THE DEPICTION OF FEMALE CHARACTERS BY MALE WRITERS IN
SELECTED ISIXHOSA DRAMA WORKS

BY

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BIBLIOGRAPHY
DECLARATION

I declare that “The depiction of female characters by male writers in selected isiXhosa drama works” is my own work and that all the sources I have used have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.

__________________________
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DEDICATION

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SUMMARY

This research expresses female character portrayal in various drama works written by males. Chapter one is a general introduction that gives the key to this study, the motivation that leads to the selection of this topic; a literary review on the portrayal of female characters in literary works written by males; the scope of study, the basic composition of the ensuing chapters and the definitions of terms that are of paramount importance for this research.

Various literary theories are used in Chapter two for the analysis of the research texts. These literary theories include womanism, gender and feminism which expose the social effects caused by the negative perception of females in social life and the negative portrayal of female characters in male dramatic writings. Other literary theories include onomastics as a literary theory, which exposes the relationship between the name giver of a person and the power the name gives to its bearer, as well as psychoanalysis as a theory which proved to be unavoidable, since this study analyses the personal behaviour of the individual characters within their literary environment.

Chapter three depicts the general victimization of female characters in male drama works and exposes the various effects of the attitudes of male writers towards female characters in terms of gender role. Chapter four shows a general stereotypical portrayal of female characters in male written drama texts. This chapter shows the impact of stereotyping on female characters from drama works that puts them in a vulnerable position, showing that it is risky to become a victim of ill-treatment in their communities and the literary world. Chapter five deals with the psychological literary review of female characters, showing them as being suicidal and murderers who easily take their own lives and those of other people.
Chapter six is a general conclusion of the works which includes observer remarks from other literary researchers of the literature.

KEY TERMS
Feminism, gender, psychoanalysis, onomastics, suicide, womanism, female characters and isiXhosa drama works.
CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Preamble

Before delving into the depiction of female characters in literary works written by males it is important to look at their general portrayal, in order to understand the profile and the trajectory this study has taken. According to Stralton (1990:98) female characters have been figured in a variety of ways, some of which are gender stereotypes and gender inequality. She further says that female characters are portrayed as mothers who are confined within the home, but have the responsibility of taking care of their household and their husbands. The female’s place is seen as the kitchen where they perform other kitchen chores. She also deposits that many male writers have encoded female characters as agents of moral corruption and contamination in their society. Stratton (1994) argues that female characters are often seen as goddesses who have lured men to their death. In other instances they are portrayed as suicidal and murderers in texts written by male writers.

Stralton (1990:111-126) sees the “Ghettoization” of female characters in male literary texts as a factor in the political disempowerment of females as well as making their “pot of culture.” Ogundipe-Leslie (1987:5) identifies the representation of female characters in literary work as “the figure of the “sweet mother”, the all-accepting creature of fecundity and self sacrifice”.

This mother figure, Ogundipe-Leslie (1987:15), argues “is often conflated with mother Africa, with eternal and abstract beauty and inspiration”. The figure of beauty, she reiterates, is usually related to the female as the passionate and sensual lover, a view that makes females feminine archetypes and objects of sexual desire for men. Most often female characters are fixed by gender stereotypes so that their attempts to transcend this position are often questioned.
Adebayo (1996:1-10) argues “it seems that females’ own attempts to cope with situations they find themselves in are regarded as a “problem” by men, and a betrayal of traditions which are often confused with women’s roles. Such ideas, which have been identified by Adebayo, limit females’ ability and serve to silence them, making them invisible in circles that have been deemed “exclusive for men”.

Achebe’s *Things Fall Apart* depicts a masculine literary work in which female characters are accorded a very low status. Female characters are seen as subsidiary characters in this text and their good deeds are not recognized. Even in Achebe (1958:44; 45-122) when Ezinma portrays a sense of brightness, Okonkwo always wishes she were a boy. The subsidiaries level at which female characters are placed make them silent throughout the text. This shows that Chinua Achebe and other writers write about themes of male interest often placing female characters in uncomplimentary roles.

Stratton (1994:126) further argues that in *Things Fall Apart*, female characters are silenced in the face of their oppression under a patriarchal system. None of the female characters in this text attempts to rebel against the patriarchal oppression which is oppressive to females in many ways. Similarly, Ogunyemi (1988:66) sees African literature as “phallic”, dominated as it is by male writers and male critics who deal almost exclusively with male characters and male concerns, naturally aimed at a predominantly male audience. Schipper (1987:35) further calls this “the male heritage in African literature and criticism”.

It is certainly clear that many male writers are unwilling to portray female characters in their totality and in their true complexity, which is evident in the way some writers have resorted to the use of stereotypes. Adeleke (1996:21-26) puts the male domination of African literature thus: “African literature is a male-created, male-oriented, chauvinistic art”.

This patriarchal perception of female characters has produced hardship, not only as it is practiced from the traditional perspective in real life, but also, more specifically, by male writers themselves in their writings. According to De Beauvoir (1949:89) humanity is male, and man defines female not as she actually is in herself, but as one who is relative to him. She is not usually regarded as an autonomous being. She further claims that man is the subject; he is “the absolute”, while the female is “the other”. According to Cuddon (1992:54), literary work is the long-standing, dominant, male phallocentrism ideologies, patriarchal attitudes and male interpretation. Cuddon attacks male notions of value in literature by offering critiques of male authors and their representations of female characters in literature, and she does this by privileging females and showing how they feel, act and think, or are supposed to feel, act and think, and how in general, they respond to life and living. It thus questions numerous prejudices and assumptions about females by male writers.

1.2 Aim of study

The aim of this research is to analyse the literary depiction of female characters by male writers. Some examples of this can be found in the following drama works, Mkonto’s Inzonzobila, Mtingane’s Inene Nasi IsiBhozo, Siphambo’s Izinto Zimana Ukwenzeka, Tamsanqa’s Buzani kuBawo, Mtywaku’s UThembisana noMakhaya, Ngani’s Umkhonto KaTshiwo and Mmango’s uDike noCikizwa. The research further aims to explore the way in which some African male writers view gender inequalities and stereotypes in their female character depiction.

Consequently, Nwapa (1966) ventured into the literary scene with her first novel Efuru, which attempted to correct the image in which earlier male writers had stereotypically depicted female characters in their literary works as witches, faithless and helpless victims of men’s love advances. This is a reflection of the low esteem in which females are held in society. Since then Ogunyemi (1988:60) says that female concerns have become a very important aspect of literature.
Ogunyemi (1998:64) goes further to say that the superficial treatment of female characters, without attempting to give a psychological depth or concern for female interests, should inspire women writers to change the situation.

Frank (1981:39) further indicates that until recently most African novels have been written by men, and they tend to focus on social, historical, and political issues, rather than personal or domestic themes. Frank further posits that females’ relations to men define them in these novels as someone’s daughter, wife or mother.

Adebayo (1996:1-10) encourages African female writers to start writing and portraying female characters as having a destiny of their own and to explore themes that embrace the solution of a theoretical world without men. It is also essential that African female writers should note that, according to Hernton in Braxton and McLaughlin (1990:205):

For the first time, the status of black women writers is no longer relegated below the status of males. Black women writers are taking the initiative. Instead of being constrained by and secondary to the literature dominance of black males, the literature of women is expansive and liberating. Unlike the past, when women were supposed to be seen but not heard, the women of today have become recognized writers in all fields and genres.

The above words indicate the significance of female writers and their input on literary works. They emphasise the importance of females’ status as being equal to that of their male counterparts in literature.
The primary purpose of this study can be summarized within the bounds of the ideas developed by such provocative female thinkers as Simone de Beauvoir, Kate Millett, Virginia Woolf, Mary Ellmann, Elaine Showlter and Michele Barrett. They all, each in her own way, repudiate the phallo-centric notion that female is but an appendage to man, an idea that captures the spirit of the biblical story of a female having been created from a man’s rib.

It is not surprising that the erudite female scholars ferociously challenge the belief system which has provided a solid foundation for a negative portrayal of female characters in literary works which is erected on the patriarchal ideas of men.

1.3 Qualitative research methodology

To achieve the aims and the objectives of this study, the qualitative method is employed as an instrument for an in-depth understanding of this area of research.

Myers (2009:241-242) says the qualitative research method is the best method for researching social and cultural phenomena, since it is concerned with understanding people and the social cultural contexts within which they live, why people behave as they do: their knowledge, attitudes, beliefs and fears.

According to Taylor (1984:141) using the qualitative approach is the best way for the interpretation and analysis of primary and secondary resources, as the only option at this point that can assist the research in coming up with quality and accurate results. The portrayal of female characters in selected isiXhosa drama texts, written by male writers, leads the research to look at the interpretation of some aspects of gender inequality in the selected drama texts.
It further assists in dissecting certain issues such as gender inequality, gender stereotypes, suicidal female characters and female prejudice in male writings.

1.3.1 Research design

This research is conducted through the use of qualitative methods to gain relevant information. According to Myers and Avision (2009:112), qualitative research refers to a generic research approach in social research according to which research takes its departure point as the insider perspective on social action. This method is chosen for various reasons, namely; the respondent's perspective is emphasized, it takes people's interpretation into consideration, it allows for flexibility, it is manageable, it does not emphasize issues such as reliability or fairness on its researches and it focuses on processes rather than outcomes. However, its limitations are that it is very subjective in nature; one cannot generalize on the basis of this method.

1.3.2 Research procedure

This research focuses on reading isiXhosa selected drama texts and other related researches that have been done in this field before. Literary theory is used to form the basis of the study. This includes; gender, feminism, womanism, psychoanalysis and literary onomastics.

IsiXhosa selected drama texts are analysed within the framework of the existing literary theory. Important texts, sourced from academic and public libraries, have been consulted as the most significant sources of critical information. Literary theories are used as the basic instrumental equipment in the evaluation of these male writers' texts. The study is researching the undesirable effects of tradition caused by patriarchal perceptions about female characters. The denial of the fundamental rights of females by male writers is also being discussed. Patriarchy is very important in any discussion of gender and of feminism issues.
The critical aspect of this study is to make an extensive assessment of how often such character inequality leads to gender stereotypes and, thereby, to social, economic and cultural discrimination.

### 1.3.3 Research method

This study uses the interpretive method for the perusal of a number of academic critical studies on different aspects of literary works. However, there are still a few scholars who researched topics of female character depiction in male—written texts. The interpretive research method focuses on the nature of the perspectives that have had the greatest influence on the writings of male writers in isiXhosa drama works. Taylor (1984:153) sees the interpretive method of research as a basic form which deals mostly with texts.

Since this study is an attempt to analyse the depiction of female characters using the significant theories, the narrative research method is employed. Literary theory is used as a tool to analyse and scrutinize the social setting and personal behaviour of female characters in selected IsiXhosa drama texts. The results of the socialisation processes of female characters in male writings are examined. According to Smith (1981:169) narratives are “verbal acts consisting of someone telling someone else that something happened” while Lieblich (1998:97) acknowledges that the term “narrative” generally can refer to any spoken or written presentation. Lieblich further sees the use of the term to describe the process of creating a story.

The narrative approach is used as a mechanism to unveil the pain endured by females in literature. The study will look at the analyses of gender stereotypes, gender roles, gender identity, the superiority of men, inequality in polygamous marriages, sex roles, any sexual division of labour, as well as forced/arranged marriages.
Literary onomastics reveals how the names of female characters are associated with the submissive and passive roles that are assigned to them by literary texts written by male writers.

1.4 Context of the research

This study serves to expose a polarization of gender discrimination in isiXhosa drama works as a kind of biometrical approach in identifying female characters. Brett and Cantor (1988:109) believe that female depiction has shown how females are presented as submissive, sensitive and domesticated. "Bad" females, on the other hand, are stereotypically portrayed as rebellious, dependent and selfish characters. This is in contrast to male characters that tend to be portrayed as assertive, those who take the initiative, independent, competent and successful. Men are also portrayed as those who are geared to succeed in a competitive social system. There are few or no female characters that are portrayed in heroic roles in literary texts written by male writers.

Male characters tend to be depicted as dominant and as more powerful than female characters. Giele (1978:147) says that stereotypical masculinity, for instance, is portrayed as natural, normal and universal, but it is in fact a particular construction. This is masculinity within which any suggestion of feminine qualities or homosexuality is denied, and outside which females are perceived as subordinate creatures.

In literary texts written by males, female characters are portrayed as marginal beings. There is a general consensus that literary texts should act as important agents of socialization together with the family and peers, contributing to the shaping of gender roles. For example, a boy is thought by a society by how to behave as a boy. There is no doubt that literature presents powerful attention-
grabbing images of gender. Literary texts thus play a significant role in shaping people’s gender roles.

Agbasiere (1999:82-85) says literary texts written by male writers produce stereotypical features that depict female characters as weak and always unable to overcome their hardships. This presents stereotypical literary texts where female characters do not play any positive roles, but are only able to perpetuate negative images and not explore all aspects of female experiences.

According to Eboh (1999:12-23) the oppression of females is a fact of life and its traces can be seen in literary works.

1.5 Scope of study

The first chapter comprises the introduction to the study. It deals with the purpose of the study, the methodology, the scope of the study, literature reviews, the definition of relevant concepts and the motivation for the research.

Chapter two explores the theoretical framework. Some aspects of literary theory like gender play an important role in the development of the second chapter. This chapter is consequently very important because literary theories are used to advocate a change of approach in the teaching and reading of literary works. The theories that are used are based on the different aspects of gender. Gender provides an in-depth explanation of the power relationships between the sexes. The following literary theories will be used as a framework; gender, womanism, feminism, psychoanalysis and onomastics.

Chapter three pays more attention of female characters as victims of the cultural set-up in their society. This victimisation of female characters is portrayed in Mtingane’s Inene Nasi IsiBhozo, where Masukude is told to go and fetch water, and not to be part of the family meeting. This exclusion subsequently leads her to commit so many unacceptable actions in the text.
This notion is supported by Betty (1963:67-91) who hypothesizes that female characters are victims of a false belief system that requires them to find identity and meaning in their lives through their husbands and children. Such a system may cause women to lose their identity in society completely.

In Chapter four male writing stereotypes receive more attention. In Mkonto’s *Inzonzobila*, MamNtakhwende is regarded as the most dangerous character who betrays her husband. This is a traditional view that females, in general, are deep human beings who are capable of murdering people and can even cause emotional or spiritual harm.

Gender stereotypes are seen by Golombok and Fivus (1994:37-39) as being organized sets of beliefs about the characteristics of all members of a particular group. These sets of beliefs are about what it means to be male or female. Gender stereotypes include information about physical appearance, attitudes and interests, psychological traits, social relations and occupations.

Chapter five looks at the social and psychological reviews of female characters in literary drama works written by males. This chapter reveals how female characters are psychologically affected in these drama texts. Some of them end up being characters with suicidal tendencies, if not actually murderers.

Chapter six is the last chapter and it concludes the main observations of the study, and finally makes some constructive recommendations.

1.6 Literature review

It is also of paramount importance, firstly, to briefly review other scholars’ research works. This study continuously reviews information received from other researchers by scrutinising any relevant information on the subject of women character-perception. It will then draw a conclusion on what really causes
problems in isiXhosa contemporary drama works regarding the current outcry of women about the unfair depiction of female characters. The review pays more attention to academic research studies carried out on issues similar to that of character inequality. Nkumane (1999) wrote her doctoral thesis on *Themes of forced and forbidden love: Cross-cultural trends in Language Literature, with special reference to Zulu Novels*. Her focus is on arranged marriages and forbidden love as the main cause of problems in Zulu culture.

Mtuze (1994) in his doctoral thesis entitled, *A feminist critique of the image of women in the prose works of selected Xhosa writers (1909-1980)* focuses on the image of female characters in literature and shows how these images change over the years. Mtuze’s finding is that subjugation and cultural stereotyping of women occurs across nearly all cultures, as it transcends all racial and national barriers. He also examines the manner in which amaXhosa women characters have been oppressed and discriminated against by isiXhosa writers.

The depiction of female characters in selected Venda novels is an unpublished MA dissertation by A Mawela (1994). She took a close look at various roles assigned to women by Venda society. As in other research works on cultural status, Mawela’s study focuses on the negative delineation of female characters. She explains that “…some writers portray characters in order to influence the perception of society about women folk, whether it is for better or worse”.

Both Mawela and Mtuze show pictures of female characters from the initial age of novel writings and indicate how the changing times influence character delineation in the present literary works. As in most societies, patriarchal and cultural challenges are not warmly welcomed by Venda society. Women can use many ways to challenge the oppressive structures of such societies.

Dlamini (1995) in her M.A. dissertation, *voicing their perception: A review of Swazi Women folk songs*, presents songs as an instrument through which the
Swazi women express their concerns, attitudes and feelings. She further shows that Swazi women are no exception to patriarchal domination.

**Images of women in some Zulu literary works: A Feminist critique** is an M.A. dissertation by Masuku (1997). It presents the portrayal of female characters by male and female writers. **Elements of feminism in M.A. Kekana’s Nonyana ya Tokolongo** (1990) is a treatise by Maponyane expressing the cultural constraints imposed on women in the Northern Sotho society. Kekane addresses the cultural norms and values which distances women from being actively involved in the social structure of their society.

The above works on literary studies indicate close similarities with this study. The similarities deal with female status problems concerning the positions they occupy in indigenous literary works. This study is adding value to the academic Xhosa literary research work because no one else has thus far researched the depiction of female characters by male authors in isiXhosa drama works.

### 1.7 Motivation

The researcher tries to motivate African male writers to understand that females are no longer subordinates as they have been portrayed in the past. There is an outcry that male authors need to make a concerted effort to change female character portrayal. They should portray female characters in their drama works as people who can take the centre stage in leading roles in today’s economic and socio-political matters.

Being a critical student researcher of literature and an advanced teacher of the isiXhosa language, as well as one of the readers of isiXhosa literary works, is one of the primary reasons which raised an interest in researching the depiction of female characters by male writers in their literary works. The interest arose from the social exclusion of women from participating in important issues of
their families and society. The study observes that the attitudes of writers need to be reviewed from time to time. Failure to give close attention to these literary discrepancies could lead to social discrimination which is currently experienced by African women in their social life and literary works.

It is very important for male writers to portray female characters as being equal with men regarding role-playing and status. This also encourages African women and female writers to take a pen and say something about themselves. This research is also intended to awaken readers to the fact that cultural practices are not the only factors in the oppression of female characters, but they are also the cause of gender imbalances in the drama works of male writers.

1.8 Definition of terms

The following terms are defined as they are significant in the understanding of the study. It is essential to describe and explain these key concepts before examining the subject, as they are used extensively or referred to quite often.

1.8.1 Culture

In different societies, people carry within themselves different behavioral norms and certain patterns of feelings, which researchers believe they have learnt throughout their lifetime. This might be the reason why a number of researchers view culture as a “learned habit”. Hofstede (1991:5) defines culture as follows:

Culture is always a collective phenomenon, because it is at least partly shared with people who live within the same social environment which is where it is learned. It is the collective programming of the mind which distinguishes the members of one group of people from another.
The above explanation indicates that culture is one of those things that is learned. One is not born with it. It comes from the social set-up, not from one’s genes. This definition also emphasizes that culture influences community behaviour because of the background of one’s psychological influences. This background lies within the cultural set-up in which an individual grew up and collected his or her life experiences. Cultural learning starts within the family and continues with the neighbours, at school, in social gatherings, at the workplace, and even in the community.

1.8.2 Values

Values are the abstract evaluations shared by the members of a society. Together they constitute the way of social life or the manner in which a particular society handles its culture. Culture invariably has effects on the behaviour of those individuals who together make up a particular society as regards certain cultural issues, such as female status and the rightful place of women in contemporary African society.

Lyle et al. (1998:111) define values as follows:

> All cultural values have central convictions by which members of a culture define what is desirable or undesirable, good or bad, beautiful or ugly, right or wrong. Values are abstract evaluations expressing broad preferences, while norms apply to specific situations.

From the above statement, it is clear that values are a very important aspect of culture because they determine the attitudes of a society and of the individuals within a particular society. Values control other cultural aspects by attaching their meaning to them. The above definition also gives an indication that values differ from one society to another.
1.8.3 Stereotypes

Stereotypes comprise the social and psychological divisions to which a person has already conformed. Stereotypes refer to a process wherein individuals interact with the conviction that they have to do and think in an acceptable behavioural manner with their environment. Sekhukhune in Mtuze, (1994:3) describes stereotyping as follows:

Most of these stereotypes which are, for the moment, exemplified by idiomatic and proverbial expressions, have relegated the social status of women to that of a nonentity. The gender role stereotypes of men have acquired aggressive qualities and command absolute power and authority, while those of women demonstrate a lack of assertiveness and certainty.

The above statement indicates that gender role stereotypes indicate different behavioural patterns of males and females. Men demonstrate social power while females show submissiveness and powerlessness.

Females are traditionally linked to traits such as dependence, emotionality, nurturing and a preoccupation with their physical appearance. These preconceptions give men the power to dominate females. Societies tend to view females as excessively emotional erratic and concerned with their own feelings rather than those of others.

Men on the other hand are always viewed as non-expressive and emotionally stable regarding both their own emotions as well as those of others.
1.8.4. Gender

Gender refers to the socially constructed roles of and relations between males and females. Gender is, in most cases, characterized by unequal power which sometimes assigns specific entitlements and responsibilities to men only. Scott, in Zinsser (1993:54), states that “gender” gives a meaning of gender that has been a systematically contentious issue for many people around the world. She further believes that the term “gender” has been used to refer to the social, cultural and psychological aspects of maleness and femaleness. Gender is seen as the “amount” of masculinity or femininity found in a person. People make what is called gender attribution; they decide whether someone is male or female when they see them. Gender attributions form the foundation for understanding other components of gender, such as gender roles (behaving like a male or a female) and gender identity (feeling like a male or a female).

This explanation of gender indicates that gender is the perceptional package to which a society has delegated the role of each sex, for example, females as keepers of their families. This is often justified by the female capacity to give birth to children. On the other hand, males have historically been given the role of protectors of the family and providers for it.

The reason for using gender as a theory is that it has to do with stereotypes and inequality aspects that are evident in literary works of the selected male authors. Pilcher and Wheelhan (2004:56) state that the concept of gender, as it is now used, came into common practice during the early 1970s.

1.8.5. Patriarchy

Patriarchy shows that men have social power in every important structure of society and that women do not have any real access to such structures. Patriarchy refers to a social system whereby males dominate women. It is viewed
as the social structure in which males have more status than females. According to Rich, in Kramarae and Treichler, (1985:323) patriarchy not only refers to the preventing of women from occupying powerful positions in society, it also creates the negative social view which men attach to women. Morten, in Kramarae and Treichler (1985:232), views patriarchy as follows:

It is a way of structuring reality in terms of good/evil, redemption/guilt, authority/obedience, reward/punishment, power/powerlessness, haves/have-nots, and master/slave. The first in each opposite was assigned to the patriarchal father, or the patriarch’s Father God, frequently indistinguishable from one another. The second refers to women as “the other” and, in time, to all “others” who could be exploited. The father did the naming, the owning, the controlling, the ordering, the forgiving, the giving, considering himself capable of making the best decisions for all.

This definition of patriarchy shows that females are regarded as non-human beings. Patriarchy is practised almost everywhere in traditional societies. Men are portrayed differently from every other group. This briefly indicates that patriarchy is not simply hierarchical organization, but a hierarchy in which a particular gender fills particular places’. It is a system where power is vested on the shoulders of the man, who is taken unquestioningly to be the head of the family. This is one of the main reasons why men, in the social power stratum, rank higher than women, while women are expected to take instructions from them.

1.8.6 Femininity

According to the Collins Thesaurus Dictionary (1993:250), femininity comprises the following: “delicacy, gentleness, girlishness, womanhood and womanliness.”
Kramarae and Treichler (1985:157) believe this is a good description of the female object or “female eunuch”, as they describe her. They say that the concept of femininity is a counterpart to the machismo stereotype of masculinity that emerged from the patriarchal view. The term is therefore explained in the context of masculinity.

1.8.7. Feminism

Feminism is the movement for the social, political and economic equality of men and women. It maintains that women and men are, and have been, treated differently by society, and that women have frequently and systematically been unable to participate fully in all the available social arenas and social institutions. Billington, in Kramarae and Treichler, (1985:158) says that “feminism” can be explained as follows:

A movement seeking the re-organisation of the world upon a basis of gender equality in all human relations; a movement which would reject every differentiation between individuals upon the grounds of gender, that would abolish all gender privileges and burdens, and would strive to set up the recognition of the common humanity of women and men as the foundation of law and custom.

The concept that highlighted the above statement is an idealistic view that wants to dramatically eradicate the inequality between males and females. Feminism seeks social change in women’s status by changing the way in which society views them. Feminism wants society to change its ideas on patriarchy and accept women as being a valuable part of society.
1.8.8 Sex

Sex refers to the biological characteristics which define humans as female or male. According to Kramarae and Treichler (1985:409), sex can be explained in two ways. Firstly, sex is considered to be the property or quality by which organisms are classified according to their reproductive functions; either of two divisions, designated male or female. Secondly, it refers to males and females collectively. In this research, the term sex will be used interchangeably to refer to both men and women and to refer to a particular gender.

1.8.9 Masculinity

Masculinity refers to the powerful nature of men granted to them by society and culture. It consolidates the various social positions into which culture compartmentalises people. According to Sattel in Kramarae and Treichler (1985:258) “masculinity” has nothing to do with femininity.

1.8.10 Suicide

This is a self-inflicted death with either explicit murderous or implicit evidence that the person concerned intended to die. According to Nevid, Rathus and Greene (1997:299) “Suicide represents an inward-directed anger that leads a person to commit suicide”. This shows that people do not actually seek to kill themselves, but rather to focus their anger on something or someone that stands against their ideas. These people end up murdering themselves. This indicates that suicidal people find life duller, emptier and more boring than do more normal people.

1.8.11 Gossip

Gossip comes from the old English word “gobsibb” which can be further broken down into god (blood) + sibb (relation). Gossipers are viewed as being both
female and male. After the 1500s, it gained negative connotations. According to Marland (1969:2), the word “gossip” is misused as a term of endearment to describe a friend or someone who may be chosen as a child’s godparent.

In this study the term will be used to refer to a female who engages in talk of an intimate nature about others. Gossiping is characterised by females who are full of wickedness, covetousness and malice. Men are perceived to be the only group which has the right to gossip.

1.8.12 Victimisation

Victimisation occurs when a person suffers from the direct or threatening and intentional use of physical force with the potential for causing harm. It also includes emotional abuse which can threaten, terrorize or severely reject an individual. It can also include the intention to ignore or verbally attack someone when it is deliberately intended to humiliate or hurt. According to McLeod, (1986:63-71), a victim can be defined as “… a person who is tricked or swindled; a person or thing that suffers…”

The above definition would include any person who is put to death or suffers because of another person’s actions. This also indicates that victimisation can be covert or overt, especially where one person perpetrates an act which is not necessarily perceived by the victim as being vindictive, because it is not culturally defined in that sense.

1.9 Conclusion

Chapter one focuses on the purpose of this study, the context of the research, motivation, the framework and the definition of the terms used. This chapter has also indicated that gender and feminism are used as the main theories. There are other subsidiary theories such as that of onomastics and psychoanalytical theories which are used in this research.
The literary review provides some idea on the subject under discussion. It has presented some information on gender social inequality in societies from different angles and views.

From the literature review they also noticed that most studies seek to show that the social status of females in the amaXhosa community is conditioned by the traditional norms which clearly need to be improved. This study focuses on male writers’ perceptions and their depiction of women characters in their drama works.
CHAPTER TWO

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to use the necessary literary theories as a means for analysis in order to facilitate the practical reading of the contexts and also to assist in revealing the true meaning of the literary texts under discussion. This will be done by using these theories extensively in the analysis of selected isiXhosa drama works. The following theories place the research in its context. Various essential literary theories, such as womanism, gender, feminism, psychoanalysis and literary onomastics have been accessed as tools. This research will use these theories in an attempt to understand the depiction of female characters in selected isiXhosa texts. These are source-based views that should assist in unlocking the mysteries of the male drama works.

According to Culler (1997:145-149), literary theories are used not only for enriching and deepening the understanding of the research work, but also to assist in demonstrating the new approach to literature analysis.

Another crucial distinction regarding the use of these theories of literary interpretation is the intention of the author as it is revealed from the written texts. It is necessary to trace the amount of weight that is given by the male writers' own opinions on their intentions in portraying female characters in their isiXhosa drama works. Furthermore, literary theories are needed to assist in revealing the male writer's intentions. They also serve as guiding factors that are of paramount importance in determining their literary works.

Literary theories are essential in any critical analysis of texts that are source-dependent on literature analysis. Eagleton (1983:viii) sees these theories as a
set of interrelated analyses of the literature. Theories are further employed to guide the research and to enable any testing of the validity of the texts. Chaphole (1993:12) makes a plea for the employment of literary theories in the analysis of literary works. They also serve to give impetus to the research; they help to create a knowledge fabric for the discipline of the literature.

The use of these literary theories serves as an attempt to reveal the underlying element of subjectivity in the literary works written by male writers. Womanism theory will be the point of departure in the discussion of literary theories to be used.

2.2. The development of womanism theory

Womanism is the feminist term that developed out of the frustration of black women. The term was first used by Walker (1983:3) in her book *Search of Our Mother’s Garden*, where she uses the word to describe the perspective and the experiences of “women of colour”. Although Walker states that a womanist is a black feminist of colour, she insists that a black feminist, as womanist, talks back to feminism, brings new demands and different perspectives to feminism, and compels the expansion of feminist horizons in theory and practice. Her construction of womanism theory and different meanings she invests in the word, is an attempt to place women in history and culture, while, at the same time, seeking to rescue her from the negative and inaccurate stereotypes that mask women in literary works.

Walker’s (1983:10) term “womanist” is the referent for what is attempted in this study. Womanist theory is by definition committed to the survival and the wholeness of all people, females and males, as well as to the braveness of women’s works in all their varieties.
The term womanism centers on the Afro-American women’s social experiences. The idea of womanism arose from the early feminist movements that were led specifically by white women who advocate social changes such as women’s suffrage. The feminist ideal focuses largely on oppression based on sexism. But this movement was mainly a white middle-class movement and ignored oppression that was based only on racism and classism.

It was at this point that womanists expressed that black women have experienced a different, more complex and more intense kind of oppression than white women. Ogunyemi, in an article: “Womanism: Indicates Dynamics of the contemporary Black Female Novel in English,” gives Alice Walker’s definition of womanism:

Black womanism is a philosophy that celebrates black roots and the ideals of black life, while giving a balanced presentation of black womanhood. It concerns itself as much with the black sexual power tussle as with the world power structure that subjugates blacks. Its ideal is for black unity... (1983:72).

The above definition endeavours to assist black women to see, affirm, and have confidence in the significance of their experiences and to be able to face the challenges of all the social oppressive forces impeding black women’s struggle for survival and for the development of a positive, productive quality of life conducive to women’s freedom and wellbeing.

The roots of the womanism theory grew from the theology of James Hal Cone. Cone (1969:94) developed black theology which sought to make sense out of the theology from black experiences in America. In his book A Black Theology of Liberation, Cone (1969:112-143) argues that “God is black” in an effort to demonstrate that God always identifies with politically oppressed people.
Grant (1995:44-48), a first generation womanist theologian, argues that Cone did not attend to the fullness of the black experience, particularly the oppression of black females which is totally different from that of black males. This idea of womanism suggests that black women are navigating between the three-fold branches of oppression of racism, sexism and classism.

Women are associated with a divine co-sufferer who suffered in His time like the black woman. Therefore, black women are more oppressed and in need of more freedom than any other group, be it black men or white women. Womanists have grasped the crucial connection between African-American women and the plight, survival and struggle of the women of colour throughout the world. Womanism theory’s intentions are to pursue and engage the cultural contexts of women who are part of the African Diaspora. This would include, for instance, enhancing the dialogical networking among women of colour all over the world.

Sanders (1995:169) views womanism as an emergent theoretical perspective that reforms and expands mainstream feminist theory to incorporate racial and cultural differences with its particular focus on African-American women. Womanists construct and emphasize the significance of America’s social environments and selected adaptation strategies that they have employed to achieve psychosocial wellbeing, including the actualization of their authentic gender-role identities.

Black American women have been denied power and privilege. They have been raised expecting to work, as they will be needed to assist in supporting their families. Women are asked to do all they possibly can to advance the Black women at the cost of ignoring the oppression of sexism. Indeed, Black women have been taught from early childhood that one way to survive in this society is through marriage or in a male-female relationship.
Walker (1995:72) defines womanism as a consciousness that incorporates racial, cultural, sexual, national, economic and political considerations. Ogunyemi (1983:74-90) is of the opinion that: “Black womanism is a philosophy that concerns itself both with sexual equality in the Black Community and with the world power structure that subjugates men and women. Its ideal is for black unity where every black person has a modicum of power and so can be a “brother” or “sister”, a “father” or a “mother” to the other; its main aim is the dynamism of wholeness and self-healing. Walker and Ogunyemi’s terminology of defining womanism may be sound and new, but their ideas are not. In fact, many black women at various points in history have a clear understanding that race issues and women’s issues are inextricably linked, and that one cannot separate women’s struggles from race struggles. Because of this understanding they refuse to disconnect themselves from either movement. Instead, they insist on inclusion in both movements in a manner that recognizes the interconnection between race and sex. The concept of womanism should possibly be traced from the view that African-American women’s voices have been left out from feminism and by black male writers.

Cummings in Sanders (1995:61) further stresses the point that the minimal presence of African women in Afrocentrism points to an even greater need for the womanist perspective. The apparent lack of American women in the conceptual framework of Afrocentrism is a continuation of their exclusion from dialogues about African-Americans, a primary reason for the fact that the womanism concept has emerged. This strongly alludes to the fact that the exclusion of African women from the Afrocentrism debate could possibly be one of the cultivating factors that led to the development of womanism.

Many scholars like Weixlmann and Baker (1988:5) criticizes the elitism of white feminists’ writings. It is therefore clear that black feminists’ criticism has developed from the space created by white feminists. Black feminists did not have any input in the development of feminism and did not take any part in the
development of the feminism theory. The exclusion situation encourages black women to come up with an alternative theory that will be appropriate for their own needs as a black community.

Many scholars of literature argue that womanism should not have been regarded as an extension of feminism, strongly because according to these scholars, black women were actively involved long before the discovery of the feminism theory. Hardman-Cromwell in Sanders, (1995:106), concurs with this view, which says:

If a womanist is one who views the world and makes decisions out of a consciousness of her identity as a female and as an African-American, and as one who values this identity, black women writers began giving a voice to womanism centuries before the term was used.

The above statement supports the argument which is brought forward by scholars like Weixlmann and Baker (1988:5). They argue that the feminism theory belongs to and can meet the needs of white females only. Scholars believe that feminism clearly illustrates an ideology of white females which does not include or even touch black women’s affairs.

Both scholars concur that the feminist view cultivates the black womanism theory development, by not being accommodative to black women’s challenging issues. It accommodates the aspirations and the visions of whites in order to possibly extend the aspirations of upper class black women who decide to ignore the needs of their fellow black women.

Hudson-Weems’ (1998:83) furnishes a theoretical construct that boldly restores meaning with the historical development of cultural contexts that is peculiar to the African and Diaspora women’s experiences. She argues that Africana womanism is not the extension of White feminism or Black feminism. According to Hudson-
Weems (1998:82) there is a general consensus in the African community that the feminist movement at large is a white women’s movement. According to her African women do not see the man as the primary enemy, as do white feminists, who are still carrying on the age-old struggle with their male counterparts for oppressing them. In contrast to white men, African men never had the same institutionalized power to oppress African women.

Hudson-Weems further believes that African womanism is an ideology created and designed for all women of African descent. It is grounded in African culture and focuses on the unique experiences, struggles, needs and desires of the African womanist. It is grounded on family-centred values and the fact that the womanist desires positive male companionship which is supportive and an integral part of positive African family values.

She feels that African womanism is aware that there has always been bonding among African women. This bonding cannot be broken because it is genuine sisterhood. The traditional family is so important to the African womanist who recognises the need for a genuine connection between women. The kind of family gives them support in their search for solace in their time of need and can offer them insight in their time of confusion.

The African womanist respects and recognizes herself in order to acquire true self-esteem, self-worth and self-love. Hudson-Weems (1998) further strongly believes that the process of the development of the womanism theory should be viewed in three ways: as the celebration of black women’s long historical struggles and the strength they have gained from their plight; the critique of various manifestations of black women’s oppression, and lastly the construction of black women’s theological views and the content of womanism theory which bears the distinctive mark of black women’s assertiveness and shows their resourcefulness in the face of all who inflict oppression on them.
The womanist ideal forces the researcher to be courageous enough to move beyond mere celebration and critique to undertake the difficult task of practical constructive work, in the struggle for black women’s liberation and wholeness. Hudson-Weems (1998:82-91) states that the womanist or Black feminist thoughts are ideas produced by black women which articulate and clarify the Black women’s perspective. This theoretical perspective addresses African women’s rights to self as they are adequately described; it accounts for the experiences of multiple oppression, and acknowledges the uniqueness of each woman’s journey. Woman’s epistemology is grounded in a belief that concrete experiences are criteria of meaning and dialogue that can be used in assessing knowledge claims.

Ogunyemi (op cit) believes that all the discussions of the African version of feminism can be subsumed under the concept of womanism, for it succeeds in encoding the essential points raised by the advocates of other varieties of the concept. Ogunyemi (1988:65) defines womanism as follows:

Womanism is black centred; it is accommodationist. It believes in the freedom and independence of women like feminism; unlike radical feminism, it wants meaningful union between black women and black men and black children and will see to it that men begin to change from their sexist stand.

To Ogunyemi, womanism serves as the rallying-point of the women of African ancestry in their struggle to effectively assert their humanity in the face of the malevolent attitude of the menfolk towards their self-fulfilment in life. However, it does not emasculate the self-pride of men; 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.
2.3 **Womanism as a philosophy of literary theory**

The role of female characters in literary texts is constantly being questioned, and for centuries females have struggled to find their place in a literary world that is predominantly occupied by male writers. According to Cannon (1988:38), these literary works supposedly furnish an opportunity to look into the lives, thoughts and actions of females during certain periods of time in a fictitious form which paints a picture of females who have failed to break away from their male companions; all such works describe stereotypically dominated females. Through the submissive nature of female character portrayal, complaint attitudes and shattered egos, each female character is portrayed as a person who has struggled to live their own life in accordance with their social values and cultural norms.

These literary texts have portrayed women who lack the ability to make decisions without the constant approval and recognition of a male. Unfortunately, some male writers have portrayed females as persons who cannot make decisions on their own. This is seen throughout their literary texts. They depict females as weak and as failures who are unable to make correct and independent decisions.

The status of female characters, and the nature of their depiction within African literature, is certainly relevant regarding female social marginalization in literary texts written by males. The manner in which female characters are depicted in these texts is criticised by womanists and feminists. The criticism is based on the roles that female characters play which are all indicative of society’s attitude towards females.

Literature is characterized by the inadequate representation of female independence. Moreover, literature often perpetuates the gender-imbalance myths that typically portray African societies via literature. In many instances
female characters are portrayed as marginalized by male writers, and their roles are either minimal or remain unacknowledged by such literature.

The lack of recognition of females in literature is not without its socio-historical deeply rooted attitude towards the marginalization of female characters. This may be quite clearly linked to the gender-specific repercussions of African society and the domination of literature by male writers for centuries. Literature written by females is always taken less seriously than that written by their male counterparts. Humm (1992:173) gives a clear picture of how long the female has suffered from male domination of her literary works and which has neglected her efforts to produce any literary works. He maintains that from the early 1970s black women were misrepresented or marginalised in most critical texts. Even as late as 1979, anthologies either did not mention the contributions of black women at all or casually dismissed these writers. The writings of Afro-American women are simply absent in the Black literary histories written by men.

It is quite obvious that throughout history, African women have often been subjected to negative stereotypes and their contributions have been minimal and even omitted. In most cases they have been excluded from the mainstream publications which examine African literature in most male-dominated fiction.

It is very unfortunate that the African female perspective has fallen into the hands of African male writers. This powerfully represents the correlation between such literary texts and the cultural setting of the African people. Owomoyela (1993:311) alludes that besides all other cultural factors and the participation of African women, this has significantly led to the marginalization of African women from literary works and any publishing of their works.

Owomoyela (1993:243) maintains that such negative attitudes toward female writings may be caused by the relative scarcity of women writers in the African canon. This may be partly explained by the opposition of colonial Western
education, family issues and gender policies to females pursuing their careers as writers in addition to their domestic duties.

The above situation shows that almost all African literary work is an outcome of Africans' contact with Western influences on African cultural art traditions. This contact has led to the marginalization and subjugation of women. This has even spread beyond the cultural and social level to the literary world too. Females still have little access to publishers in comparison with the opportunities that males have. This is hard evidence that African activity emanates from the arts and the cultural consciousness in various aspects of life. Hastings (1993:91-99) argues that western interference encourages separation from African traditional perceptions of reality and existence. It has subsequently resulted in cultural and social inequalities and other forms of disarticulation of gender differences.

This has perhaps discouraged them from participating in any literary writings. Restrictions have been imposed on women by male writers. Men fear that women may reveal too many sensitive issues that are generally considered confidential and sensitive by society. In most literary works females are encouraged to be silent, especially on matters that affect their marital relationships. This shows that literary works by males view females as being inferior people who cannot be permitted to represent or express their communal views.

Labode (1993:24) further maintains that the colonial educational system embraced Eurocentric views which excluded women, thus resulting in their social, cultural and literary exclusion from the possibility of any literary contribution. What was perpetuated was a type of education which discouraged the upliftment of females, preventing them from gaining a more positive image of themselves, self-awareness and a greater knowledge based on their possible intellectual growth and improvement. This kind of negativity in education pervaded certain attitudes towards women and did not make any attempt to
promote pride or self-respect in them. According to Hastings (1993:49), the acceptance of Western influence requires that most elements within literary heritage be construed as an obstacle to literary creativity and the advancement of female social development. African literary works must therefore now continue to engage viable African literature through continuous examination and portrayal of the realities of the new thoughts about women’s roles in literary works.

In this regard, indigenous African core statements are important to African literary works because, in addition to the male writers’ ability in normal literary practice, they also show the capacity for change encoded in African literary ways of knowing. A primary concern is the re-entrenchment of female and or female-related aspects of selected issues into contemporary literary works. The focus is to examine the literary capacity to maintain harmony and equilibrium using recognizable predictions embedded in literary texts.

The critical silence of females, coupled with the oppression of female literary works, means that female literary works are still invisible and immersed in silence for a considerable part of the literary world. The dearth of African literature genres that support the female’s participation in the recreation and maintenance of societal vision provides evidence of the silence.

Davies and Adams (1986:148-149) argue that literary works have thus far excluded females from the emerging culture that has presented the African experience for a largely external readership. Thus, the portrayal of female characters becomes problematic in any contemporary setting, which could not create opportunities for women’s participation in the literary world. Literary criticism is rooted in the need to create a niche for female literature and the critic. Within contemporary literary works this approach has developed from the years of silence and struggle that many African female writers have experienced.
Many African female academics, like Busia (1988:9), oppose the silence which seems to be supported by a male-dominated African literature. It is a pity that African females have had to endure exclusion and contempt from a male-oriented African literature. Literary work has long been the preserve of male writers. Despite the enviable position females have occupied as capable oral artists in the literary world, they have not been given the attention they deserve; male voices have continued to be dominant.

Baird (1997:56) strongly believes that the neglect of female artists in literature has been an unfortunate omission, because females offer self-images, patterns of self-analysis, and enormous general insights into the female situation which are ignored by, or are inaccessible to, male writers in general.

Womanism theory has showed that women are still undertaking ongoing, warlike campaigns against the patriarchal system. Women’s marginalization, or exclusion from powerful structures of society, has not silenced them. Through the use of literature women have been able to communicate their pain to the whole world to break away from the issue of gender and gender stereotypes.

2.4 The literary development of gender theory

Gender theory came to the forefront of the theoretical scene as the systematic gathering and examination of information on gender differences and social relations accumulated. In order to identify and understand the social imbalances based on gender, it was first necessary for facts to emerge into the public domain. Firstly, it appeared as feminist theory that employed a diagnostic tool for gender streamlining, but it has subsequently come to include the investigation of all gender and sexual identities. This theory had followed slightly behind the re-emergence of political feminism in the United States and Western Europe during the 1960s.
It can also be traced to the impact of political feminism which had, as its emphasis, practical concerns with the rights of females in contemporary societies, female identities, and the representation of women in literary texts and in cultural society. This converged with early literary feminist practices as characterized by Showalter (1986:134-138) who emphasizes the study and the canonical inclusion of works by female writers, as well as the depiction of women in male-authored canonical texts.

Eckert and McConnel-Ginet (2003:10) strongly believe that gender is not a convention with which people are born, and it is not something people have, but something people do. West and Zimmerman (1989:12) maintain that it is something people perform. Butler (1990:19) images a young boy proudly following his father. “As he swaggers and sticks out his chest, he is doing everything he can to be like his father, to be a man.” Butler (1990:23) believes that the chances are that his father was not swaggering, but the boy is creating a persona that embodies what he admires in his adult male role model.

Butler (1990:86) further maintains that the same is true of a young girl as she puts on her mother’s high-heeled shoes, smears make-up on her face and minces around the room. The chances are that when these children are fully grown, they will not swagger and mince respectively, but childhood performances contain elements that will no doubt surface in their adult male and female behaviour patterns. The chances are also that the girl will adopt that swagger on occasions as well, but adults are not likely to consider it as “cute” as her childhood mincing act. And chances are that if the boy decides to try a little mincing, he won’t be considered cute at all. In other words, a gender performance is available to everyone, but with it comes social constraints on who can perform which personae with impunity.

This is where gender and sex come together, as society tries to match up ways of behaving with biological sex assignments. Gender development does not end
with childhood activities. Moser (1989:112) believes that gender continues to be transformed as people move into social structures such as the workplace; as people learn to act like secretaries and managers. This perception also continues to be transformed as people’s family status changes; as people learn to understand their gender roles as wives, husbands, mothers, daughters, fathers and uncles.

As people grow or age, they continue to learn new social behaviours for what is required of them in being men and women. Gender teaches people how to be males or females and involves them in learning to look and act in particular ways, and also to participate in particular ways in relationships and communities and in learning to see the world from other perspectives. It is obvious that gender is by no means the only aspect of literary texts that one learns in his/her development. It is an interaction with other hierarchies based on such socially constructed categories as class, age, ethnicity and race. According to Eckert and McConnell-Ginet (2003), gender is a social arrangement and every individual’s gender is built into the social order.

This seems to suggest that everyone gets gender cues everywhere. Gender consists of a pattern of relations that develops over time to determine male and female identities, while simultaneously structuring and regulating people’s relations to society. Molyneux (1998:93) believes that gender is deeply embedded in every aspect of society, in institutions of higher learning, in literary works, in art works, clothing and movement.

To some extent gender activities and spheres have greater power and prestige than others; a division of labour can also be a division of social values. Across communities, the gender division of labour involves differential power and status. McDonald (1994:129) believes that men’s social activities are those that are guarded the most closely, as men’s domain involves greater social power through the disposition of goods and services and the control of social ritual.
McDonald (1994:131-135) further believes that men in most cultures have more access to positions of public power and influence than females do; while females in most cases have wielded considerable influence in their domestic settings or in other non-public domains. This influence is clearly limited by the domain itself.

The gender division of work in most literary works relies heavily on the allocation of female functions to the domestic or private realm, and men’s to the public realm. Literary works link this division of labour to reproductive roles. Females are then portrayed as bearers of children, are assigned not only to delivering them but also to raising them, and to the nurturing not only of children, but of entire families, and to the care of the homes in which such families are based. McDowell and Pringle (1992:15) say that the importance of the domestic roles and the separation which has led to female restriction to the domestic sphere can be advanced as a universal explanation of female subordination. They further believe that it has a particularly pertinent influence in anthropology. The assumption that female character portrayals are closer to nature is linked to their restriction to domestic activities and their reproductive roles.

Labode (1993:49) believes that females may do as much subsistence labour as a man, although they may be spared the heavier tasks. In addition they are obliged to do all the household chores, including caring for the children. Yet once outside the intimacy of the home, a female is not her husband’s equal.

Gender theory is post-modern in that it challenges the paradigms and intellectual premises of Western thought, but also takes an activist stance by proposing frequent interventions and alternative epistemological positions needed to change the old social order. One of the most prominent gender theorists, Butler (1990:13-14) initiated the view that gender is a human construct enacted by a vast repetition of social activities. This gives further impetus to gender theory as having originated as a tool to examine the biological distinction between man and woman. This tool eventually came under the same scrutiny by those theorists
who had reached a similar conclusion that sexual categories are products of culture. They actually create social reality, rather than simply reflect on it.

Gender theory is concerned with gender relationships and other categories of gender as manifested in male literary works. The main focus of the study is gender-specific problems of authorship and literary gender-specific reading and reception behaviours of readers. Narrative approaches, taking account of gender perceptions and the interdependence of literary canon-formation of genre and gender, are also focused on.

2.5 Gender as theoretical criticism

The concept of gender makes it possible to view practices that are subjective to females as being not solely female issues, but as concerns rooted deeply in the social relations between men and women. The term gender has given gender scholars, as well as feminist social engineers concerned with development theories and practices, an essential tool to analyze those relations and to assist in formulating policies to improve women’s oppressive situations in many life situations.

According to McKinnon, in Treichler (1985:128), gender can be described as that literary approach to the development of gender which is based on a clear recognition of the unequal gender relations between females and males in society. These are clearly characters created by unjustified patriarchal practices. The effects of gender-unequal social relations between females and males include also the sexual divisions in labour practices.

According to Anker (1997:31), gender is imposed on almost all social institutions, societal actions, social beliefs and people’s needs, so that it appears in literary works as being completely natural. He further alludes to the fact that societies are deeply inculcated with ideas about gender and those thoughts are so common to people that they are taken for granted, and are accepted as true.
Scholars like Kabeer (1999:367), employ their prerogatives to look beyond what appears to be common sense to find not simply what truth might be behind it, but how it came to be common sense to some communities. It is precisely because gender seems natural, and beliefs about gender inequalities seem to be obvious truth, that people need to step back and examine gender inequality from a new perspective. Many scholars argue that readers of literature identify with characters of their own gender. Therefore, the relative lack of positive portrayal of female characters in literary texts can limit the opportunities for females to identify with their gender and validate their place in society.

The manner in which gender is presented in female literary works impacts on women’s attitudes and perceptions of gender-appropriate behaviour in society. Sexism in literary works can be so insidious that it quietly conditions both sexes to accept it; they observe or read the world, thus reinforcing these gender images. The reinforcement of gender images has predisposed females not to question the existing social relationships.

In isiXhosa drama texts, the moral roles assigned to male characters and female characters are undetermined and different. The families, as agents of socialization, assign different status, values and roles to girls and boys. Some gender scholars, ED. Hester Eisenstein and Alice Jardine, believe that discrimination against women and girls starts before birth with parental attitudes and that this can be further extended to literary text attitudes that promote a preference for sons over daughters.

According to Oxfam (1995:19), young girls and boys should be afforded equal opportunities to grow and to develop to their full potential in their productive and reproductive roles. There must be concerted efforts to promote literary texts where girls and boys grow and work together as equal partners for sustainable development and peace.
Gender stereotypical roles are constraining to both genders. Females are trapped in passive and submissive roles. Males are rarely described as people demonstrating emotions of sadness or fear, and having hobbies or occupations that are not stereotypically male, and in roles where they aren’t competing or meeting high expectations. It is not easy to check the imbalances of gender inequalities that are so central and deep-rooted to people’s understanding of themselves and of the world that surrounds them.

It can be extremely difficult to pull back and examine this issue from new perspectives; it is precisely the fact that gender inequalities seem self-evident, which makes the study of gender inequalities in literature so interesting.

This research attempts to bring a challenge to uncover the process of construction that has created what people have so long thought of as natural and inexorable, and to study gender, not as a given fact of life, but as an accomplishment; not simply as a cause, but rather as an effect. The failure to recognize this challenge is manifested, not only in the isiXhosa drama texts, but in many other academic works on language and gender. As a result, some gender researchers have done much to rectify and support existing beliefs in order to promote more effective and informed thinking about gender roles in literary texts.

In the presence of many social activities, females are forced to withdraw into the background, not daring to enter into conversations or even to remain nearby. At parties females’ roles are to prepare food, and sometimes to enter the dining room merely to serve the guests.

Keddie (1996:116–117) claims that gender appears in many different forms in social relations. Firstly, it appears as a widespread system of dichotomous meanings that assign femininity and masculinity to objects and processes that have no literal connection to any human biological differences. Secondly, gender
appears as an important element in individual identities. Thirdly, it appears as a component of the general social structure as a whole.

At present, isiXhosa literary texts written by males are largely characterized by gross inequalities and unfairness. Although females are socially integrated into the process of development, this goes unnoticed. Despite of the involvement of females, they have remained onlookers, as they are essentially excluded from any decision-making processes in their families and communities. This shows that the role of culture becomes a crucial question in relation to females. They have continued to uphold cultural values, but their position, however, has been weakened by the way cultural forces have been turned against them. Gender oppression has been given a cultural dress. Men have made use of cultural beliefs in order to subject females who still work within the cultural patriarchal framework.

In isiXhosa literary works female characters occupy culturally disadvantaged positions, possess low self-esteem and lack confidence. Social and cultural traditions and practices should be reformed towards a common civil code that upholds the dignity of females as equal partners with males in the family, including the removal of any gender bias in matters of marital status.

Keddie (1996:20) has alludes to the fact that the legal position of women of today has greatly improved when compared with what it was 100 years ago, particularly within marriage, where the husband has lost his proprietary rights over his wife’s person and property. He has become liable to proceedings for divorce and the custody of children. He must leave his deserted wife undisturbed in the matrimonial home and may not exercise the Common Law right of reasonable chastisement which is now grounds for divorce. Instead the emancipation of married women has led to the creation of a new legal personality: “the married man”.
Females see a number of obstacles to their participation in decision-making structures within the community and family. These are linked most crucially to their lack of information and lack of confidence which has prevented them from participating at meetings and limited them to their time-consuming domestic work. The roles of women in the house automatically exclude them from any other community duties.

Eckert and McConnell-Ginet (2003:15-21) believe that the force of gender categories makes it impossible for people to move through others’ lives in a non-gender-specific way, and it is impossible not to behave in a way that brings out gender behaviour in others. At the same time, the maintenance of gender categories depends on their reinforcement in daily behaviour in the portrayal of females, either in social activities or literary works. They further claim that males and females could not persist in structurally important social categories if people did not perform enough gendered and gendering behaviour: each distinct group of people did not continue to act like women or like men. In other words, the gender order and the social categories of male and female on which it rests, exists by virtue of their ongoing social practice.

Gender bias exists in the literary works and illustrations of a large number of works written by males. This bias can be seen in the extent to which a gender is represented as the primary character in literary works and how gender is depicted. Many researchers, such as David Buchbinder study on analyzing female characters in literature have found that literary works are dominated by male writers. In most of these, female characters are portrayed or reflect the stereotypes of their traditional masculine and feminine roles.

Although society continues to move further and further away from a gender dichotomy, literature written by male writers must also recognize the effect of negative depiction of female characters in their literary works. They depict female characters who are portrayed as being less competent than male characters.
They are also judged according to gender. Where females are expected to be subservient and slave-like and to play a role of dependence on men. Feminists do not conform with the above idea. Equality is their slogan.

2.6 The development of the feminist theory

The Feminist criticism theory developed in the 19th century when prominent African-American women like Cooper (1892:149) challenged the conventions and movements of their era to speak publicly against gender imbalances and in support of women’s rights. Some of these African women did not regard themselves as feminists. However, their beliefs and activism ignited a tradition of the anti-sexism movement and thought which now defines Black American Feminism. Many Black American women were inspired by these ideas and have continued over the years to work towards the eradication of gender inequality, among other systems of oppression, which have historically subjugated women.

From the 19th century the women’s rights movement, continuing through the black and women’s movements of the 1960s and the 1970s up to today’s contemporary Black feminist activities, Black American women have sought to have a voice in two centuries of the liberation struggle. Black American feminists articulated the complexity of Black women’s demands for social equality as understood in the desire for a compatible and progressive social justice. This would be based on the historical and ongoing struggle against gender, where women have traditionally experienced oppression. This oppression has existed at home, in their communities, in literary works and moreover, within the dominant culture as a whole.

According to McDowell (1995:56-58), Black feminist criticism is an approach to literature that is informed not only by gender, but also by cultural attitudes. She further says that Black feminist criticism is made by Black feminist critics who have analyzed the works of Black female writers from a feminist perspective.
Smith (1977:45) in her essay, *Towards a Black Feminist Criticism*, outlines the desire for the Black feminist critical project of the future. In this historic and frequently anthologized statement she further declares that Black feminist criticism should be born out of a political consciousness and should include an embodiment of the realization that the politics of sex, as well as the politics of race and class, are crucially interlocking factors in the works of Black women writers.

Smith’s assertion that Black women’s experiences must be comprehended simultaneously in sexual, class and racial terms is perhaps the single most important principle or emphasis of the Black feminist criticism, even if it is not always reflected in practice. She further believes that this principle offers an escape from the critical tendency to homogenize Black women and that it essentialises them, for it does not permit females to dissociate the category of Black women from varied sets of complex social and material realities.

Early Black feminist critics attempted to formulate a methodology that would emerge organically from the work itself. They proceeded with a healthy skepticism about outside critical approaches and assumed a healthy separatist and chauvinist posture. Smith (1977:66-68) recommends that Black feminist critics should first look at the precedents and insights in interpretation within the work of other Black females. She urges Black women to write out of their own identity and not to graft the ideas of male literary thoughts upon the precious materials of Black women’s arts. Her idea implies that the common view of the Black female identity as unitary is most essential, giving as it does, the paramount importance of the critical views of the Black feminist approach.

The goals of feminists can be seen as an attempt to improve the quality of life of women by promoting unbiased literary texts in which they can thrive equally with men without prejudice. It seems as if feminists have explored many facets of the
social challenges and have come to divergent opinions on how to achieve their targets.

According to Acholonu (1995:21-38) it is still necessary to examine the idea of “motherism” which is ambitiously conceived to serve as the alternative term to “feminism”, as the sub-title of the book suggested. The book is rooted in social anthropology and aims at bringing out a concept that will derive its force from the core values informing the African way of life. Acholonu (1995:39-41) further dismisses the terms “patriarchy” and “matriarchy”. She considers them to be Eurocentric and opts for patrifocality and matrifocality. To her, men and women are complementary opposites in the traditional African society, such that no gender dominates the totality of the social life of people. She feels that men are dominant in many spheres of life, including literature, while women have the upper hand in spiritual and metaphysical segments. Economic power is the source of social influence in society and any person wielding it can command a lot of respect. Such a person is not restricted to any gender.

It is interesting to understand why some Black feminists feel the presence of bias against their literary works in the literary world which is so threatening to their literature. Feminists want a better world and a society that is morally, socially and intellectually viable. The patriarchal system does not conform to the above need. Acholonu (1995:84) states that:

Patriarchy, the system that places men at the top of the social and political ladder, seems to be an inappropriate term for describing the organization of the social systems of the African peoples. This is because several African societies reflect systems with ranging degrees of dual-sex hierarchies in which men and women exist in parallel and complementary positions and roles within the society.
The above quotation indicates that, within the social system of the African people, men and women are not seen as rivals but people who can work together in achieving societal goals.

Acholonu (1995:85) launches attacks on various advocates of feminism. She sees European radical feminists as over-individualistic: “This excessive individualism, among radical feministics”, she asserts, “has in some cases given rise to an extreme radical lesbian feminism bordering on masochism” Acholonu (1995:88) further says Buchi Emecheta, Molara Ogundipe-Leslie and Ama Ata Aidoo have misunderstood feminism to be synonymous with violent confrontation, militancy and aggression.

2.7 Feminism as theoretical criticism

Feminist literary theory is a complex and dynamic area of study that draws from a wide range of critical theories, including psychoanalysis, gender and anthropology. Feminist theory is the extension of feminism into theoretical ground. It encompasses work done in a broad variety of disciplines. Its main aim as feminist literary theory is to understand the position of females and gender conflict as a feature in literary works written by male writers.

According to McDowell (1995:134), the primary objective of feminist literary theory is to evaluate how the gender quotient affects all phases of human existence. Unlike the feminist movement, feminist literary theory not only wants to change the social stratum, but also aspires to invent new substitute models of reading and writing and tries to determine the reasons behind the condition of women in the contemporary world. The basic concern of the feminist is to secure equal social rights for females and to do away with any disparities based on sex.

Feminism is based mainly on equality rights for females and seeks to assist them in finding an equal standing in their communities. Feminist theory encourages
females to raise their voices together and fight for their rights to get rid of the age-old stigma of female characters being portrayed as inferior in male literary works.

It further outlines the campaigns at all levels, addressing various issues, the most important of which is the literary works which have taken a prominent part in shaping perceptions about female characters in literature. In traditional literature females are portrayed as people who have made little contribution to the literary works. They are portrayed as narrators of tales and who sing songs to their grandchildren in their family gatherings. At the same time, they are excellent and dramatic storytellers who are appreciated by their families and their communities.

Females are also marginalized within traditional literature where women are not expected to perform the traditional oral poetry which is instead meant to be performed by males and is regarded as the most important genre in the African community. Finnegans (1976:98) concurs with these perceptions on literature distinction that some genres are specific preserves for men, like poetry, and others for females, like tales. However there are variations in the specification of poetry, especially lullabies, that are typically made by females as their literature specialization.

Finnegan (1976:99) further believes that lullabies are used to put a child to sleep. These enumerate a child’s personal beauties and charms while, at the same time, prophesying a child’s glorious future, but they can also be used to complain about the mother’s weariness and hard lot, or the father’s absence. These females are teaching young children social and traditional customs, such as family duties, social position, and gender role. This is emphasized as the key to building sound relationships within the family.

As a consequence of marginalising females from certain aspects of oral literature, most African literary scholars’ works have rather paid attention to male
oral artists. This tendency of researchers leads to the deprivation and marginalization of females from playing any pivotal role in oral literary works. Instead females are portrayed as people who employ other strategies when narrating stories, such as singing, accompanied by comments publicly on social issues that affect their lives. According to Owomoyela, (1993:313):

By singing about their familiar problems, the women construct and reconstruct their personal histories, and reflect on the values and attitudes of their society.

Females have employed literature as a literary arts form to express their family pains, community problems and their social experiences. This concurs with the opinion of Owomoyela, (1993:64) who maintains that women sing songs about their social problems or to ridicule men and to express their feelings and indicate their understanding of gender discrimination. This is done by examining the traditional arts, by verbal performances and the contents of songs sung by these females of the African communities within social contexts. These songs shed light on the specific identity of the traditional songs of Africans and intermingle with their cultural superstitions. These further show that songs have remained part of the oral patrimony and have been sung by females during various cultural festivals and cultural ceremonies.

Finnegan (1976:101-103) believes that through the singing of resistance songs, female singers confront many aspects of cultural life, ranging from low literacy rates amongst females, challenges facing them and their discontent with witchcraft in their communities. Yet these songs are not inserted into the fabric of the daily life without contestation or disruption, nor do they unanimously achieve their goals.

Females sing them as a strategy for empowerment, specifically to contest and breach the structures of social inequality. To some extent they have indeed
succeeded in relaying their message of pain, but they are still often relegated to a subordinate social status. Many are engaging the challenges of social unification and mobilization through singing songs that promote social solidarity.

While generally not being afforded the same access to other mechanisms of social change as do men. African females have longstanding discourses and dialogues through alternative strategies, cutting through the hegemony of the written word and patriarchal cultural discourse with singing.

Blain (1983:47) concurs that all feminist movements were against females living in an age characterized by gender inequalities in literary works written by male counterparts, where female characters are expected to remain subservient to male characters, who are portrayed as being superior to them.

In these male literary texts female occupational choices are also portrayed as extremely limited. They are expected to remain at home, caring for their children and performing the household chores. Many scholars, like Daiches (1942:15), agree that, in a time of escalating gender polarization, female characters are expected to adhere to a rigidly defined sphere of their domestic and moral duties. They have increasingly resisted this in their attempts to eradicate patriarchal views in literary texts.

The feminist movement has arguably influenced females in a more positive way, defining them as being the more morally refined of the two sexes, and therefore the guardian of morality and social cohesion. Through their positive portrayal of female images in such literary works, females are able to demand access to public places long denied to them, by publicly emphasizing and asserting the need for, and benefits of, a more civilized influence in literary works. Bennett (1929:67) believes that societal transformations, that are largely biased and responsible for the female's status being defined in terms of domesticity and morality, have also worked to provoke gender consciousness and reform, as the
roles assigned to females become increasingly at odds with social realities. Through the literature, females are often portrayed in the conflicting expectations imposed on them by literary works, culture and society.

Feminist movements, along with other women writers, have expressed the sentiments of countless females who are unable to speak, and have brought attention and support to their concerns. Modern feminist critical analyses often pay attention to the methods employed by females to advance their causes, while still maintaining their delicate balance of propriety and feminine appeal by not threatening their male counterparts.

Feminism has gradually become more far-ranging and subtle in its attack on the male-dominated literary world. According to Berkman (2005:83), feminist critics believe that injustice still needs to be corrected in literary works written by males about what is equally more down-to-earth, tolerant and a compassionate view of fellow human beings.

Critics, being mostly male, have not generally concerned themselves with gender issues. Most of the prominent or world’s great literary works have been written by males and it is very difficult to imagine that females really have it in them to write at the highest level.

Woolf (1932:8) herself refutes this, though her mental breakdown was perhaps brought on by the strain of balancing male self-realization with female abnegation. But in her essay “Professions for Women”, Woolf (1932:10-15) complains that women’s social obligations can hinder their writing careers. She believes that their social lives have given them a different social perspective, but females are not fundamentally different from males in their capabilities, psychological needs and outlooks.
Some literary scholars seriously disagree and argue that female writings express a distinctive female consciousness which is more discursive and conjunctive than their male counterparts. Such consciousness was radically different, and had been adversely treated. De Beauvoir (1953-1989) in *The Second Sex*, documents various ways that “legislators, priests, philosophers, scientists and writers had striven to show that the subordinate position of females is willed in the heavens and advantageous on earth”.

Females had been made to feel that they were inferior by nature and, though men paid lip-service to equality, they would resist its actual implementation. Some male writers such as B.B. Mkhonto in *Inzonzobila* might be sympathetic to female issues, but only to females they knew, and to what they felt and wanted.

Nonetheless, feminists had advanced to a much more confrontational attack on male hegemony, advocating a complete overthrow of the bias of male writers in the canon of literature. Some feminist scholars, like Maze (1997:132) and Bowlby (1998:93), argue that females should write with a greater consciousness of their social and cultural issues, which would create a more honest and appropriate style of openness, fragmentation and non-linearity.

Male literary works have an abiding emphasis on the socio-historical and cultural contexts in which African literature has developed. They have perceived how females have assisted in shaping and contributing to traditions and how they are portrayed in literary works written by male writers.

Patriarchal practices in African society and literary works that have portrayed females in a negative light have succeeded in diminishing the public perception of female contributions to the general welfare of society and its genres. Fernald (2006:5) believes that the negative portrayal of females leads to their voicelessness, the co-modification of female gender relations and a question of
the redemption of the motif of marriage as females’ only salvation and gender inequalities in patriarchal texts.

The tale has always been an important genre in the socialization of children and is in fact regarded as females’ prescribed and restrictive social role for women’s work. Doyle (1978:7) argues that traditional patriarchal gender literary bias has resulted in the exclusion of females, preventing them from making an impact on acculturation, as well as broader social issues like female access to public discourse, the representation of females in literature and any full female contribution to the literary world.

Feminist theoretical approach has put more emphasis on character equality in literary texts. These feminists often question the traditional dominant male ideology, patriarchal attitudes and male interpretations of literary works. Feminist scholars vigorously attack male ideas of values by giving critiques to male writers and the minimal role of women writers in the literary world.

2.8 The historical development of the psychoanalytical theory

The psychoanalysis idea was developed in Vienna in the 1890s by one of the most prominent Austrian Physicians, Sigmund Freud and his colleagues. This was devoted to the new idea of the unconscious, along with various techniques for studying the personality and placing more emphasis on human psychological behaviour.

Freud had become sensitized to the existence of mental processes which were not conscious, as a result of his neurological consulting job where he noticed that many aphasic children had no organic cause for their symptoms. During its years of existence psychoanalysis has grown in leaps and bounds from the modest Central European beginnings into a worldwide therapeutic and cultural presence. Freud was one of the most prolific thinkers whose ideas have
shaped the 20th century tremendously, and whose influences seem likely to continue for many generations to come.

Yet psychoanalysis has been characterized by controversy and doubt, both from within its own ranks and even more so from outside the ranks. Psychoanalysis is highly individualized and seeks to show how unconscious factors affect behaviour patterns, relationships, and overall mental health.

Psychoanalysis traces the unconscious factors to their origins, shows how they have evolved and developed over the course of many years, and subsequently assists individuals to overcome the challenges they face in life. In the Three Essays on the Theory of Sexuality (1905:251) Freud emphasizes the central importance of infantile sexuality and the role of bodily experience in the early development of personality which has become of paramount importance as pillars of psychoanalytic thinking.

Freud (1908:146-149) further strongly believed that people are driven by two conflicting central desires: the life drive (libido) and the death instinct in the minds because of their desires and energies that are repressed into the unconscious. According to him these urges, ideas, desires and instincts are fundamentals, but they are repressed because of societal restrictions. He further says people are continuously trying to express these natural drives in various ways; some are often indirectly manifested in order to avoid the reactions of others. He uses dreams as one of the indirect expressions of these wishes.

Freud’s move from seduction theory to the idea of unconscious fantasy has provoked an enormous amount of controversy amongst historical scholars, especially in the light of the contemporary knowledge of the extent of childhood sexual abuse. Freud’s influence as a theoretician remained undiminished to the end of his life. In 1923 he saw the publication of his "structural theory" of an ego, Id and superego in a book entitled The Ego and the Id, as his major revision of
the topographical model. This model had divided the mind into unconscious, preconscious and conscious parts. He proposed instead the structural or tripartite model of the Id, Ego and Superego.

In 1926 he produced a revised theory of anxiety, which he now saw as signalling a threat to the self, rather than being a manifestation of surplus erotic energy or libido.

Jung (1906:156) was a contemporary of Freud’s who became a convert to psychoanalytic theory. Freud was initially enormously impressed by Jung, who followed in his footsteps, and made arrangements for him to be elected president of the psychoanalytic society, which Freud had founded. However, Jung soon began to deviate from orthodox theory, and as this happened, the relationship between Freud and Jung, originally so warm and intimate, became strained and more distant and finally ruptured entirely.

This was quite characteristic of Freud’s relationships with those who disagreed with him. Jung developed his own theory, called analytic psychology. It shared with psychoanalysis an emphasis on personality as a battlefield of unconscious urges with other systems of the personality. However, Jung argued that Freud’s sexually motivated unconscious co-existed with a collective unconscious containing archetypes. He further alluded to the fact that the collective unconscious is the memory residue of the ancestral history, including animal origins.

One of the useful points of comparison between psychoanalytic personality theories is their degree of past versus present and future orientation. Freud’s theory places a heavier emphasis on the past as a determinant of present conflict. Jung (1917:134-136), on the other hand, assigned a much more dominant role to a person’s future aims and goals. He argued that one’s first
attempts to develop certain aspects of one’s personality is a process he called individuation.

Lacan’s (1901-81) literary theories are difficult to grasp, but he extended psychoanalytical thought in many ways. His unconscious was structured like a language, which gives language a key role in the construction of the picture of the world, but also allows the unconscious to enter into that understanding and dissolve essential distinctions between fantasy and reality. To him there are no primordial archetypes of Jung or entities beyond the reach of the language of Freud.

Psychoanalysis is a general theory of individual human behaviour and experience, and it has both contributed to and been enriched by many other disciplines. It seeks to explain the complex relationship between the body and the mind and furthers the understanding of the role emotions play in illness and health.

2.9. Psychoanalysis as theoretical criticism

Since the discovery of psychoanalysis, the field has displayed a powerful set of connections to literature; some literary scholars, Raman Selden and Malcom Bowie, have even discovered mutual fascination between these two disciplines as an academic discipline it has played a major role as a mediator between literature and psychoanalytic theory.

The two domains of psychoanalysis and literature are intertwined and seek to use each other in distinctive ways. Fisher and Greenberg (1977:14) believe that psychoanalysis has occasionally sought to explain literature, but far more often it uses literary texts as sources for analysis. Even literature itself has sometimes sought to exploit psychoanalysis for creative purpose. Theoretically thinking on
fiction and creativity and how it looks at psychoanalysis, has affected ideas about both the reading and interpretation of literary studies.

Freud turned to literature for evidence of his mapping of the unconscious mind and he explained what he found there. He traces the art form from the dream and sees the dream as a way into the unconsciousness. This idea gives impetus to the suggestion that psychoanalysis theory furnishes a basis for the development of art in literary works, since it puts more weight on the fact that almost all art work is the total reflection of a state of mind.

The Oedipus story, which reached Freud through the literary medium of Sophocles's tragedy to become the Oedipus complex, is the best-known phenomenon. Yet the tie between psychoanalysis and imaginative literature will always remain vital and the two disciplines still today interact vibrantly in many of the selected literary works.

Both psychoanalysis and literature enhance the consciousness, expand the emotions, undermine unconsciousness closures, and provoke thought. It is these very qualities that provide their illustrative and explanatory usefulness to each other.

Bateson (in Strelk, 1976:VII) sees this as the process of the literary cycle, where language is used as a form of expression by the writers and as a means of relaying information to the readers of literary works.

It is undoubtedly true that art works and psychoanalysis each draw their information from human beings. As with dreams, it appears that the information that contains the content of a writer's work needs to be interpreted. It shows that interpretation of the unconscious is only possible through the use of literature.
The pathological influences of writers appear in many writings that writers have psychoanalyzed to produce particular characters within their literary works, but it is usually assumed that all such characters are external projections of the writer’s own psyche. One of the most interesting facets of this approach is that it validates the importance of literature, as it builds on literary texts as the key for the decoding process. This common fertile ground between literature and psychoanalysis receives support from Goldstein in Strelka, (1976:260) when he emphasizes the point that:

Psychoanalysis uncovers these terrifying repressions by penetrating defences that the analyst does through a study of the writer’s language. The psychoanalytic critic studies the language of a writer to discover what is beneath the surface of description and speech and to determine what is being defended against.

This quote suggests that the process of analysing literary work through the psychoanalysis theory is a critical endeavour that seeks evidence of unresolved emotions, psychological conflict, guilt, ambivalence, and so forth, within what may be a disunited literary work. The writers’ personalities project their own childhood experiences, family lives and fixations, and these can be traceable within the behaviour of the characters they create in their literary works.

Van Zyl (1990:1) describes the relationship between literature and psychoanalysis as one of a traditional kind which has more productive exchange on the level of contents. Kaplan (1990:30-41) further points out that the early history of exchange displayed two identifiable stages which can be determined by whether psychoanalysis or literature was seen to have the priority.

Jung (1963:122) perceives the human mind as consisting of an unconscious divided into two discrete parts. He strongly believed that the personal
unconscious consisted of those feelings that could not be accessed without therapy and dream work. His universal unconscious is a shared set of images, called archetypes common to all people.

This universal unconscious is expressed in art literature. Jung's (1963:56-57) literary criticism looks for the existence of universal symbols in the individual or to his cultural settings; it focuses specifically on the analysis of archetypes in literature. He believed that the goal of humans was to achieve individuation in the psychology of personality, a state where the conscious is known and integrated into the unconscious. Freud's symbols had been interpreted with a specific cultural set-up, while Jung noted certain dream symbols that possessed the same universal meanings for all men and women. He termed this phenomenon “the collective unconscious”, while he regarded dreams as personal experiences that often touched on universal themes and symbols. These symbols were believed to occur in every culture throughout history. Jung (1963:298) saw that psychological research on the formation of works of art had to be separated from the various factors that made a person artistically more creative. To him “the poem” had some obvious imagery of the collective unconscious, but more useful was an analysis in terms of animus-anima archetypes and of the mechanisms of repression and transference.

Unlike Freud, Jung was more concerned with the creative process and shielded artworks from the searching eye of psychoanalysis. He alluded to the fact that, in all the works of art, people have to deal with complicated psychic activities as a product that is apparently intentional and consciously more structured. Jung further suggested that, in the case of the artist, this must deal with the psychic apparatus itself. Although these two understandings are closely related and even inter-dependent, neither of them can yield the explanations that are sought by the other.
Jungian literature contains 32 essays by the greatest archetypal critics. These are an excellent introduction to the possibilities of seeing literature in new ways, as it is directly related to the individual psyche. This view of literature and its human functions reminds one of literature’s roots in mythology and, before that, in religion itself.

From the 1950s to the 1980s, Lacan’s influence has been remarkable, especially in post-structuralist literary criticism and art history. He achieved this success by using Freud’s *The Interpretation of Dreams* for the roots of his theory that the unconscious is structured like language. His structural psychoanalysis put more emphasis on language as being the main centre of psychoanalysis.

Lacan sees the texts as possessing linguistic structure each of which has its own psyche. His applications of psychoanalytic theory to the arts have focused mostly on the psychology of individuals and on the works of art and their characters, but not the texts. It is therefore not surprising to discover that his theory has much in common with the linguistic theories of other prolific philosophers, such as Ferdinand de Saussure.

Lacan provides the simplest aspects of psychoanalysis, so much so that, according to him, literature and psychoanalysis are merely two different types of discourse with the same purpose, which is to expose the discursive dimension of knowledge, power and social relations as the locus of determinations of the emotional life.

Lacan’s theory of language serves as the cornerstone of human subjectivity which is caught within a system of signification. He further believed that the purpose that the mechanism of significance serves, in both the terminology of the analyst and the literary texts themselves, links to the function of both the analyst and the critic in an unending and ultimately unfulfilling search for meaning.
For Lacan subjectivity is firmly rooted in language. He further advocated a rereading of the unconscious as a system based on the relation of the subject to signification. He strongly sees language as a system of signifiers that make a closed order of independence. Lacan (1989:182) constantly emphasizes the alienation between language and reality, which can be seen when language names things and thus creates an alienation that infers that there are gaps, or a ternarity in language. He continues to see language as an entity that can only stand for the real thing.

Wolfreys (1994:67) confirms that Lacan was one of the ground-breaking psychoanalytic analysts. His practical application on a large scale of theories of Lacan to literary texts has not, however, really taken off. There has not been the appearance of Lacanian literary analysis as a major field in the literal world. He introduced the evolutionary new ideas on psychoanalysis compared with other prolific philosophers. This relative neglect of Lacan does not adequately reinforce his importance outside the discipline of psychoanalysis as a key thinker within what is called post-structuralism. Of course, significant post-Lacanian interpretations of particular authors have appeared particularly in those whose writings and lives have seemed to lend themselves to psychoanalytic interpretation, like Virginia Woolf.

Lacanian thinking proved for a while to be a significant force, depending on one’s perspective. However, with the exception of the occasional inclusion of Lacan in a general post-structuralist mode of interpretation, while excluding his ethos, theoretical texts talk about theory rather than demonstrating the use of theory in the interpretation of literary works. This should, however, not necessarily be perceived as a fault, since there is a significant lack of any Lacanian view, to borrow some of Lacan’s own language. This state of affairs may have something to do with his obscurity, particularly in his own written prose. The early suggestive leads for interpretation provided by Lacan are to be found most notably in “Ecrits”; these have not been taken very far. The remaining worrying
question is how best to make his theory of “the mirror” generally applicable to the forms and functions of literary texts. These soon run out of mileage.

Eagleton (1983:158) sees psychoanalysis theory as tool to scrutinizing the personal behaviour of a person and examines the consequences of the socialisation processes of human being. This theory gives an insight into the undesirable effects of tradition and further highlights psychological effects caused by patriarchal perceptions towards females and the denial of their fundamental rights as females. Some names which are given to individuals, as well as to characters, do have a psychological impact in their progression in life.

2.10 The historical development of the onomastic literary theory

In the light of the tendencies in literary works, it is wise to consider one particular aspect of literature which often raises controversy; this is the anthroponym. Nesselroth believes that the study of the names of human beings derived from two words “anthropos” meaning man or mankind or person and “onoma” meaning name. These names may be subdivided into personal names and literary work that includes the names of those personified.

This study also pays attention to the personal naming of characters. According to Frege (1977:130), the primary function of names is to identify, and their meaning is to be found in the objects they signify. Some researchers like Savage M.A. and Skead C.J. believe that names are indifferent to the notion of meaning in general. However, they generally believe that names have connotations which are independent from, and come later than, the act of name-giving. According to Altman-Alvarez (1987:1), the literary theory of onomastics is a more specialized literary criticism in which scholars are concerned with the level of importance of names in drama, poetry, fiction and folklore.
Naming in literary works is sometimes specific. It may be fair to assume that behind most names the author’s intentions lie. Debus (2002:73-90) further believes that proper names in literary work fulfil the functions of identifying, fictionalizing and characterizing roles. They can also play a pivotal role in a descriptive role, revealing some aspects of a given literary character’s personality traits or appearance.

2.11 Onomastics as literary theory

Onomastic literary theory is very significant for the writers of literary works. This literary theory plays a pivotal role in naming the characters portrayed by writers. The meaning of the names of the characters in literature is very important, because names give a certain implication of the roles played out in literature. The name provides the meaning of the expected role application and is significant for the analysis of the behaviour of the characters.

According Nuessel (1992:1), proper names are connotative, because they denote the individuals who are so named, but they do not depict or imply attributes as actually belonging to the person. Pulgram (1954:34) concurs with Nuessel, who maintains that names connote nothing and, strictly speaking, have no meaning.

The term onomastics denotes the name of the persons. It is very important to show the relationship between names and folklore. Names and folklore are significant in this research, because they depict the cultural background of the society in which they are employed.

Moleleki (1988:15), in his dissertation, observes that writers grow within their tradition and further believes that they learn their skills and their craft within that culture. Therefore, one sees their reflection in certain aspects of that culture and in their writings too.
These traditional values of a society should not be taken for granted, because they cast light on the background of the names used by any particular community. The importance of choosing fitting names in literary work cannot be overemphasized, because the names of characters are related to the common living situations in which they find themselves trapped. This gives a clear indication that, to a large extent, art exposes the writer’s experiences and opinions about social matters in their society. According to Richards (in Altman-Alvarez, 1987:12), “Badness in literature” is observed by looking at how names comment upon moral values in literary works. This kind of exposure experienced by literary writers plays an enormous role in influencing their writings.

Readers tend to identify characters by the names given to them. Names play a central and important role and those given to characters are important to the writers. This is a semiotic sign that plays a crucial role in the overall linguistic structure of literary works or their significance.

Decoding the names therefore becomes an important critical exercise in as far as it helps the reader in his deciphering of the text in which the names appear. There is an interest among critics in the names of characters that tends to go beyond the narrow limits and confines of seeing them as mere tags that distinguish one fictional character from another in the broader figurative import and implication of those names. These characters’ names are used as expressions of experience, ethos, values, culture and attitudes of varying shades.

Nesselroth (1996:133) believes that it is not surprising that theorists pay so much attention to naming in fiction, since proper names are the nodal points through which actions and descriptions are interconnected.
Characters’ names, as this study will show, can be used artistically to achieve a number of goals, like encoding a central trait in a particular character’s signification, embracing crucial thematic motifs, ideological toning and even showing the particular writer’s point of view. Some of these qualities are easily lost in the translation; something that captures the attention of readers can be too idiomatic or subtle to translate into another language and still convey what the writer intended.

In Mkonto’s *Inzonzobila* there is clear notice of a polarization of the two main characters, Zinzo and Ndlangisa, the fair one and the nasty one. This element of polarization of characters is one of the most striking markers of characterization in isiXhosa creative writings. It is also a key device in the moral exemplar motif seen in the majority of isiXhosa drama works. It is worth noticing that a good number of isiXhosa creative writers have actually engaged in the application of onomastic theory in their literature.

One of the primary premises of this section is the realization that some characters’ names, besides individualizing the characters, have important pragmatic allusions and a symbolic significance that must be seen in the perspective of the overall structure of a particular literary work. Implicit in this is the sense theory of the proper names that sees a name as a handle that describes the object it names. This is in contradiction to nonsense theory that argues that names represent or stand for objects or referents and nothing more.

The central idea in this study is that names in isiXhosa literature are not just merely deictic, but rather have specific meanings that integrate characters into their fictional life, and that can also imprison them there. According to Bal (1984:73), the analysis of names as expressions of experience, attitude and senses, is one of the ways used in linguistic analysis with social and ideological considerations predominately at various points.
One name might be interpreted in a number of ways, since the semantic possibilities are varied. In the case of Inene Nasi IsiBhozo, it is possible to see the name as encoding the traits of a fighting spirit, rebellious against culture, questioning and being ready to take up arms like Masukude. One of the most basic qualities about any name is the relationship with a particular culture. This can be termed the social contextualisation of naming.

The choice of names reveals the ethnic beliefs of a certain community which is in line with their social setting. Most African cultures attach great significance to names. The writer’s choice of name and attitude seems to bring the theme of defiance or fighting unjust cultural systems to the fore. This is a central theme in much of the literature. Consider, for example, that the villain in the story, the heroic mother, has a name that invites such a reaction.

These creative writers used names which placed a character within a specific and identifiable cultural setting. This is a fact that constitutes an important structural element in achieving the fictional verisimilitude of the work. In certain cases, like in the drama uDike noCikizwa, a character like Cikizwa is given a name that reflects a certain physical feature in her. Particular nuances or something about a character’s birth can also be reflected.

Literature always belongs to the readers from the community, and those readers should be able to analyse the names attached to particular characters. Altman-Alvarez (1987:11), which reveals the following statement:

Names in literature frequently demand to be considered as if they were complete little poems, with all the richness that is implied. We must see in each name all of a poem’s cerebral phosphorescence, for in names writers of skill pack many connotations and “tell all the truth”, but tell it with a slant. They produce little puzzles for the critic by indirective and must find out direction.
The above statement suggests that names should not be taken for granted, because in each is embedded a meaning which needs to unfold. This also indicates that writers employ naming techniques to hide or reveal their intentions. This illustrates the view that names should be seen as a jigsaw puzzle that requires to be assembled in order to furnish a direction. This suggestion is augmented by the view of Altman-Alvarez, (1987:11) which reveals the following truth:

> When studying names in literature we are in fact seeking both the "plot of the message" and the poet or the maker who performs "high above the heads of the audience".

The above phrase shows that readers should not take the names of characters as they surface in literary texts, but should dig more deeply to get to the actual meaning of the name. Readers should look out for any hidden meanings in naming.

The application of literary onomastic theory provides a golden opportunity to reveal the powerful character traits carried by characters in their names, and how the naming of female characters is associated with the submissiveness and passive roles that are assigned to them.

2.12 Conclusion

Theories such as womanism, gender, feminism, psychoanalysis and onomastics, are used as literary theories that assist readers in understanding literature. The womanism theory has showed that women have been excluded from powerful social structures and been silenced in most family issues, while they are still facing the ongoing battle against patriarchy. Through the use of literary works, females should be able to communicate their social pains to the world. Gender
roles, as a framework, focus on describing females’ and males’ roles and their relative access to, and control over, resources.

Feminism theory is used as a mechanism for equal opportunities, freedom and dignity for all females to choose what they want from life. Psychoanalysis is the theory that deals with the unconscious, symbolic order and stresses the psychological aspects of the different characters. Naming techniques play a pivotal role in naming people, into which some project the behaviour or the social expectations of persons within the family.
CHAPTER THREE

FEMALE CHARACTERS PORTRAYED AS VICTIMS

3.1 Introduction

This chapter is about the general perceptions regarding female characters as portrayed negatively in many of the literary texts written by males. This chapter seeks to examine the cultural perceptions of African male writers towards females and the gender discrimination in their literary texts.

This study also looks at the extremely difficult situations experienced by female characters in these texts. The research further attempts to open the eyes of females and to assist them to see the unfair portrayal of them in these writings. There is an indirect threat under which females are living due to the portrayal of the lower status of female characters in these literary works.

Female characters in male literary drama texts represent a means of economic gain through marital arrangements and deceit. Miller (1991:467) argued that females are seen to be in a state of bondage; maternity is a period of suffering and anguish and, in silent and subservient slavishness and helplessness, they are to play the role of a dependent bounty for all their material wants. And for all the information they might desire on vital questions of the hour, they are commanded to ask their husbands at home.

According to Snyman and Slabbert (1992:227), victimization takes place in many forms. It can be direct and clearly interpreted as such, and the perpetrator is sometimes so subtle that only the victim perceives it as such. In some cases the victim can be socialized to accept certain circumstances or condone certain behaviour which can only be interpreted as victimization.

Snyman and Slabbert (1992:229) both further endorse the fact that females fall victim to males because of men’s traditional role and their status in society.
3.2 Female characters as victims of arranged marriages in Mmango’s uDike noCikizwa.

Arranged marriage is one of the social aspects that clearly explains the status of women in literature written by male writers. These texts depict male writers as discriminators against female characters who use this custom to validate their arguments that marriage in African communities is an arranged relationship and that females should accept this custom and stop playing the victim.

In literary texts a marriage is considered to have been arranged because this match originates with someone other than their future spouses. Ebel (1982:86) sees the patriarchal system, as it is commonly found in literary works written by men, where female characters are regarded as peripheral. Females are under the authority of their fathers or guardians, and later that of their husbands when they get married.

In this literature female characters often marry spouses chosen for them by third parties, such as the father of the girl involved or relatives of the prospective couple. There are wide differences across the different African cultures regarding the extent to which the prospective bride herself has any say in the person she will marry.

In these isiXhosa selected texts female characters’ sentiments are not taken into consideration when these arranged marriages are planned. The key to this chapter is to show the manifestation of female characters as cultural victims who are oppressed through marriage institutions in those literary works written by males. An example of this female plight can be drawn from a selected sample of isiXhosa drama. Reference is also made to other isiXhosa drama works to unveil that it is not only specific individual male dramatists who have made a negative portrayal of the female character.
The enslaving practice of arranged marriages in literary works is questioned by uNomatiletile to her brother Sando who is the father of Cikizwa had a heated argument. Like other female characters, Nomatiletile is angry about the brutality and the spiritual and emotional abuse that occurs to her brother's daughter uCikizwa.

Nomatiletile is furiously confronted her brother [Sando] about Cikizwa's forced marriage.

UNomatiletile:  *Le yokwendisela umtwana emzini engafuni?*  
(This thing marrying a child in the home she goes not want?)

USando:  *Engafuni? Xa esazi ntoni ke yena?*  
(She doesn't want it? What does she know?)

UNomatiletile:  *Uyazi ke ukuba nanku engafuni.*  
(She knows because she does not want it.)  
(Mmango, 1983:6)

The above quotation conveys the cultural practice constructed by traditional patriarchal literary texts where female characters are treated as non-human beings, persons who can not voice an opinion.

Gilman (1986) sees this victimization of females as being associated with the idea that males and females go through life as different sexes. This kind of attitude demonstrates that female characters are represented as lacking in intelligence, continually objectified and brutalized in their communities.

Showalter (1985) strongly believes that such cultural victimization of females in male writings projects the image of a societal mindset and, as time goes on, it
becomes very difficult to change. Male writers almost always shape their female characters to serve a specific purpose. This is in line with the unfair gender practices that one comes across, particularly with male writers, as can be seen in *uDike noCikizwa*.

It seems as if Cikizwa is a slave who cannot say what she does not like. Marshall, in Jarrett-Macauley, (1966:10) says, “Since slavery, the stereotyping of females, as being sexually denigrated, has been instrumental to their subordination”. Cikizwa becomes subordinated to her father’s cultural view. Nomatiletile attacks her brother and further confronts him on his action of taking away Cikiswa’s freedom of choosing what she wants to do:

**UNomatiletile:**

*Umenza ikhoboka xa angamvumeliyo ukuba acinge, aqiqe, aqonde njengokuba esitsho.*

(You make her a slave by not allowing her to think; understand as she says.)

(Mmango, 1983:6)

The above phrase shows that Cikizwa is treated as a slave, because she is not allowed to make her own choices or decisions or even give a thought or offer advice on her own arranged marriage.

What is expected from her is to accept that she is not permitted to make any suggestions or choices. According to Saller (1994), females should not be allowed to influence their father’s decision on the issue of marriage. This gives the upper hand to men to negotiate their marriages without consulting the woman involved. The prospective husband, in some cases, has often played along and worked together with the father and they know each other well. His feelings are taken into account when the match is being made, contrary to the case of the female.
The bias portrays Mjongwa as a good young man who listens to his adults’ advice, while Cikizwa is portrayed as a female character who does not obey her parents. Aubrey (1991:49) observed the traditional stereotypes of arranged marriages among the African communities, where the female has absolutely no right to veto over a match made on her behalf.

In most African literature female characters are expected to marry the man of their father’s choice, as shown in uDike noCikizwa, where Cikizwa is expected to marry uMjongwa who is her father’s choice. This literary work portrays Cikizwa as a female character who cannot object or disagree with this traditional practice of arranged marriages, but can only state her point of view. Ultimately she is obliged to accept her father’s proposal.

Female characters’ views in male writings are not considered, and there is no respect for their dreams or ambitions. This show that marriage is not the decision of those who will participate in this commitment, but it is rather a decision forced on them by their fathers. The female who is going to be married does not know the consequences of this commitment. Mjongwa, as male character, also shows his moral commitments. He is portrayed as a male of good character who obeys his parent’s choice and respects his cultural values by saying the following:

UMjongwa:

_Ewe, eyakho eyakhiwa ngothando ayinakuma kakuhle, kodwa le yakhiwe ngemvano nangemvumelwano yabazali iza kuma._

(Yes, yours which built on love, it cannot stand properly, but this one that is built on agreement and the understanding of the parents is going to stand.)

(Mmango, 1983:23)
The above statement shows how biased the writer is when he portrays Mjongwa as a good character who understands the cultural values and customs of his society. Mjongwa shows confidence in the adults and trusts them, as people who can build a good foundation for his marriage.

Cikizwa tries to explain her feelings about this arranged marriage, but her father is adamant that he wants her to marry the man of his choice. She writes a letter to Dike, her lover, that she cannot marry him and informed him about her feelings on the unfairness of a marriage arranged by her father. In her letter, she expresses her feelings about the unfairness of the traditional custom towards females which denies females’ freedom of choice and expression.

UCikizwa:

Dike wam

Kubi ukuphila kweli lizwe – ilizwe lamasiko, lezithethe nemithetho, izinto ezithi unenyama negazi nengqondo nje zikwenze ufane nesigodo somthi olinde ukubaswa.

Ndisitsho nje ndiva intlungu yokuthobela uMthetho katata, uMthetho ondiphanga bonke ubuntu bam, undenze ndibe yigusha efuyiweyo, uMthetho onqongqo katata undinyanzela ukuba manditshate no Mjongwa Nqike, umfana wase Mahlungulu.

Onke amalinge am okuzama ukubonisa utata ukuba andifuni kutshata nalo mfana awe phantsi, ndibhala nje igama liyaphindwa ngeCawa ngomhla wesi – 6 apha kuDisemba.
Ndithi mandikwazise le nto, sithandwa, kuba apha emhlabeni andazi bomi bumnandi njengobabathanda-nayo, ndaye andiboni mfana ndingafa naye ngaphandle kwakho Dike wam.
Owakho Wenene

UCikizwa

My dear Dike

It is hard to live in this world of customs, the traditions and laws, things that though you are made of flesh, blood and brains make you look like a tree-stump waiting to be hit by a fire.

I am saying this because I am heartbroken at having to obey my father’s law – a law which robs me of all my being, and make me like a sheep in a fold. My father’s law forces me to marry Mjongwa Ngqike, a young man of Mahlungulu.

All my attempts in trying to show my father that I do not want to marry this young man have been in vain. As I am writing, the bans are going to be called a second time on Sunday, the 6th of December.

I thought it best to let you know, my love, because in this world I know of no sweeter life than that of two people who love each other, and I see no other man with whom I can live, but would rather die, if I cannot have you, my loving Dike.

Yours lovingly

Cikizwa

(Mmango, 1983: 1-2)
This extract shows how Cikizwa feels about the unfairness of males, the laws against females and the cultural victimization of females. She expresses her feelings about attitudes of her society which affect females severely. Her own father is forcing her to marry Mjongwa.

The letter reveals her state of mind and how she feels about the traditions of her society towards females in a male’s world. It also indicates the strong bond between her and the choice of her own lover.

Sando intercepts a reply to Cikizwa’s letter from her boyfriend and he acts according to the information he has received from the letter. Cikizwa’s father decides to kill Dike, whom he thinks is the stumbling block to his plan of proceeding with the arranged marriage of Mjongwa and his daughter.

Cikizwa receives the news that her boyfriend has been killed and she decides to take her own life as well. Before she takes her life, she expresses her disappointment about the unfair treatment that women get in not being able to make their own personal choices.

Cikizwa is relegated to a non-human being who has no rights, merely because she happens to be a female. Cikizwa is portrayed in the literary text as being the culprit who acts against her father’s idea of the arranged marriage.

It is this attitude of the love relationship that motivates Cikizwa’s inspiration and the will-power to oppose her father’s idea. She is spiritually brutalized by her father’s victimization of her because of what she believes. Every female character should be portrayed as a person who has choices in matters which affect them, especially when choosing a spouse.

Cikizwa’s emotional pain is a consequence of the negative cultural attitude towards females. Her father’s determination to indulge his traditional right as the
head of the family and to choose a partner for his daughter is the issue here. The writer has portrayed Cikizwa as being clearly Eurocentric in her mindset.

It is observed in isiXhosa selected texts that in the case of arranged marriages that such traditional gender discrimination has caused immeasurable pain between fathers and their daughters. Forced marriages leave these women with emotional and psychological scars that may even lead to females committing suicide.

Nojoyini indicates that Cikizwa is suffering from anxiety and depressed and this may lead her to suffer from insomnia and lost of appetite. This stress can be severe enough to lead to suicide.

UNojoyini:

UCikizwa akonwabanga, kunjalonje iyamdla le nto,
usuke waphela isiqu ngoku!
(Cikizwa is not happy; and this thing is eating her; she is now losing weight!)

(Mmango, 1992: 5)

This quotation reveals that she is suffering from endogenous depression. This is a depression which comes from within and has clearly been caused by her environment. She is unhappy because her father has treated her as an object of material or as a symbol of power and status in his community.

Reber (1985:471) stresses that a psycho-neurosis is nearly always caused by unconscious conflicts which evoke anxiety. This may lead Cikizwa to experience depression which manifests itself as sadness, irritable moods, or grief which intern may lead to weight loss. This literary work depicts female characters that are coerced into acquiescence and a perpetual state of subservience to their male relatives.
In *uDike noCikizwa* and *Inene Nasi IsiBhozo*, it shows that under male supremacy a female’s status depend greatly on the male’s approval. In African literature written by males, female characters do not have a say in such matters as arranged marriages. As in the case of Cikizwa, female characters who refuse are likely to be forced by their relatives in an attempt to persuade them to relent.

The literary texts under consideration indicate that the socio-economic status of families and such cultural depiction play a major role in the consummation of arranged marriages, as well as in the denial of female characters the right to accept the man of their own choice. A wealthy family, for example, would forbid their daughters to marry a person from a poor family background. Stichter and Hay (1995:109) have noticed that:

> In other situations, the man or his family was deemed unsuitable because they were poor, or they had come from a group with a low social standing, or they had a reputation of witchcraft, infertility or other problems. Sometimes it was her family that objected; sometimes the woman herself decided against the marriage.

It is clearly evident from the above quotation that there are various cultural reasons, such as poverty, witchcraft or infertility which are used as reasons for preventing female characters from choosing a spouse. Some writers such as Odetola (1983:3) show that marriage, then, is based on specific social circumstances. Odetola further mentions that in all cultures, endogamy and exogamy are important factors which narrow the range of marital possibilities for individuals. Endogamy (Odetola, 1983:35) is explained as follows:

> In general, there are norms or rules restricting marriage to members of the same group, tribe, village or other social groups. It is used here to refer to the selection of a male
similar to the individual in that they are both members of the same broad social grouping and are influenced by the same general norms. One may want to marry somebody who is similar to oneself in such areas as ethnic background, religion and general social and economic status. Amongst the endogamous factors are propinquity, which refers to proximity and a common race, age, religion, education and occupation.

Endogamy, according to Stichter and Hay (1995), means that economic status plays the major role in choosing the husbands for female characters in literary works. In *uDike noCikizwa*, Sando’s objection to the marriage of Cikizwa and Dike is based on Dike’s economic status as compared with that of Mjongwa, who is portrayed as a good male character who is very wealthy. Cikizwa, as the female character, has no alternative but to abide by her father’s decision of marry a male who is rich.

Potash, in Stichter and Hay (1995:83), points out that in some places and among some families an arranged marriage can be used to benefit the father of the daughter concerned. In virtually all these literary texts, traditional marriages are confirmed by payment for the bride by the husband and his close relatives, to the bride’s father and his close relatives. The presumed beneficiaries are always men, especially the fathers of the daughters. This is more likely to occur in hierarchical literary texts with emergent stratification, where marriage can be employed to consolidate male characters’ power as opposed to that of the female characters. It is evident in these literary works that economic status influences men into arranged marriages with their female counterpart to marry a man with plenty of cattle.

Men use customs as an excuse for their personal gains or for abusing women. Although it is very common in the cultural environment for a father to choose a
man for his daughter, it is clear that all these literary texts are motivated by men’s love of wealth to force their daughters to reject their boyfriends and marry the men they choose for them.

They are always portrayed as commercial commodities in literary works written by male writers. Female characters function universally as objects of every kind of economic exchange, both familial and psychic. Far from being just one form of social organization among others, this suggests symmetry is the founding condition for all society and all forms of the literary works and perceptual value, for the passage into the social order. Such social order is assured by the fact that men circulate females among themselves.

This situation suggests the economic exchange of females seems to be given a foundational status. Kang (2006) begins by stressing the asymmetry of the men’s and female character’s relation to exchange, whereby the female is the object of transaction and exchange exclusively among the menfolk. Female characters in these selected literary works are split by being primarily the objects, rather than the agents, of exchange; split, first of all, between their function as the materialization of transactional exchange.

Objectifications of females are to be seen as visible objects of man’s pleasure. Magar (2003) believes that females are not valuable to men in themselves for the usefulness of their natures, but in terms of their value relative to other females or rather relative to the abstract scale of equivalence which enables them to be so exchanged, like any commercial commodity. This is more likely to occur in hierarchical literary works written by males with emergent stratification, where marriage can be used to consolidate the power of men within the community. According to Dasgupta (2005), it is evident that economic status is another influential factor which has impelled these males to arrange marriages for their daughters to marry a man with plenty of livestock. UMmango in uDike noCikizwa suggests that females become economic
commodities, which will enable their fathers to collect as many cattle as they possibly can to fill up their kraals. Sando says, in *uDike noCikizwa*, about this economic gain:

**USando:**

*Oo! Silungisa nje kukho izinja ezimana-nayo! Ndiza kuphulukana neshumi elinesihlanuleenkomo amashumi amabini eegusha nehashe ngenxa yesi sidenge; ekungenzeka ukuba asinayo nenkukhu le.*

(Oh! While we are working things out, there are dogs that are causing problems! I will lose fifteen cattle, 20 sheep and a horse because of this idiot; it might happen that he does not have a chicken.)

(Mmango, 1983:28)

The above phrase highlights how female character is portrayed as men exchange trade with the aim of acquiring more wealth out of their daughters. Cikizwa is portrayed as a commodity and a victim for the personal gain of her father. Men were shown as people who are not concerned with the well-being of their daughters, but in reality they want to satisfy their greed.

Sando’s statement clearly indicates that he is not interested in the daughter’s happiness but only in his own personal gain:

**USando:**

*Ukunyaniseka kothando lwakho kuCikizwa kuza kundiphulukanisa neshumi elinesihlanu leenkomo, amashumi amabini eegusha neli hashe ndiliqabeleyo njandini!*

(Your honest love to Cikizwa is going to be the cause of
losing 15 cattle and 20 sheep and a horse that I’m riding, you dog!)

(Mmango, 1983:48)

The above extract shows that wealth and greed play a significant role in arranged marriages. Sando’s ill-treatment of his daughter is driven by his personal desire to get wealth out of her forced marriage.

In uDike NoCikizwa, Sando’s sister Nomatiletile, who is a female character, voices her concern about Cikiswa’s health situation which is aggravated by her father’s forced marriage that he has arranged for her. In this following statement Nomatiletile as a female character shows the awareness of her brother’s ulterior motives in Cikizwa’s marriage:

UNomatiletile:

\[ \text{Ziinkomo ebezinani kakade ezi, ezi kubonakala ukuba kuza kuf'umntu ngenxa yazo?} \]

(What is the significant of these cattle that seemingly a person is going to die for their sake?)

(Mmango, 1983:11)

The above phrase illustrates the fact that Nomatiletile disapproves of her brother’s actions in forcing her nephew to marry a man that she does not love. This patriarchal authority which is portrayed in these literary works, as one would expect, is very conservative in nature. It normally ruins and represses all the freedoms that promote a female’s individual interests above those of the patriarchal and the communal.

Male writers supports the practice of arranged marriages which, in many cases, has the blessing of some female character, especially that female character who perceives marriage only as a means of social mobility and material enrichment
for their families.

A girl, as Cham (in Jones, 1981:94) puts it as being similar to a lamb being sacrificed, like many others on the altar of materialism. Female characters in particular become the victims of literary work written by males and of male power. Nomatiletile further criticizes the economic reason behind the arranged marriage. Sando replies to his sister by showing his anger and determination that he is not going to change his mind because of Cikizwa’s “sick” reasons.

USando:

Nina! Niza kundiphambanisa. Ukugula kwalo mntwana akusayi kundijika kwisigqibo sam. uza kutshata noMjongwa ethanda engathandi.

(You! You are going to make me mad. The sickness of this child is not going to make me change my decision. She is going to marry Mjongwa, whether she likes or not.)

(Mmango, 1983:11)

The above statement shows no sign of any sympathetic passion about Cikizwa’s health. Rather, he is depicted as a strong male character who is determined that his daughter is going to marry Mjongwa irrespective of the state of her health. This shows how female characters, such as Cikizwa, become victims of these arranged marriages.

According to Pilcher and Wheelhan (2004:93), patriarchy means rule by the male head of a social unit, a family or tribe. It also refers to the elder who has power over others in the social unit, including other men, women and children. The feminist has used the term to refer to the social system of male domination over women. Ruthven (1984:2) contended that the task of the feminist critic is to expose the way in which male dominance over females constitutes perhaps the most pervasive ideology of our culture and provides a most fundamental example of power domination.
3.3 Female characters as victims of arranged marriages in Tamsanqa’s 
**Buzani kuBawo**

MaGaba, in *Buzani KuBawo*, is portrayed as one of the female characters who is bound by patriarchal rules, where she accepts that she cannot be involved in discussing her family issues. She is quite clear of her minimal role in terms of females’ roles in the African cultural society. She is portrayed as knowing that the final decision in a patriarchal society will always be pronounced by the men of the family, in this case her husband Zwilakhe. MaGaba shows the awareness of her gender- minimal role in the literary texts.

UMaGaba:

*Kanti nangoku ukuba bekuthetha mna bekungekho ntombi yimbi ibiya kuthathwa nguGugulethu ngaphandle koThobeka.*

(Even now if I had a say there would be no other girl married to Gugulethu except Thobeka.)

(Tamsanqa, 1987:2-5)

In the above statement MaGaba Gugulethu’s mother reveals in words her awareness of the female restrictions of her powers. She is portrayed as being powerful to stand up to her husband and make her voice heard and also to fight the men in the family and to openly embrace the attitude of a female’s place being in the kitchen. She says these words for a second time.

Masar (2006:41) advocates females’ persistent wish and also intimates that they have a resilient spirit. The strong influence of females’ roles seems to have waned somewhat. The dominance of the male, portrayed as the figurehead, is indisputable. Such literary works victimize women who know that they have no say on any matter in a man’s world. Male writers portray their female characters
as those who know that they should be submissive to the wishes of the male figurehead. Sex is also a subject of great importance in these texts.

**Buzani kuBawo** denounces the commonly held assertion that female characters must be married and depend on their husbands. In **Buzani kuBawo**, MaGaba falls victim to the same principle of literary texts written by male writers which lack strong female characters. Instead these texts depict female characters as weak and dependent characters. Characters like MaGaba are depicted as being helpless female characters that need to be rescued by brave and bonding adventurous male characters.

**Buzani kuBawo** is about the treatment of female characters like Thobeka and NomaMpondonise. Both are portrayed as victims and women who do not value their choices. Thobeka’s parents are portrayed as authoritative. They can be described as inconsiderate and do not listen to their daughter’s views about her choice.

In African literary works written by males, male characters are portrayed as people who dominate their families and are capable of making decisions about all their family matters. Thobeka is miserable about the treatment she has received from her family who forced her to marry a man whom she did not even know. She says this about her traumatized situation:

**UThobeka:**

*Kowu! Bandenza abazali bam ngokuhlala bahlale bandizise kwisilingo esinjengesi ndikuso ndibaxelele.*

(Oh! My parents have done a bad thing to land me with this problem, and I told them so too.)

(Tamsanqa: 1987, 83)

Thobeka, as a female character, is in a painful situation. She blames her traditional parents for her unhappiness in her marriage situation. This indicates
how male writers have portrayed female characters as being people who should be looked after by men in their lives. Zwilakhe is portrayed as a traditionalist character who stands for his cultural values no matter what:

UZwilakhe:

Mna zinkosi andikhathali nokuba umntu uchasa ade alele ngomqolo phantsi, ndifuna intombi kaMcothama....

(As for me, fellows, I do not care even if a person objects and lies with his back on the floor; I want Mcothama’s daughter).

(Tamsanqa 1987:1–21)

The above quotation shows that Zwilakhe is portrayed as a male character who has enormous power to do whatever he wants, because in his statement he indicates his authority over Thobeka’s choice as a female. She is portrayed as an object that is not going to have any say in the arrangement of her marriage. His traditional mindset makes him out to be a strong male character who is not even aware of the significance of an arranged marriage undertaken without the consent of both the partners.

Thobeka shows her resistance and is seen by her family as having unfounded fears. This shows how the behaviour of female characters and of people in general affects female’s relationships with other sectors of the community. Things do not seem to work out in Thobeka’s favour because it seems impossible to her to escape her victimization.

Odetola (1983:4) makes an important remark when he asserts that in most African societies the personality of the individual is significantly interwoven with cultural factors. He adds that from birth to death the individual cannot escape the impact of his/her cultural experience.
Traditional literary works written by males, like Buzani kuBawo and uDike noCikizwa, show that the practice of arranged marriages indicates the relationship that exists between the female’s private life and the cultural values of the society in which she lives which will always be interlinked. Thobeka is portrayed as a young, female character whose views about life can not be separated from those of her parents. The arranged marriage for Thobeka indicates how a female’s individual life is intertwined with the patriarchal social background which is portrayed by the male writer, and is male-dominated.

Eventually Thobeka yields to her parents’ coercion and marries the man of their choice, Gugulethu. The forced marriage, however, does not prosper, because the man of her parents’ choice refuses to sign the marriage papers and abandons the marriage. Thobeka, as a female character, voices her plight in the undesirable situation in which she finds herself:

**UThobeka:**

\[ \text{Kowu Thixo kazi ndingumntu oyini na ndingazi namntu kulo Mthatha? Thula sana lwam? thula sanana.} \]

(Oh God, I wonder what kind of a person I am; I do not know anyone in uMthatha? Keep quiet, my baby? Quiet baby.

(Tamsanqa, 1987:84)

The author here is portraying Thobeka as a desperate and helpless female who finds herself under tremendous pressure. She has the responsibility of raising children and being forced to go and look for the man who has deserted her. She blames the people who forced her into the situation and deserted her after the marriage:
UThobeka:

*Bandifaka engxakini, ngoku bathe qelele.*

(They put me in trouble, and they are now far away).

(Tamsanqa 1987:84)

The above statement portrays a female character in an agonising situation one who and could not deal with her situation. She is portrayed as a lonely and helpless character that is left in an unknown world without the assistance of anybody. The writer has portrayed her as a victim, and is thus vulnerable to her situation.

She sings a song to reveal her pain: *Mayenzeke intando yakho* (Anything may happen that you wish). This says everything about the person who does not have control over her situation, and is inviting intervention from God.

NomaMpondomise in *Buzani kuBawo* is also portrayed as a female who disobeys her parents and has failed their cultural values. She now faces the consequences of this disobedience to her family. The author portrays her as cursed and a disgrace to her family for refusing to marry a man chosen for her by her family.

He suggests, by illustration in the following statement, that NomaMpondomise regrets her decision of making a choice different from that of her parents and thereby disrespecting her culture.

UNomaMpondomise:

*Ndixolele bawo nceda ndixolele.*

(Forgive me father. Please forgive me).

(Tamsanqa, 1987:70)

This suggests that NomaMpondomise has done something wrong to her father’s kraal cattle for *lobola* which were paid to her family. This also gives the
impression that she sees her action, in disobeying her father’s wishes on the arranged marriage, as a disgrace. This book paints a vivid picture that by not accepting one’s parents’ choice, as a female, one is digging one’s own grave.

This literary text suggests that if females do not conform to their cultural values they may pay a heavy price in their life. It means that many female characters mutilate and injure themselves. By failing to obey their traditional norms they might find themselves in a situation where they cannot rescue themselves, like in the case of NomaMpondomise where she felt that she had betrayed by here family. This is of significance in sustaining male power over females.

**3.4 Female characters as victims of their age in their marriages in Siphambo’s *Inzinto Zimana Ukwenzeka***

In many African literary works, parents are portrayed as people who wish to settle their daughter’s marital fate early in order to prevent them from doing anything that might damage their chances of attracting suitable husbands. Many literary texts believe that an early marriage makes a female a better wife.

This practice is also viewed as a way of preventing females from forming relationships with a number of men and ending up either in trouble or with a ruined reputation.

There is a physiological tendency for females to marry earlier than males do. This may be traced to the earlier onset of maturity in females. According to Snyman and Slabbert, (1992:234) the inferiority of African women are also somewhat reinforced by the fact that African brides in traditional settings are quite young in comparison to their husbands.

They further suggest that amongst those groups where polygamy is practised, the young brides in some of the literary texts finds themselves being a fourth or
fifth wife, where the senior wives are sometimes as old as their own mothers, if not older. These female characters are abused, not only by being married without their consent to men much older than themselves, but they also find themselves being virtual a slave to the older wives in the family.

This gender discrimination with regard to the age of the female characters, the attitudes, psychological traits and social relations of female characters are matters of concern for family in-laws. The age of a bride, as in the case of Nompumelelo as a female character, does in fact matter. One of the family’s male characters uttered the following words which indicate their disapproval of getting an old female as a bride in their family.

UVelile:

*Thina ke asinqweneli kubona Xhegokazana lihamba-hamba ngooXhongwana apha phakathi Kwalo mzi KaZikhali kusithiwa ngumolokazana.*

(We do not want to see old woman walking with small legs here in the KwaZikhali family.)

(Siphambo, 2001:12)

The above statement indicates the significance of age discrepancies in African marriages. This age difference appears as a gender inequality which is linked to the relationship of power between the sexes. McKinnon, in Kramarac and Treichler (1986:174), emphasizes the following point by saying:

> Gender is a division of women and men caused by the social requirements of heterosexuality, which institutionalizes male sexual dominance and female sexual submission.

The above statement put more emphasis on the gender inequality issue which is mainly caused by the social perceptions of a particular community. This
demonstrates that sexuality is the cause of differences in African literary works. This preference of males over females leads to the social dominance of men in every aspect of social life, including literature.

The negative portrayal with regard to physical appearance and the age of female characters in their marriages, and of the social perceptions, which play the most important role because of the family's expectation of females to carry the babies. Velile, in his statement, alluded to the importance of female's ages in their marriages.

Velile:

*Nali elam Zikhali, intombi le iminyaka mingaphi ubudala apha kunyana.?*

(Here is my word Zikhali: Who is this old girl for the son?)

(Siphambo, 2001:11)

The above question shows that female gender discrimination is also based on the victims' ages in their marriages. Age, in the above literary texts, is viewed as being very important for any woman in marriage. Langa wants to marry Nompumelelo for which his family doesn't know her age. Mpiyakhe indicates the importance of avoiding such problems; he may have been in relationships involving older females:

UMpiyakhe:

*Thina bolewu isesithi asizange sihambisane namaXhegokazana.*

(We, as playboys in our times, have never been in relationships with older women).

(Siphambo, 2001:12)

The above text indicates that male characters are portrayed as people who have a choice on building relationship with woman. The use of words like
Maxhegokazana suggests that the writer is degrading women who are older, but who pretend to be young.

Another factor that may lead to the age gap in marriages may be caused by the fact that men need to go and work for lobola. These men may also need to work for their parents before they get married.

3.5 FEMALE CHARACTERS BEING PORTRAYED AS DOMESTICS

Men are portrayed by literary works as people who are off to work, while female characters are expected to do the domestic chores. This creates the view that men alone should support their families. Nwapa, in her interview with James (1990:113), alludes to the fact that:

“The oppression of women starts in the home. In our homes today we treat girls differently, and we treat boys as if they are kings.”

This gender belief that the world of work, the public sphere, is a rough world, where men do what they have to in order to succeed, is a world that is full of temptation, violence and trouble. Females who venture out into such an environment could easily fall prey to it, because they are portrayed as delicate creatures.

Literary texts, written by males, suggest that female characters’ place is therefore in the private sphere, in the home, where female characters are portrayed as being in charge of all that goes on in their kitchens. It is suggested that in whatever situation of life female characters are portrayed, from the cradle to the grave, a spirit of obedience and submission, pliability of temper, and humility of mind is required of them. These female characters are perceived as being the weaker sex, and in some cases are relegated to the same status as that of a child. The following statement proves without doubt that if there is anything like a
family issue in her house Masukude needs to call someone who is male and regarded as being superior her.

UMfolo:

* Nanku uLolo, umninawe kaNjinge, oliliso lalo mzi. Ukuba kukho into ekuxakileyo okanye ongayithandiyo, yibike kuye
(Here is Lolo, the young brother of Njinje who is looking after this family. If there is any problem that you experience, talk to him.)

(Mtingane, 1992:7)

The above texts portray female characters as family members who exist only in terms of their relationships to their male relatives. Even as mothers they are portrayed as subjects under the control and at the whim of their male counterparts,

Female characters are portrayed as people who are expected to uphold the values of stability and morality. They must make their homes a special place, a refuge from the world where their men can escape from the highly competitive, unstable, immoral world.

Most literary texts written by male writers support the theory that the man is the head of the family, and the wife must obey him and be submissive to him, as is observed in *Buzani KuBawo*. MaGaba seems to understand these cultural rules. There is an observation that in the various literary texts that it is the male characters who are portrayed as the people who control and maintain the harmony in their families.

Another cause of gender imbalance is the literary portrayal of the dependence of females on males to give the advice and support needed to provide the basic necessary solution for the wellbeing of the womenfolk. In the following statement in Mtingane’s *Inene Nasi Isibhozo*, Masukude, as a female character, voices her
concern that she is a female. She is not expected to convene a family meeting as a female. This is clearly depicted in Inene Nasi IsiBhozo. Calling family man to discuss issues of a family is only the men’s responsibility – not females territory.

UMaSukude:

*Abizwe ngubani loo madoda?*

(Who called those men?)

UMaSukunde:

*Akanakuza xa abizwa ndim.*

(They will not come when I call them.)

(Mtingane, 1992:22)

The above statement shows that a female character must be aware of her minimal domestic role in all household issues. The importance of the attitude of discrimination appears as a stamping block that confines females to the domestic affairs or prejudices them to live at all times as subordinates to their male superiors. This shows the low expectations set for female characters in their lives. It consistently encourages submissiveness and low levels of self-esteem, lack of self-worth and feelings of guilt. This culminates in dependency on the male.

These literary works suggest that female characters are not allowed to convene a family meeting. They can only do this on behalf of the men who will ultimately make all the necessary decisions. This unnecessary domestic intervention of male family members to Masukude is confirmed by a statement that indicates the unfairness of these men:

UNoayini:

*Ufanele unyoko mntwana wam; eligazi nje ulwela lo mzi.*

(This is necessary for your mother my child; she
bloodied because she is fighting for this household.)

(Mtingane, 1992:6)

The above sentence confirms the victimization of Masukude by her in-laws. She is “bloodied” because her in-laws do not want to stop interfering with her domestic affairs or leave her alone with her son. They keep on interfering and even try to lay down some ground rules in her household, as if she were a child. She further complains about their abusive attempts to take advantage of her as a widow and control her in her house’.

UMasukude:

Ezi zinto zilima ngeenkomo zam. Ezinto ziyamvuyelela umhlolokazi.
(These things who use my cattle for ploughing. Those who are taking advantage of a widow.)

(Mtingane, 1992:2)

She is portrayed as not having anyone to help her or to protect her belongings from being abused by her brother-in-law. The literary texts portray a voiceless female character in matters that concern her as an adult. He portrays her as being weak, helpless and vulnerable in her family. The females are unable to leave their husbands or change their behaviour patterns of being submissive to their husband’s attitudes.

Male characters are portrayed as being physically stronger and more dominant, while the female characters are portrayed as being more passive. They nurture the males and their children and look after their families and their domestic affairs. One of Freud’s theories is that anatomy is destiny, so that men should be in control. Yet there are different traditional perceptions where female characters are portrayed as being more nurturing, while male characters are regarded as warriors. This should be acceptable, but many male writers who are still gender-blind ridicule these new families’ lifestyles.
Elson and Evers (1998:79) argued that it is still believed that boys and girls are trained differently at home, in school and in the communities. It is acceptable in these literary texts written by males that boys have to fight and to be more aggressive and competitive, while girls are supposed to be non-aggressive and less competitive. Female characters are expected to be the primary caregivers in the family and to be passive and nurturing people.

This kind of female character portrayal encourages females to feel that they occupy a secondary position in their family set-up. They learn, as they are growing up, to value themselves in relation to their male partners or to the men with whom they work.

Heise (1994) sees the idea that "females are given less value and are objects of contempt" and are derivatives of the idea that female characters have been consistently portrayed as vulnerable people in all the literary texts written by males.

Noayini is portrayed as being the victim of man who does not listen to her. He provokes her dissatisfaction about men’s negative domestic attitudes towards females as their counterparts in sharing the family affairs.

UNoayini:

\[ \text{Ngumthetho wenu madoda eli xesha, ukucinga ukuba abafazi aba Zizidenge zenu.} \]
\[ \text{(This is the law of you men, of this time, to think that females are fools.)} \]
\[ \text{(Mtingane, 1992:30)} \]

The above phrase emphasizes the discontent female characters feel that, when they complain about being victims of a cultural attitude that does not give females
any say and makes them dolls for their men. UNoayini uttered strong words to show her unhappiness about males’ patriarchal attitude towards the females. This indicates a remarkably discriminating and judgemental attitude in their thinking which manifests itself in all female characters portrayed by male writers.

_Inene Nasi IsiBhozo_ and _Buzani kuBawo_ are further refined by the immaturity and the startling imagery of psychological realities which conventional morality has suppressed in the case of the female characters. The essence of these literary texts that is unrecognized is the intensity of females as human beings with feelings. Mfolo, in _Inene Nasi Isibhozo_, depicts females as people who do not know anything about cultural values and who cannot make any valuable contributions, because there are females who do not understand the significance of culture.

_UMfolo:_

* Bubufazi ke obo abuthethayo. Thina sitetha ngesiko.  
  (She is speaking like a woman. We are speaking about custom).

(Mtingane, 1992:27)

The above statement portrays female characters as people who always speak like women, who are not acquainted with cultural issues. This gender oppression limits females’ scope of thinking and prevents them from being innovative in their outlook. The male writer creates the impression that the female character is thinking differently from the way men do.

In these literary works the male writers have portray females as having no insight into their cultural set-up. These literary texts further give the impression or suggest that domestic cultural values are used as an excuse to oppress females’ feelings and their ambitions. Most male writings reflect female characters who disrespect their culture and who depict gender domesticity as a deeply rooted offence against the ideal of the family and the dignity of women.
Some conservative literary texts written by male writers seem to regard gender issues as milestones in a society which females should unquestioningly obey and not raise any questions. Mfolo, as a male character, makes it clear that a woman, cannot run her family domestic affairs without the assistance of a man in handling the affairs of her household:

UMfolo:

\[ Asinguwe \textit{na iliso lalo mzi akubhubha umkhuluwa wakho? } \]
(Are you not supposed to keep an eye on this household after the death of your old brother?)

(Mtingane, 1992:25)

It is certainly true that these literary texts portray males as people who have power over females under all circumstances. It is also true that females do not want to come and go without their activities being observed.

Feminists allege that men abuse females’ rights freely. Male writers’ traditional perception of the victimization of females places all female characters in a protected category. It is in this context, that feminism presents us with the demand that male writer’s texts should at all times adhere to traditional concepts of morality regarding their behaviour towards the female characters.

The following literary text proves the general perception that if a man has lost his power in his community or status, he is likely to use his remaining power to ridicule or to victimize his wife at home and show her that she is quite powerless. Zinzo, in \textit{Inzonzobila}, utters the following derogatory word that shows he is the head of his family.

UZinzo:

\[ He \textit{Nofinishi, uthi aba bashumayeli benu bebhongo boza bayeke nini ukusihlalela ngentlamba kwezi mvuselelo zenu} \]
kule mihlo?
(Hey Nofinishi, when will your boasting preachers stop rebuking us on these revival services and on the funeral?)
(Mkonto, 1991:1)

The author uses insulting language to condemn the actions of preachers. He uses this kind of derogatory and abusive language in order to paint the most vivid and horrible actions. The question here is whether the readers of this literature are not more shocked by such provocative language used by Zinzo in describing the preachers to MamNtakwende.

The author makes no attempt to play down the cruelty and inhumanity of rebuking MamNtakwenda, as a female character, who is the victim of both Zinzo and Dlangisa, the preacher. According to Dowing and d'Herurte (1982:53), language can be used by writers as a powerful and evocative tool of its use of strong and expressive words to degrade and dehumanize a person who happens to be a victim. As illustrated in literary texts, female characters tend to assent to their status as the property of male writers and to their reduction to a level lower than a barn full of yams in their role as signifiers of their husband's views.

The author of Inzonobila exposes the injustice of the social class gender system, but he remains silent on its gender hierarchy, and while critics continue to eulogize him in Inzonobila for the balance he has achieved in his portrayal of Mamntakwenda’s strengths and weakness, he has carefully avoided pointing to the subjugation of female characters as one of those weaknesses.

UZinzo:

  Kwek! Madoda! Bendingenwe yintoni kakade ukude ndigwadle nawe iindaba zobudoda ezifuna ucamngce ungmfazi.
(Oh! Men! What happened to make me discuss with
you men's issues that requires you to think being a woman?

(Mkonto, 2001:1)

The above quotation shows a female character who is portrayed as being less intelligent than men, and a female who cannot think on deep issues or “outside the box”. This suggests that only men have the capacity to think.

This text is an amusing, informative and diverse text which provides modern readers with a revealing look at literature in post-colonial times. The author in Inzonzobila has harboured an intense hatred and an implicit fury against MamNtakwenda as the female character. The author here has been characterized as one having an obsession with female characters who require social skills to understand life. The question of the author’s attitude towards the women characters in his book needs to be addressed within the context of his own life and times and within the code of gender equality which has been promoted in a traditional lifestyle. According to Dasgupta (2005), the views of the female characters are portrayed as being evaluated by looking at the writer’s own life, his relationships, and the conventions of the society that produced him and directed his expression artistic and otherwise.

However, it is asserted by certain literature readers that the author’s treatment and depiction of female characters in his writings reveals a deep understanding of women. His work displays his attitude towards female characters or is it merely the creation of his vivid, if sensuous, imagination which has a direct impact on society. This writer is a master of the gradual unveiling of the structure of a human personality in his drama. Dasgupta (2005), says the writer, possesses a powerful skill to confront the reader with a unique plan of existence projected by the female character in his drama.

The writer reveals how MamNtakwenda, through the influence of certain Christian values and external and internal circumstances, chooses to be what
she is, and how her fundamental choices influence the life of her husband. The author leads his readers through a variety of critical situations in which MamNtakwenda responds by practising a self-introspection of her life. The most fascinating aspect of this drama is not only in this situation in itself, but in the relevance and revelation in the life of MamNtakwenda as a female character.

The reader is drawn into Mamntakwenda’s life; she participates in the unfolding of her secret of having a love child outside her marriage. In this drama she tries to understand her own complex personality from its most intimate Christian feelings. The writer employs the perennial theme, maybe unconsciously, as a symbol for the most crucial recurrent life situations in which all human beings may at times find themselves. The concrete evidence of the individual situation may be different, but the fundamental structure of any experience may be very much like that of MamNtakwenda in Inzonzobila.

Zinzo roars at his wife, berating, belittling and pounding her into submission without being confronted or jailed for his actions against her. Literary works in general portray a sad legacy of a female character who is verbally bullied and derided. This goes virtually unaddressed in these literary texts.

It is the climate of pretence, denial and hiding that fosters the self-abuse that females get caught in when they have been victims of verbal abuse.

This study focuses on the dangerous side-effects of the abused female characters. Jesperson (1924) believed that language attacks directed at someone have a greater chance of hurting their image and damaging their self-esteem, because females are already viewed as being inferior, belonging to the weaker sex and coming from lesser positions.

These female characters are portrayed as being vulnerable to verbal abuse and pay a devastatingly high price for it. The inner voice of an emotionally abused
female character is not only a voice of pain, suffering and anger, it is also the voice of an alienated female. Perhaps, one wonders, such characters may well themselves be to blame for how they are treated. After all, they permit it.

Victims can easily become believers and imitators of hostility directed at them, to such an extent that self-doubt and self-blame, even self-hatred, become second nature. This approach of male writers, who concentrate on blaming their female characters as dangerous people, should not be employed to place all the blame on male writers. This approach has been promoted by a brand of feminism which holds the male-dominated patriarchal system responsible for all the evils in such a cultural set-up.

The writer has portrayed female characters as belonging to the weaker sex. Females have traditionally suffered verbal abuse from the stronger sex. They have even suffered it at the hands of their own lovers. This verbal abuse leaves no visible wounds or scars, and can be hidden or denied with hardly a second thought.

Allport (1954:97) has mentioned that such a language attack requires no physical prowess. It merely increases the woman’s fear and level of intimidation. These verbal attacks in literary texts can be seen as naked aggression and are definitely destructive to female characters. Such verbal attacks leave the female characters emotionally bleeding.

The author of Inzonzobila gives himself the power to enter the minds of his characters and also to probe their deepest thoughts. This language abuse penetrates into the mind of the suffering, the mentally tortured and those on the verge of mental derangement. Such derogatory words can be seen as transparent and they are also a straightforward series of undermining attacks. They constitute more or less one of the most complex ways of denegrating the female character.
The writer has projected the use of such insulting language which shows that females are regarded as minors in their own families. The following statement indicates that Zinzo, as a male character, sees himself as more authoritarian in his house. His authority should not be questioned by the females.

UZinzo:

Ndaphendulana nave ngoku sowutsazise imixhadana nje okwentshontsho elomiweyo.
(Am I arguing with you now; you put out your veins like a small chicken that has something stuck in its throat?)

(Mkonto, 1991:2)

The above statement is derogatory and designed to make the female be metamorphosed into a minor or some sub-zero human being. The efficiency of a man is largely a result of man’s power over his women and his ability to reduce complex situations and emotions to the lowest common denominator. This, in turn, produces a lowering of the woman’s social status.

Sando, in uDike noCikizwa, uses derogatory language to victimize his sister and to prevent him from changing his mind about Cikizwa’s arranged marriage. The abusive language used by Sando shows his cultural authority over Nomatiletile:

USando:

Musa ukundi fundekela.. Nokuba ufile lo mntwana ngowam.
(Stop making noises to me. Even if this child dies she is mine.)

(Mmango, 1983:11)

The above statement indicates the use of a defensive mechanism by using aggressive language to show his social authority and to stop her sister from bombarding him with questions about Cikizwa. This kind of aggressive language
shows that he is portrayed as a powerful figure, and as a male character who has control over the situation.

According to May (1967:19), such language attacks not only cause physical suffering, but they also cause emotional suffering and psychological trauma. Many of the victims cannot be so easily overcome. Men are unsympathetic towards their females’ plight and their experience in their communities. Females find themselves at a point of tension, aware that the conventional view of what is appropriate for females encroaches on what some sees as a male preserve.

According to Eagleton (1986:41), female characters, as they are portrayed in literary texts, show a lack of originality, intellectual training, abstract intelligence, humour, self-controls and any knowledge of their male characters.

UDlangisa:

*Akwaba ebesazi ubumpumputhela bumfamekise kakuhle.*

(I wish she knew her stupidity and blindness.)

(Mkonto, 2001:7)

The above statement shows Dlangisa as a much cleverer character than his wife who cannot even notice her husband’s lies. This also shows that Dlangisa’s wife is much more stupid than her husband. She could not even pick up on Dlangisa’s devious actions. She is portrayed as a female who could not even discover that Dlangisa has a kid.

According to Archer and Lloyd (2002), men have most of the desirable qualities such as power, breadth, distinctiveness, clarity, learning, abstract intelligence, shrewdness, experience, humour, knowledge of everyone’s character and open-mindedness. This shows that females should try to depict their experiences about their own deepest responses, particularly those that are sexual, and their
feelings of anxiety at revealing the truth about their experience in their relationships.

Kaplan and Sadock (1988:28) seem such emotions to be based on contradictory impulses on the one hand, to show the African literary depictions which have great depth, value and beauty; and on the other hand to demonstrate that females are incapable of handling responsibilities. The misrepresentation of female characters by male writers is one of the literary means by which men have justified their subordination of females. A negative identity as to what women are not allows men to read any quality into the feminine psyche. Men project onto the image of their female characters their own dreams and fears. As the dominant gender, the normal man’s representations are authorized as being the truth from the universal human viewpoint.

Books written by men need to be continuously reviewed on issues affecting females’ images as projected by male writers. This will unveil men’s fears and anxieties rather than being simply a list of stereotypes presented by male writers. The negative representation of female characters as being sexual seductresses requiring moral censure and punishment reflects men’s fear of losing power and control in the sexual act.

It is futile to say human beings ought to be satisfied with tranquility. They must have action and they will make it if they cannot find it in females who are supposed to be very calm generally. However, females feel just as men feel. They need exercise for their faculties and fields for their efforts, as their brothers do. They suffer from too rigid a restraint and too absolute a stagnation, precisely as men’s reputation would suffer as it is thoughtless to condemn them or laugh at them if they seek to do more or learn more than custom has pronounced necessary for their sex.
3.6 FEMALE CHARACTERS BEING VICTIMS WHO ARE SILENCED

It is a crucial aspect that female characters in literary texts are frequently portrayed as being absent and silent in any decision-making of their families. Batliwa (1994) sees female characters as marked by a fundamental absence in the literary texts written by male. They lack both a phallus and phallic power. This silence is a crucial mechanism whereby this asymmetrical distribution of power between the sexes can be maintained.

Female speech marks the dramatic alternatives of silence and utterance. MaSukude’s absence at family meetings in *Inene Nasi Isibhozo* is embodied in the central female character. In terms of this pattern, female characters mirror and reflect one another and even replace one another on stage in a way that renders family presence symbolic and likewise family absence.

Aubrey’s (1987: 50) views about the position of women in amaXhosa traditional society are as follows: The perception about women’s status in African society is that it is one of inferiority when projected through the male literary works. Female characters are portrayed as being minors who can not perform the ritual customs of their families, although a married female character like Masukude in *Inene Nasi Isibhozo* is regarded as an adult; but she still does not obtain adult status through her marriage.

Females are still regarded as minors under the authority of their males and, after the marriage, female characters are portrayed as individuals who succumb to the authority of their husbands. After her husband’s death, she falls under the authority of the most senior member of her husband’s family, as is the case with MaSukude as a female character portrayed in *Inene Nasi Isibhozo*. She is placed under the authority of Lolo, her brother-in-law, who looks after her home’s affairs because her husband has passed away. This means, among other things, that female characters are portrayed as people who may not institute proceedings,
and that they must be represented by males or one of their husband’s male relatives during any family meetings.

In *Inene Nasi Isibhozo* indicates that MaSukude has no right to be part of the family meetings. This is regarded as a denial of female rights and a treatment of the female character as one that is inferior or subordinate to their brothers-in-law. They are depicted as occupying a more powerful position in their families. This shows that most literary works portray male characters as being in the supremacy and having absolute power over their society and their siblings.

Hunter and Forden (2002) see gender as an issue that selfishly and deceptively perverts those privileges bestowed upon males, and to the detriment of females. These literary texts show the victimization of female characters. A literary text perception is imposed upon Masukude as a female character because she is being silenced and her wishes are not taken seriously. Ntuli, (1984:133) complements this view when he says... “Throughout the ages writers have been found to express their displeasure about certain conditions and practices”. He further stresses this view by commenting:

> When the poet [writer] exposes the evils or irregularities he notes around him, he wants to arouse in his readers a state of disquietude which will lead to some kind of reform. (1984:134)

Some male writers have observed the exclusion of females, and their silencing from any active participation in the decision-making in their families, as a result of the power imbalances between male characters and female characters, as portrayed by male writers.

Schipper’s question in Jones (1987:46) is appropriate to this matter when she asks: ‘Why should men be more equal than women?’ The answer to this
question is that the issue of equality has to do with literary works inherited from men’s writings. In patriarchal literary texts, the role of each citizen is to perpetuate the status quo, to assume responsibility for the continuity of the male dominance in their families, to perform within the traditional framework, and to maintain the closed society.

This silent oppression of female characters is associated with a biased way of writing literature. Mfolo’s role in Inene Nasi IsiBhozo represents a long-held traditional belief, which prevails in various African literary works, that a married female character will never have a say in her in-laws’ family. Mfolo’s idea is viewed as one that indicates that they will never accept MaSukude’s contribution as a female in their family matters. This suggests that literary works written by males have no space for women, and they are portrayed as people who should not interfere when men discuss family issues. Mfolo wants their decision as men to be perceived as being final without any questioning by the females. They want Masukude to comply with their decision as the males of the family who have a type of culturally bestowed authority.

The perception of literature is always non-reciprocal and hierarchical in nature when it is based on the relationship between a male and female. Mfolo’s idea is strongly suggested that man plays a central role in literary texts written by males, and females remain at all times minors.

MaSukude is portrayed as a female character who defies this attitude towards the patriarchal silence imposed on women. Her defiance is a politic directed at changing the existing power relations between men and women rooted in the traditional patriarchy in those literary texts written by males.

It is clear evidence that Masukude is crying for the sharing of power with her brothers-in-laws. The following statement emphasises the fact that Masukude is not part of the decision-making process taken by her family.
UMaSukude:

_Uyakuzeka loo Themba wabo mna ndifile._
(This Themba of theirs will marry over my dead body.)
(Mtingane, 1992:32)

The demands of change and adaptation to modern values in the literary works written by male writers disturb the balance of power. They lead the cry of female characters in seeking to unsettle the literary works written by male writers. This cry of women threatens male characters’ portrayal as one that occupies a superior position. It does not however guarantee any safety in the new order which is to be created by women writers themselves, together with liberal male writers, about female characters in their literary works.

Offering a compromise is difficult and severely painful for male writers who still adhere to the patriarchal traditional perception and align themselves with the traditional life and its cultural views which they project in their literary works.

MaSukude’s silence is not projected as a punishment for her actions, but as something that is profoundly subversive of the limiting structure. Her silence is largely a containment of female transgression, yet it does not simply and unproblematically negate it. In the end, she has been almost reconstructed as an innocent victim instead of a tragic transgressor.

The emphasis is on the limit in the case of female transgression and upon the transgressing act itself in the case of female characters. Yet a transgressor like MaSukude, who is also a victim, does in practice push the boundaries. Collaghan (1989:61) claims such importance for a female transgression may, however, be seen as being problematic because females are usually thought to be static.

One can assert that such characters in African male literary writings do not change, while male tragic heroes manifest some psychic change. This however seems to disregard the initial transgression of female characters and the way in
which they are frequently regarded as unstable elements by the central male protagonist. Mfolo cannot abandon his suspicions of MaSukude. Also, the change female character effect tends to be along a range of discontinuities which foreground their theatrically, their status as characters, rather than the psychic change seek by critics using on a historical realist measure of psychological coherence.

Female characters frequently serve to demystify the assumption that her man is at the centre of her universe. Collaghan (1989:63) says:

Patriarchy is the basis of the social structure - an individual’s link to other members of his society through the mother and hence by extension and abstraction to all other women and to femininity. It tends to symbolize that wider community and ethical system that encompasses and pervades the politico-legal system.

The above statement squares with the traditional perception of silencing women that is the measure of morality in drama. But, if female characters are moral touchstones, they are so in a far more complex sense than the word usually allows. They are frequently constructed as catalysts of problem action, throwing the moral order into confusion rather than merely ratifying it. Mseleku (1996:6) maintains that: “It is primarily for these reasons that you find many innocent women suffering or dying. In the texts they become victims of the dominant order because change is painful.” According to MamNtakwende, her great contribution to the silence about her problems before marriage is the strength she provides to the future of her husband. In Inzonzobila one can find that in a conversation between MamNtakwende and Dlangisa, MamNtakwende reminds him of his physical abuse while she was pregnant with his boy:
UMamnankwenda:

... ulibele na ukuba yayingaloo manqina akho la ayedavuza kwesi sisu, ingaloo manqindi akho la awayexhimfiza esi sisu; izezo mpama zakho ezaziqwaba esi sisu? Naloo minwe yakho eyayiphikica esi sisu? Uyazikhumbula izenyeliso zakho?

(... Have you forgotten that it was your legs that kicked this stomach; it was your fists that beat this stomach; it was your hands that clapped this stomach? And your fingers that squeezed this stomach? Do you remember your insults?)

(Mkonto, 2001:17)

The above statement shows that MamNtakwenda was physically and emotionally abused by her former partner who happened to be her boyfriend. This also shows that female characters are portrayed as vulnerable people in literary texts. McCue (1995:7) agrees that women are victims of physical abuse which ranges from pinches, squeezes in a painful way, punches or shoves, hits, or even kicks. These can all cause broken bones and miscarriages.

The oppression apparent in these selected texts seems to emanate from the fear of the unknown, the fear of adaptation to modern values, the problem of selfishness, the misuse of literary texts by males who are portrayed as being in the position of authority, who believe in holding and maintaining the power through literature. Mfolo is a male character who represents the attitude of male writers who do not want to change their views towards the patriarchal perception of silencing women. Mfolo serves as a man who is extremely culturally conservative.

The main emphasis is on how the behaviour of silencing females like MaSukude reveals gender imbalances and gender roles in these literary works. This section
shows the personality patterns of the female characters that are affected by these patriarchal perceptions. It examines the effects of such traditional pressures on the psychological state of the female character. It also shows how this unhealthy psychological state, in turn, influences both the victims and the prominent perpetrators of such violence.

In order to be able to achieve his primary objective of exposing the patriarchal problems experienced by female characters in literary works, the writers create imaginary characters that project the patriarchal perception of a particular society as a whole. Male writers often shape their characters to serve a specific purpose in a work of literature. This is in line with the patriarchal silencing of females that scholars of such literature come across in so many literary texts.

Characters in turn are the means through which the writer communicates his literary experiences and traditions, like Mtingane’s portrayal of Mfolo as a male character who is a prominent culturalist who does not want to throw away his cultural beliefs. This kind of behaviour makes for the silencing of women who cannot see the changes in society. Mfolo blames himself for victimizing Masukude by trying to silence her.

UMfolo:

*Bendingazi kanti sakuba nje isiphumo nesiqhamo sale nto.*
(I did not know that the consequences and the results of this would be like this.)

(Mtingane, 1992:70)

Most female characters have been silenced by these male writers and largely portrayed negatively. There is a strong desire to rediscover the lost dignity of females, while providing a context that would be supportive of women. The desire is to manifest what it is to be a female character. The study should be aware that critical attention is focused mostly on female characters in male
writings; these critics demand a status and recognition for the female’s silenced voice.

The primary objective of this research is not to simply to fit female characters into the male-dominated character portrayal, but to unveil the texts’ negative perception caused by a patriarchal cultural society which silences females and prevents them from having any participation in their communities and families.

This perpetual description and also the self-hatred have alienated female characters from a sense of their own collective identity. The theory of a female sensibility reveals itself in an imagery and form specific to women, and as always, it runs dangerously close to reiterating the familiar stereotypes projected by male writers. It also suggests certain permanence - a deep, inevitable difference between males and females in the way of perceiving the world. McKinnon, in Kramarae Treichler (1985:98), sees females as those who have suffered from a long tradition of what is generally called biological essentialism, which is the belief that a female’s nature is an inevitable consequence of her productive role. What is natural cannot be changed in the way that literary attributes of characters can. Hence, if biology were actually to render females characters more submissive and less adventurous than males, then there would be little that anyone could do about it. This is why gender and feminism are interested in literature as an influential traditional practice embodied in powerful institutions.

They are concerned to discover how literature, as a traditional perception, may be involved in producing the meanings and values that unlock female characters into inequality, rather than simply reflecting the already existing reality of females’ lives in literary texts.

MaSukude, as a female character in *Inene Nasi Isibhozo*, reminds us that since the beginning of traditional organizations, women have been acutely conscious of
the inequality of their position and the male misrepresentation of women by male writers. This includes their failure to look at female characters as being really equal to their male characters as partners.

Through literary works female characters are supposed to occupy or be in subordinate positions in their families. Female characters have not accomplished the achievements which are currently enjoyed by male characters in male writing works. This may be attributed to the constraints inherent in the conditions which their story illustrates. Females identify with the concerns of female characters.

The problem is: What female is likely to identify with men, against her own interests, as MaSukude in Inene Nasi Isibhozo has rung the changes on this basic schema, in which female characters struggle against the constricting, barbaric, victimising forces that make up the female experience as a whole.

Kramarae and Treichler (1985:104) believe that males and females are not simply biologically situated. They are also placed in history and in a culture, in a social practice and representation that includes biological determinants, shaping and defining them in their process. MaSukude in Inene Nasi Isibhozo has solid radical values, and only in the sense that she is used to describe a woman character’s mind - one who is neither proud nor afraid of anything that she may discover in the psychology of her own mind. This state of mind has been constituted by her readiness to face these constraints of silencing her from participation in her own household affairs. She is portrayed as a violent female who is always in an inevitable against conventional man. A universal female character who has the guts to bring her freedom at any cost:

UMaSukude:

*Mfazi, ndiqine ngaphezu kwelitye lenyengane.*
(Woman, I am stronger than an igneous rock.)

(Mtingane, 1992:45)
The above statement shows that radical female characters are cruel. This also indicates that female characters like MaSukude, in **Inene Nasi IsiBhozo**, are strong enough to kill whoever disagrees with their view of seeing getting her freedom of speech. Literary texts have portrayed females like MaSukude negatively. She has been characterized as violent female and always in an inevitable struggle with her more conventional man. She has to bring women to their senses and give them a sense of meaning in society.

Female characters are naturally excluded or silenced from positively participating constructively in the social set-up in their communities. Mtingane’s **Inene Nasi Isibhozo** female characters are viewed as being unable to hold positions of responsibility and to rule over men or even to be visible when serious family matters are being discussed. Female characters are viewed as needing tutelage before they can be socially active. Family affairs are considered to be the absolute realms of men and females are not considered fit to hold any position in their families. This is confirmed by Mfolo who maintains that females have never been part of any participation in family affairs, even before the death of their husband.

UMfolo:

*Into endenza ndibe rhabaxa yile yokuba kudala sisiza kushukuxa izinto kulo mzi, kwakukwaNjinge; sakha sathetha ekho lo mfazi? Namhla ungena njani kooyisezala?*

(What make me angry is that we have been coming to discuss issues in this family in the presence of Njinge for a long time. Have we been able to discuss such things in the presence of his wife? Today, why does she come to her father-in-laws' house?)

(Mtingane, 1992:25)
This shows that female characters are looked down on by men. They have portrayed MaSukude as being a minor in her house, a person who could not play any major role in her families’ affairs. This indicates that a female character is not independent in various life aspects, such as in controlling her family affairs without the interference of males. Hansson and Liden (1983) say the experience of marginality is affected in the thematic pre-occupations of females’ portrayal in male writing in literature, while men’s literary works tends to be full of ideological valorizations of the status quo of men’s domination. They further argue that when texts are read with a view to examining their relation to patriarchal ideology, the portrayal appears as a means of legitimizing male domination.

Despite this critical stance, drama does not relate the brutality of masculinity to this excess of power. What a patriarchal male writer advocates is not a dismantling of the literary perception of male domination, but rather it is the incorporation into the male personality of qualities conventionally associated with the feminine nature.

The critic’s ideal of equality or her character’s independence ought not to distance her from male writers’ attempts at depicting the less-than-ideal lives of female characters in male literary works. Inene Nasi Isibhozo is a thoroughly misogynistic drama, its ideological function being to legitimate and reinforce patriarchal ideology. Like other male literary works it is more concerned with gender balance in its literary texts.

But in Inene Nasi IsiBhozo’s rendering of this gender theme, it is not the overvaluation of masculine values, but rather the pernicious influence of female sexuality that threatens to destroy the patriarchal order. If male writers are sure of men’s powers, why do they go to such lengths to victimize and discriminate against females, who are their life-long and inseparable companions?
3.7 Female characters being portrayed as victims of love and materialism

Many African literary works are favourable to "feminism" in a broadly practical sense that supports say the right of female characters to equal pay for equal work or to have access to jobs. A much smaller number, however, subscribes fully to modern feminists theory as it has been proclaimed since the early 1960s and which constitutes “feminism” as an ideological movement. As was discussed in Chapter two, this ideological feminism would be worthwhile to keep separate from the attitudes of female characters in general.

Feminism, as an ideology, is part of an intellectual’s social culture which seeks both to influence and to stand in opposition to any negative perceptions about female characters in male writers’ literary works. In traditionally male literary texts, the notion that female characters are the victims of a domineering, explosive and insensitive mainstream culture is fully endorsed. Female characters become a foundation stone for a grand theory of victimization, according to which all female characters are the victims of all men in different ways. Through love, Makhaya, as man, who used his girlfriends to get materials confirms this in UThembisa noMakhaya by making the following statement, which shows that he relies on females to buy clothes for him:

UMakhaya:


(I am looking good in Wal’s suit. Sifuba’s girl is really wearing me. But this one is far from her wallet. This girl is really high class.)

(Mtywaku, 2003:3)
The above extract proves that most females are financial victims of their lovers, who only need money from them without loving them. All these men use love to win what they want from a female. Makhaya pretends to love Thembisa and Wal, but he knows that he is behind their wallets. The writer has portrayed these female characters as people who are victims of circumstances. This show how stupid Thembisa is. She is educated but still fooled by illiterate man.

The writer shows that even if a female is educated, her man is always intellectually above her. These female characters are portrayed as victims of love. These literary texts depicts actions which provides a sufficient threat to keep all women in a constant state of intimidation of being involved with men. This is because men are first-class liars who have hurt women through love. This is confirmed by the following passage. Makhaya’s intententions of marrying Thembisa:

UMakhaya:

*Enyanisweni ke andikuthandeli le ndlalo yabantwana,*
*hayi ndikuthandela ukuba sitshate*

(Really I do not love you for child’s play; no I love you for marriage).

(Mtywaku, 2003:4)

The above statement shows that Makhaya has exploited Thembisa’s financial support by using love and marriage to get what he wants from her. Feminist theorists have pointed out that literary texts written by males preserve male dominance. All men benefit, not just because they instil fear and pose a threat to females.

In their literary works many African writers show up, as a reductionist argument, that power does not have anything to do with sex; it is exclusively an assertion of power in male characters and less power in female ones. The root of the idea is
planted in male literary texts’ perception of female characters. These literary texts’ degradation of the female character have a widespread influence in contemporary communities. They even affect the literary perception by women in general.

Makhaya confirms that his former girlfriend did not have enough money to maintain him. The following statement confirms that Wal is another victim:

UMakhaya:

\[ UWal \text{ makaxole, ebengenakuze andibeke kulo mgangatho.} \]

(You, Wal, should be at peace, she would not be able to put me at this level.)

(Mtywaku, 2003:6)

The above quotation indicates that Makhaya is using love to get money from his girlfriend. This shows that he is exploiting women. He has a girlfriend or wife who has more money than Wal. This proves that he does not love women, but exploits their weakness for their money.

One of those notions is that until it is enlightened by literary texts by male writers is continue to see female characters as being inferior to male characters. The feminist movement has attempted to teach young girls and women that they have just as much value as males. The notion that female are of less value is derived from the idea that female characters are always portrayed as victims of their societies.

Female characters’ status must thus be examined within the context of patriarchy and the literacy texts’ control of females. According to Corbett (1991:13), it is the oppressive structures and social relations which relegate females to a position of relative powerlessness and contribute substantially to their susceptibility to social
abuse by their male counterparts. In addition, this literary inequality of the female characters has wide-ranging social and psychological consequences for females, limiting their opportunities.

In this way, literary texts serve as a control mechanism, schooling females to confine their actions and attitudes within the parameters of what is considered to be acceptable gender-role behaviour. The following statement from Izinto Zimana ukwenzeka shows that most females are victims of their lovers.

**UMpiyakhe:**

*Ufike bethene mbende nala maxhegokazana angoositashinesi befunana nale mali yawo qha.*

(You will find them close to these elderly women staff-nurses, but they only want their money.)

(Siphambo, 2001:12)

The above statement suggests that these females are the victims of males who do not love them, but only want their money. The literary text also indirectly indicates that there are female characters who are easily targeted by younger males for money reasons only. Female characters are portrayed as targets for men to enrich themselves financially by using these women’s love.

In Izinto Zimana ukwenzeka these female characters are portrayed as materialistic people. These female characters are also portrayed as quite snobbish in their thinking. This is confirmed by Nombeko’s conversation with Gcina.

**UNombeko:**

*Izinto zimana ukwenzeka Gcina xa selethenge enye imoto kodwa isaphilile nale Mercedes Benz. Phofu Mpumi ndandikuxelele ndathi unemali ngokwe-nene ubhuti uThemba.*
(Things do happen Gcina when he has bought another car, but this Mercedes Benz is still alright. Anyway Mpumi I did tell you that brother Themba had real money.)

(Siphambo, 2001:99)

The above statement shows that female characters are portrayed as really materialistic people. They enjoy being in relationships with men who are in positions of economic power and they are portraying real life. Many women are portrayed as being involved with men they do not love, but because these men are driving beautiful cars and earn good salaries. Novuyisile endorses her friend’s materialistic view by saying the following words as a woman:

**UNovuyisile:**

*Ayintle naloo moto, inene ngumnyobo.*

(This car is beautiful, it is really beautiful.)

**UThemba:**

*Kanti thina asizikhathalele nje izinto zeemoto Gcina kuba sizi thenga njengeeswiti.*

(We do not care about things like motorcars Gcina because we buy them like sweet.)

(Siphambo, 2001:92-93)

The above quotation endorses the idea that female characters are portrayed as people who do not have love and are not romantic, but treat their men as a source of income. This also projects the fact that men are in a position with economic means, while females need to use their bodies and sometimes sell them to get wealth. Most of the female characters in male writings are realistically portrayed for, as we have seen they do not change in response to their specific social situations. Instead they remain true to conventional gender characteristics, as Nomatshawe is portrayed in *Inzonzobila.*
UNomatshwe:

Andiqondi ukuba inganguwe ncakazana oyekela eli
Kapa liphoxise ngam lakugqiba Ukundinyevulela xa
bindisihla ndinyuka kweziya venkile ndixela into
ebendiyifuna. Akugqibi ukuthi ndimhle kule dyasi.
Uyayazi le minti ukuba yimalini?
(I don't think you should have let this Cape Town man
ridicule me when I was going up and down in these
shops and saying what I wanted. You just say I am
beautiful in this jacket. Do you know how much this
cost?)

(Mkonto, 1991:41)

The above text proves that females are sometimes obsessive about material
things and they engage in other relationships, not only driven by love of the man,
but by a strong desire for material belongings. Nomatshwe, in Inzonzobila
confirms this desire for the wealth of a man. She says this about Dlangisa who is
much older than she is, and who seems to be a man who is buying her.

UNomatshwe:

Uthi ke ndandinokulunga komnye? Ngene TC
enje uMthetho? Bangaphi kwezintanga zam
abanokuba nezandla ezithambe oluya hlobo?
Zingawa zona izinyeliso ezindigqwalisayo.
(You say can I fit into another? Do you think was
I going to fit? Would Mthetho have this kind of
TC? How many mates of my age are there who
would have such soft hands like these? Ridicule
and criticize me if you like).

(Mkonto, 1991:42)
The above statement shows that the female character does not care about who gossips and criticises her, but she is concerned about the financial happiness she is getting from her sugar daddy. This also confirms that females do not care about the age difference as long as they have gained or can benefit from their relationships.

In uThembisa NomaKhanya, uLaura, as a female character, confirms that female characters are really interested in materialistic things. She says this in her soliloquy. uLaura uses uMakhaya to build her house for which he bought cement for her house.

uMakhaya:

\textit{uLaura ndakuggiba ukumnceda ngesamente, ipeyinti nezinto zombane ungenisa abacuphi.}

(uLaura, I offered help with cement, paint and electrical things and she allows the investigator in the house.)

(Mtywaku, 200:16)

The literary text above shows that Laura, as a female character, does not love Makhaya, but she only needs certain material things from him. From the extract above Makhaya confirms that he is being used by Laura because she wanted material things from him. Further, Novuyisile in iZinto Zimana Ukwenzeka, who, arguably is the central female character in the drama as a stylized figure, a psychological archetype, is also a shadow, a demonic parody of powerful men, who are despotic and destructive in her life. Finally, the subjective bias of materialistic romance is evident in the coincidence of the writer's and male characters' attitude towards females, but most especially in the absence of anything in the drama to undercut Siphambo's stereotypical view of female characters.
When this literary work is read with a view to examining it in relation to patriarchal ideology, the portrayal appears as a means of legitimizing male domination. Despite his critical stance, Siphambo (2001) does not relate the brutality of masculinity to the excess of power a patriarchal society makes available to men. Hence, Ebel (1995:19) advocates not a dismantling of the structures of male domination, but rather incorporation into the male personality those qualities conventionally associated with the feminine.

What one has, then, is a literary work whose concern is wholly for men and their dilemmas. What happens to female characters in their life activities is of no consequence. However, although females have been explicitly excluded from literary texts, they have in contrast to the female characters, refused to remain silent.

The critic’s ideal of the equality of female characters, liberated or independence, ought not to distort or obscure the degree to which a writer succeeds in depicting the less than ideal concept of the female. Lakoff (1987) seems to assume that an uncompromising realism is incompatible with a thorough commitment to the ideal of the characters’ equality.

She believes that female characters all belong to families who occupy an insecure position in the literary texts written by male writers and thus do not quite fit into the rigid class definitions in these literary works.

3.8 Conclusion

Looking through these isiXhosa selected texts which present females as cultural victims, it shows that these literary works are still very far from assisting females or even trying to elevate their status within their families and their communities. What appears is that females play subordinate roles in their family affairs’ cultural set-up.
The negative effects of the portrayal of female characters in these literary texts are stripping women of their rights to make their own decisions. The psychoanalytical behaviour of females is mostly determined by the social circumstances they face in their families and society at large. Females have recently come under the spotlight because of the language used that has engulfed African society. They are seen as victims of these cultural practices, such as arranged marriages and domestic practices.

This reflects the subordinate position of females in their families and in society, as well as the widespread belief that a woman’s place is in the kitchen. The notion of arranged marriages, that literary texts have referred to, is a tool for discriminating against females or forcing them into building a matrimonial home not of their own choice. These male writers suggest that females have no say in any marriage proposal they have received. Throughout this chapter, female character portrayal takes a largely negative outlook on female characters. They are seen as being of lesser importance and valueless to their families and communities. These literary works have always provided a unique and increasingly fertile ground for the cultivation of female victimization as a cultural hobby-horse.
CHAPTER FOUR

GENDER STEREOTYPICAL PORTRAYAL OF FEMALE CHARACTERS

4.1 Introduction

This chapter explores the attitudes towards the role portrayal of female characters in literature in the context of male attitudes towards feminist consciousness. This one-dimensional and robotic portrayal of female characters in literary text written by males is largely biased and stereotypical.

McKinnon (in Kramarae and Treichler, 1985) emphasizes the truth by saying that gender is the division of women and men caused by the social requirements of heterosexuality, which institutionalises male sexual dominance and female sexual submiss. This then leads to gender stereotypes.

Robyn (1993:x) believes that attention to gender stereotype is another issue in which feminists’ criticism can usually be identified as the stereotypical way of persecuting female characters in a male-dominated society. Some feminists strongly believe that these male writers depend upon this distinction as a key to combating essentialism, or a deterministic view that biology is destiny. Some writings perceive female characters as individuals lacking competence, deficient, and envious of males in their communities. These writings perceive males as the only sex in which any value resides.

There are two paramount issues to be discussed here: firstly, the issue of addressing female matters through the extensive examination and the tracing of the logic of phallocentrism in these writings in the isiXhosa selected texts and secondly, the analysis takes the form of a close reading of these male literary texts. These selected literary works are deconstructed by means of searching for the unfairness of male writings and their failure to portray any positive image of
female characters. Showalter (1985:89) believes that feminist critical analysis is focused on hearing the silences of females and reading between the lines for states of mind that cannot be articulated as such in literary texts.

The main concern here is to voice a negative portrayal of the feminine elements in the selected texts written by males. It will also take a closer look at such literary texts and to draw the relationship between the text’s formal structures and their underlying negative perception of female characters. Therefore, gender inequality stereotypes of females and the repressions of the feminine nature is the central theme of this section.

The thought here is to give a fine analysis of the behavioural patterns of female characters who are affected by traditionally stereotypical behaviour. It also seeks to concentrate on the effects of the male traditional pressures on the behavioural state of the female characters. It will reveal how this unhealthy psychological state, in turn, influences female characters as negative perpetrators in male writings.

4.2 Portrayal of female characters as rebellious

According to Golden (2004), literary texts have cast female characters in a negative light. They are stereotypically portrayed in such literature as rebellious, emotional and thus unable to think rationally or make decisions. These characters are seen to be different from men. This leads to the irresolvable traditional perception that leaves females with a spirit of revolution against the perpetuators of patriarchal domination. The following statement clearly shows this rebellious reaction:

UMaSukude:

Urindo ntoni? Urindo wantoni? Ndikunqanda la maqvinga angakanana nje! Bhetele izinto ezenzeliw'
The above statement indicates that MaSukude, as a female, is under enormous emotional stress about the things happening in her house by her brothers-in-law. She is portrayed as a rude and unreasonable female who is not supposed to utter such words to her in-laws. This is not acceptable in a normal situation, but due to the problems she is experiencing from her in-laws, the environment changes her behaviour and she becomes a rebellious person.

In any given literary text, people’s behavioural patterns are fixed by norms. Carroll (1997) says such literary texts provide only a negative source of socialisation for females. Through these literary texts, norms and values are transmitted, as well as acceptable patterns of behaviour, especially attitudes towards female characters and authority.

In uDike noCikiswa Mmango’s portrayal of Cikizwa is of one of a rebellious female character who disrespects her father’s instructions. She should not stand up to or challenge her father’s decisions, or voice her stand regarding any choice of her own. The writer has portrayed her as a rebellious female who does not comply with the unwritten rules of her culture and is not conversant with her cultural values.

UCikizwa:

Akungantando yam

(This is not about my will)
UNonjoli:

*Kungentando kabani ke?*

(It is by who’s wish?)

UCikizwa:

*Kungentando katata. Mna andifuni ukutshata noMjongwa.*

(It is by my father’s will. I do not want to marry Mjongwa.)

(Mmango, 1983:13)

The above words strongly indicate a female who is voicing her dissatisfaction, but is seen as a rebellious person who believes that she should be free to choose her own life partner. Cikizwa is portrayed as not accepting her father’s authority. She is forced to respect her father’s will, but it should also be born in mind that respect can have erosive and adverse effects if it is not reciprocated or if it is used as a means to oppress or to make a person submissive to conditions that affect her negatively.

In this instance respect is used negatively as means of gender stereotypical oppression and therefore evokes an unpleasant response from Cikizwa.

Cikizwa is portrayed, as if she were being driven by the id to reach for her sexual desires. Her father is motivated by the strong perceptual system of values and norms present in traditional constraints to curb the unreasonable daughter’s wishes.

Cikizwa is in a real dilemma because she has to deal with the ego that directs the id and the superego in order to deal with the real world of partriarchal practice. The traditional practice of arranged marriages reflects all the contradictions and attitudes that are to be found in humans as social beings. Sando shows his stereotypical view of male dominance, as if he had the right to force his daughter to marry the man of his own choice.
USando:

*Ndim Mfundisi, kunjalo nje lo mntwana uza kwendela kulo mfana ethanda engathandi!*

(It is I Reverend, and this child is going to marry this man whether she likes it or not!)

(Mmango, 1983:72)

The above statement from the literary texts evokes resistance to Cikizwa as a female. This kind of pressure leads her to defy the social values of traditional marriage. It evokes an attitude, as well as revolutionary actions, that lead to the violation of the traditional family norms by Cikizwa. For Freud (1936), the human mind is the expression of conflicting forces. Some of these forces are conscious, while others are unconscious.

Cikizwa and her father are in day-to-day conflict which is not only between individuals, but also between a person and their environment. It is this environment that seeks to determine the fate of each person. It seems as if it is the external conflict that stimulates the internal conflict which is experienced by these people in such male literary texts.

Such literary texts portray females' defiant behaviour and the disregard of the cultural norms and values of society. The source of the difference between these two characters Cikizwa and her father Sondo, is her father’s unfair approach in his prohibition of the amorous love between her and her boyfriend Dike. Sando is portrayed as a man who represents the moral values as projected in the text. He finds himself at loggerheads with his rebellious daughter because he wants to dominate her and suppress her pleasure drive.

Nonjoli has picked up that Cikizwa is suffering psychologically and is isolating herself from other people. She is experiencing emotions that lead to antisocial and immoral impulses, as the following words reveal:
UNonjoli:

*Cikizwa! Kutheni walala emini?*

(Cikizwa! Why do you sleep in the daytime?)

UCikizwa:

*Ndiyagula ma-a-ma*

(I am sick, mother.)

(Mmango, 1983:10)

The above quotation shows that Cikizwa is suffering from social anxiety disorder and is avoiding any encounters with other people who could keep her out of her daily activities. This anxiety makes her feel trapped and shut off from the world. However the text portrays her as a rebellious female who uses a defence mechanism by pretending to be sick. She could also use the idea of a headache or depression as a means of winning sympathy from her father or to win the empathy of her family.

After her father’s actions Cikizwa is so emotionally affected that she cannot sleep, but cries and locks herself in the house all day. She is not expected to pursue her ideal of love with Dike. In this literary text self-choice plays a less-than-important role in women’s lives. If she were to consider the matter of marriage, it probably would not be with the man chosen by Sando. She is portrayed as rebellious when she voices her feelings to her father by saying:

UCikizwa:

*Tata, ndiya kuba ndiyona xa nditshata nalo mfana ndingamthandi.*

(Father, I will be doing wrong to marry this man that I do not love.)

(Mmango, 1983:72)

The above statement shows a female who is unruly and violating her father’s authority when she questions her father’s decision. She defies the marriage
oath. Cikizwa’s defiance drives the minister to utter the following words:

UMfundisi:

_Inkonzo ayinakuqhubeka phantsi kwale meko._
_Khanihambe niye kuthethana nabantwana bevane._
(The service cannot go further under this situation. Go and talk to the children to reach an agreement?)

(Mmango, 1983:72)

Respect is used negatively as a means of gender oppression in this text and it evokes a negative and unexpected response from Cikizwa. The following statement is an example of a cultural stereotype that females should not disgrace their families by not accepting arranged marriages.

UNomazala:

_Urlhazisele ntoni igama lwakwa Ntando phakathi kwabantakwa abantu ecaweni?_
(Why did you disgrace the name of the Ntando’s family in front of so many people in church?)

(Mmango, 1983:81)

The above statement indicates that Cikizwa is regarded as a person who has humiliated Ntando’s family because of her defiant behaviour in church and her refusal to accept Mjongwa as her spouse. This portrays her as one who acts the authority of her father. Unfortunately, her father forbids her to love Dike which frustrates her. Consequently, she was psychologically disturbed and ended up committing suicide.

It can be observed from Cikizwa’s case that nothing is permitted to come between the loves of two people. Freud (in Malcolm, 1981:9) describes the importance of sexual love for those who are still young and says:
Sexual love is undoubtedly one of the chief things in life, and the union of mental and bodily satisfaction in the enjoyment of love is one of its culminating peaks... Again, when a woman seeks love, to reject and refuse her is a distressing part for a man to play; and, in spite of neurosis and resistance, there is an incomparable fascination in a woman of high principles who confesses her passion.

The pain and pressure that Cikizwa endures from her father makes her dispense with all forms of respect for him. Cikizwa seals her fate by refusing to talk to human beings, preferring to talk to the non-living phenomena, such as the moon and the stars.

UCikizwa:

\[ Wena \ nyanga \ nani \ zinkwenkwezi, \ musani \ ukundi \ khalala, \ ndipheni \ amehlo. \]

(Moon and stars do not give up on me, give me eyes)

(Mmango, 1983:81)

The pressure has build up in Cikizwa’s unconscious mind and comes out in the form of a slip of the tongue as it is quoted in the above phrase. There is nothing that will ever stop her from proceeding with her love for Dike. It is evident from the above phrase that the major point of conflict between Cikizwa and her father is gender stereotypical discrimination. According to Warren (1997), this stereotypical portrayal normally affects one’s behavioural patterns and leads to further defiance that can be analysed psychoanalytically. Cikizwa’s portrayal as being rebellious of her culture causes her to suffer severe neurotic symptoms. Psycho-neurosis is an organic dysfunction which is normally related to experiencing severely painful feelings.
4.3 Portrayal of female characters as people who violate their norms and values

According to Lyle, Bourne and Nacy (1998:111), it is agreed that cultural values are the central convictions by which members of a culture define what is desirable or undesirable, good or bad, beautiful or ugly, right or wrong. NomaMpondomise in *Buzani kuBawo* informs Gugulethu about her engagement to Mcunukelwa, but she is prepared to break the arrangement or the cultural values of society for Gugulethu’s sake. She is portrayed as a female who is committed to Gugulethu, but by breaking all the social strings that are codified into a cultural set up, she says the following statement which acknowledges that she is not allowed to defy her father’s wishes.

UNomaMpondomise:

Ndiyazikhupha ke mfo kaZilindile, ndizikhupha ngenxa yakho. Yanga loo ndawo ingahlala ithe thaa kuwe ukuba uNomaMpondomise ukhuphe iinkomo ebuhlanti ngenxa yakho!
(I’m letting them out Zilindile’s son; I’m letting them out because of you. May that stay brightly in your mind and that NomaMpondomise has driven out cattle from the kraal because of you!)

(Tamsanqa, 1987:29)

The above excerpt projects the situation as being the most disgraceful to any family when a female violates her cultural arrangement of marriage by driving away *lobola* cattle out of the kraal of her father without bringing in more cattle than those that initially occupied the kraal. This is perceived as the sign of violating the norms and the values of African society. NomaMpondomise encounters the problem of having to end her engagement with Mcunukelwa, and has to marry the man who has been chosen for her by her parents.
According to Foley (1995), stereotypical literary texts are very negative about females’ independence. Male literary texts portray loving and choosing your own lover as can clearly be seen as a deviation from the traditional values. Literary texts perceives NomaMpondomise’s behaviour as deviant from the arrange marriage custom.

NomaMpondomise’s emotional outburst in the situation is viewed as hysterical. This kind of behavioural reaction is bound to occur in a text where females are subjected to unreasonable patriarchal control. She is driven mad by the unpleasant circumstances of Gugulethu’s forced marriage.

Gilbert and Bubar (1984:53) describe the relationship between hysteria and patriarchal oppression when they say:

> Recently, in fact, social scientists and social historians like Jessie Barnard, Phyllis Chesler, Naomi Weisstein and Pauline Bart have begun to study the way in which patriarchal socialization literally makes women sick, both physically and mentally. Hysteria, the disease with which Freud so famously began his investigation into dynamic connections between the psyche and soma, is by definition a “female diseases’.”

NomaMpondomise shows that females’ lives revolve around jealousy and passion. She has been quiet throughout the text, but the moment she finds that Gugulethu has married another female, jealousy, anger and disappointment overcome her emotions. The writer indicates that a woman’s arrogant behaviour is unavoidable when she is angry.

Viewed in this light the aberrant behaviour of NomaMpondomise shows beyond doubt that her environment has a tremendous influence on her behaviour.
Significantly, the words used by the character portray much of the personality of the speaker. The male writer portrays her as arrogant, selfish and irrational.

4.4 Perceptions of female characters’ behaviour

In Inene Nasi IsiBhozo Mtingane, a male writer, is no different in the stereotypical presentation of females’ specific behaviour, as it is done by other male writers. Caldwell (1993) says it is true that literary works have been unsympathetic towards females, or have lacked the ability to present behavioural complexes of women, or have merely given stereotypes,’ is confirmed by Mtingane. He presents us with lifelike female characters in his literary text.

MaSukude is portrayed as a villain and a cruel female in the text; she is further portrayed as a female who fights against her cultural setup, and moreover, a person who displays unreasonable behaviour and one who wants to control or invade men’s territory. She is seen as a rebellious female who cannot conform to her cultural practices.

She is depicted as having no ability to stand on her own to solve her problems. She can be described as a cowardly female. When using characters as caricatures, the writer employs “unsubtle exaggeration of one aspect or trait of character” (Cohen, 1973:38). Mtingane has used this technique to expose MaSukude’s deviant behaviour. She shows her anger to her brother-in-law by saying:

UMaSukude:

*Kanti lo mntwana, uthi makabe sisicaka sikaThemba, bhuti? Ngubani yena uThemba? Itshipha! Int’ engazange ithumele mali! Inani yona isenti emdaka!*  
(But this child, you say he must be Themba’s slave, brother. Who is Themba? A prodigal son! A person
The above statement gives the wrong impression about Masukude’s behaviour as someone who is not complaint with her cultural set-up. It seems that there will always need to be a man to supervise women’s behaviour. But in this literary text Masukude is portrayed being arrogant towards her family and in brother-in-law. She does not appear as a caricature who is merely meant to carry out the author’s objective, which is that females need to be supervised to carry out their tasks as mothers.

Lliffe (1987) sees literary texts as places where the authority of men over females in a patriarchal society can be confirmed. Females are regarded as mere minors. It underlines the gender inequality that prevails between the sexes in Literature written by males. Mfolo reflects a different type of patriarchal authority, power and of the Xhosa man’s sense of superiority over a female. It is therefore concerned both with the theoretical truth and the historical fact of female characters being in subordination to men.

The correct social behaviour of females, according to these selected texts, is still to be subservient to the head of the family are, just like all the other members of the family. Most of the time females are expected to behave as passive individuals and to have only secondary roles in the family’s decision-making process.

Miller (1990:246) contends:

The theoretical truth is that gender is not merely a supplementary issue that can be “added on” to a critical approach, like a caboose on a train. Gender, as an issue and feminist [womanist] criticism in particular, invite a reappraisal of literature and culture from the ground up.
The above statement depicts how the inferior position of females has largely been perpetuated by male authors. Miller’s call for the reappraisal of all such literature and culture must be seen to be of great significance if one considers that many such works are prescribed to be read at schools. Miller adds that parents take for granted that their children will associate themselves with the positive and free gender behaviour in the texts that are communicated by the literary works they read.

The reappraisal of such literary texts can then be aimed at changing the mindset of readers. It should also bring to the fore the relation of literary texts to patriarchy. The submissive portrayal of females is another form of controlling them and preventing them from fighting the injustices of this stereotypical portrayal. Current literary texts command females in general to succumb to the will of a man.

In *Inene Nasi Isibhozo*, Mfolo does not believe that a female (MaSukude) should be present at any family meeting. He further says, about the presence of MaSukude in her household affairs, as a show of defiance of her cultural norms:

**UMfolo:**

*Lo ke umfazi uza kwaneka umcimbi womzi emadodeni uza kusanekele njani?*  
(This wife who is going to present the state of affairs of the family on men. On what grounds is she going to do that?)

(Mtingana, 1992:24)

This text shows that Mfolo does not accept the presence of a female at their meeting. MaSukude is instructed to keep quiet and to leave the meeting to her brothers-in-law. This is clearly stereotypical evidence of the oppression of females. This method is used to force her into submission. This act is a
repression of women. According to Reber (1985:640), in sociology and social psychology, repression refers to the limitations on an individual’s freedom of expression and action set by a dominant group or individual. To keep MaSukude where she belongs, Mfolo demands that she must go to fetch water. It is a patriarchal society where the writer states that one of the important duties of a female is to take care of her kitchen chores. As can be observed from the text, it is obvious to Mfolo, that Lolo, the brother-in-law of MaSukude’s husband, should take over and control MaSukude’s household affairs.

Good females are perceived as giving in to the authority and control of their male counterparts, even in matters that concern them and the running of the home. Like any minor, females should show respect towards their husbands on all family issues.

MaSukude’s situation is evidence that females live in a male-dominated patriarchal society in which women remain unacknowledged. Female characters are neglected in all the decision-making which demands that they be dependent, passive and nurturing.

The fact that males are portrayed as better than females, which is recurrent in all the selected texts, leads to the conclusion that men are superior to, and more human than, females. Miller (1990:253) says: In African literature as a whole woman hardly have a mouth yet.’ Having a voice is the rhetorical tool of unity, homogenization and their empowerment. Censorship of freedom of expression for females should therefore be recognised and addressed in all such literary texts. Men like Mfolo strongly believe that the censorship of speech assists them to achieve the submissive behaviour that they expect from their females. The literary texts strongly reveal that all such literature written by males is fundamentally discriminatory in nature.
Females therefore, cannot be expected to play an equally significant role as their husbands in a male-dominant world. The censorship of the freedom of expression on the part of females is generally viewed as a denial of their human rights to express their opinions on issues that affect them and threaten their very lives. Females need to be emancipated from such traditional situations.

According to the code of the literary text MaSukude, as a widow, should stand by her husband's brother at all times. She should not behave differently or take a different route from the one taken by her brother-in-law. This shows that males command respect and are expected to be authoritarian while females enjoy less respect and are expected to be submissive. This confirms the conviction that this submissiveness is one of the unquestioned assumptions of this cultural perception. Its influence may be seen in all sexual situations and gender viewing.

The stereotypical portrayal of females shows a disdain for females who deny the ethos of patriarchy and demand a new and different order founded on freedom of speech. Such a new order expresses angry feelings on injustice and is engaged in raising women's social awareness of their oppression by literary texts. They are very discontented about men's control of them. It is the main function of any literary artist to open the eyes of society to the good and the bad that coexist among its inhabitants. Daymond (1984:35), in Manyaka (1995:164), suggests that any form of protest is against the distorted order of doing things;

Daymond says:

Protest at this state of affairs is not a gesture, but a system of belief, a quiet and tenacious one, which is situated at the point where the way things are have diverged into the way they could be or could have been. An act of memory in a society which has lost an international dynamic of renewal can be allied to an act of provocation.
Protest is used by MaSukude as a tool for changing things that are in disarray to their normal order. Meillassoux (1981) says it is bound to be used in a community where the order of doing things has become too rigid, or where all the power is vested in one sector of the society, as it is in a patriarchal community. This protest is perceived as being a response to the unreasonable adherence to traditional perceptions found in literary texts. Every text needs to be dynamic so that it is in line with changing times. Explanations of protest need an analysis of the status of the characters and the roles of the people who comprise a family set-up. Status and roles are two of the most paramount aspects of interpersonal relations involved in literature. Status can be defined as an individual’s position within a family structure and his/her society.

All such literary texts have a set of stereotypical behavioural patterns or norms specifying the expected performances of the selected individuals in a variety of social situations. It is clear from the literary texts written by males that female characters like MaSukude are rebellious against the patriarchal control of men. She is stereotypically portrayed as a female who is seen as a villain by refusing to submit to the authority of men.

Females, in the selected texts, yearn for their freedom of speech and choice. They want to do away with stereotypical patriarchal control that puts them at loggerheads with menfolk who want to maintain the old order. Meillassoux (1981) confirms the view that female characters are portrayed as people who cannot be in charge of the realisation of their freedom. Literary texts portray men as having the power to place certain restraining orders on their female counterparts. Kelleher (1964:19) explains freedom as:

"The power in man to do what he likes so far as his powers can reach."
This definition stresses that freedom has its limitations. It is limited the point where one’s power can reach and not beyond. Complete freedom does not exist and therefore, no person, irrespective of his or her gender, can have complete freedom. Although freedom is a fundamental fact of human existence, it can be applied only to a certain degree.

This research focuses more emphatically on the particular dilemma of female characters in rapidly changing passages from various literary texts. Given the historically established and stereotypical sanctioned sexism of African communities, there is no possibility of a compromise, or even a truce, between men and women. Fisher (2003) believes that literary texts explore the difficulties of moving from the old traditional order to the new modern way of life, and they seem to bring some solutions to the difficulties encountered by females. From the writers’ perspectives it would appear that they are suggesting that a significant balance be maintained between the social patriarchal control of a man over a woman, and the more modern and liberal values.

The stereotypical portrayal of the militancy of female characters in these selected texts, like MaSukude in Inene Nasi IsiBhozo and NomaMpondomise in Buzani KuBawo, arises from the institutionalized sexism of contemporary literary texts written by males. These selected literary texts convey the observation that if one’s person’s feelings are one’s basic experience, then freedom is the fundamental fact in a one’s existence. In uDike NoCikizwa the difference is between Sando, a man and Cikizwa, a female; they both have freedom of choice. It is not only Cikizwa who relies on her sense of independence. Her father’s sister warns Sando against the dangers of his old-fashioned idea of forcing a child to marry a man she does not love.

UNomatiletile:

Ngokwenene andikholwa ukuba uyayiqonda le nto uyenzayo.
Nomatilitile, as a female, tells her brother directly that Cikizwa must be given a chance to decide about her love affair which is seen as her worst type of behaviour. The extract from *uDike NoCikizwa* shows how an individual’s character treats another in a family unit and how texts written by males react to acculturation processes. Some literary texts are those of gender inequality and power struggles; others show the dilemmas of modernisation, especially in literature written by males.

The literary texts separate themselves readily into the particular stages of females’ lives. They deal with what arranged marriage means for female and where their futures fit into their lives. Some stereotypical texts reveal how literature develops and controls the liberation of a female. Senghor (quoted by Lam in Jones, 1987:100) argues that culture is the bedrock of development. This demonstrates how literary works endorse the behaviour of men like Sando in *uDike NoCikizwa* who has misused his culture to benefit himself at the expense of his daughters.

This suggests that in some instances literary texts written by males become a stereotyped viewing of female characters as resisting the accepted values of their culture. This argument is based on selected texts written by males, where the author does not encourage the equality of the sexes.

The selected texts have also exposed the influence of modern literature on females by showing how female characters resist patriarchal control, which denies them their human’s rights. The dilemma around the rejection of patriarchal control by females has created a division among some African literary researchers. African writers, who have written about such themes, must come
under scrutiny. Nomatiletile’s defiance of the arranged marriage reveals that the act is an old school of thought that belongs to earlier days.

UNomatiletile:

Lo Cikizwa asinguye Cikizwa wamaxesha akudala, amaxesha obumnyama; nguCikizwa wala maxesha okhanyo.

(This Cikizwa is not the Cikizwa of the old time, time of darkness; this is Cikizwa of an enlightened time.)

(Mmango, 1983:6)

The above extract indicates that the existing cultural clash is viewed as a stereotypical case where some females are seen as having been influenced by the West to a certain degree. For example, Makhambeni (1988:30), who also wonders whether it is right to blame every change in society on Westernization, says:

On the other hand, it is difficult to ignore this influence and the changes occurring in African societies. The writers have been greatly influenced by Western Culture. This is clear from the stories they have produced, which are obviously against traditional practices. Most stories advocate the abolition of a practice which has been previously accepted without any criticism.

This shows that male African writers need to accept Western culture by writing literary texts that are unbiased towards females. Stereotypical people look at this writing as being partly discriminating because, if they are totally authentic, it would mean that all literary writings are then portrayed as extremely oppressive. It would also mean that literary works written by male writers would not have
changed their perception of oppressive ways of writing things if it had not been for Western influence.

The revealing of female sensibilities in an image and form, specific to female characters, always runs dangerously close to reiterating the familiar stereotypes. It is also suggests permanence, a deep, basic and inevitable difference between men and women and the way each of them perceives the world.

4.5 Portrayal of female characters as gossippers

According to Marland (1993), the word gossip applied to both males and females until the negative connotations associated with the word became commonplace. It is now used exclusively against females. The stereotypes that were formed long ago are still prevalent in contemporary literature. Gossip is often understood as being women’s speech, a view that is completely unfounded by literature researchers. Men are rarely referred to as gossips and their conversations seem never to be regarded as gossip.

However, the study shows that men have always been just as eager to gossip as are women, but the talk they engage in has been labeled as "conversation", an exchange of mere information. Hurston (1969) sees female characters as always stereotypically portrayed as destructive in their gossiping and always intending to cause harm, as the following statement clearly shows:

UMaSukude:

*Uyabona wethu, mna ndicinga ukubayeka bayicele le ntombi bafuna ukuyizeka, ze ndisuke ndiye kuhleba phaya kwamkhozi.*

(You see friend I am thinking of letting them continue with marriage preparations, and I will go to badmouth at the in-laws’ family.)

(Mtingane, 1992:32)
The above extract portrays female characters as being capable of ruining the future of other people through gossiping. This female character employs the gossiping as their main weapon of fighting injustice against her in-laws. The writer depicts females as people who use gossiping as a way of fighting others by ruining their lives. It is evident that solidarity amongst females, to a large extent, is maintained through gossip especially, though not exclusively, through that of a painful situation.

In these circumstances people tend to reach a consensus on norms and exert a consistently informal pressure on each other to conform. Duribar (1996) says literary works portray female gossiping as an integral part of women’s lives. This is a stereotypical portrayal of female characters that confirms the hurt they can inflict on the lives of others. For instance, Siphambo’s Izinto Zimana Ukwenzeka Novuyisile is presented saying:

UNovuyisile:

   Tyhini le naphunga iti ngegama lam kutheni?
   (Oh why do you drink coffee over my name?)
   (Siphambo, 2001:97)

The above quotation confirms her feeling of belonging to a social group with a common history, common traditions and shared standards of behaviour. Gossip is also seen in literary works as something to be feared and can harm people’s reputations. Novuyisile shows grave concern that this gossip can hurt her husband:

UNovuyisile:

   Kanti ndincedeni wethu ngegama lam. Angathini kodwa umyeni wam akufumana esi simanga? Uxolo noko zintombi kaloku mna ndingumfazi womntu.
   (But please stop talking about my name? What will
happen if my husband finds these things out? Please girls, because I am someone’s wife.)

(Siphambo, 2001:97)

The extract above shows that females’ conversation is always going to become the agent of gossip when it is confirmed that gossip is accepted as normal. This would contradict the friendliness rules of females. The writer shows that there will inevitably be gossip amongst females.

UMaBhangqo:

Ungatsho uphinde ntombi, kuba loo Nompumelelo kaJeJe wazala umtwana oyinkwenkwe ngokuya wayesesibhedlela eBhayi.
(Say it again girl, because this Nompumelelo of JeJe had a baby boy while she was in hospital in Port Elizabeth.)

(Siphambo, 2001:23)

Gossip in a literary text is intended to act as a deterrent to any future sexual “deviance” in the literary work. Dunbar (1996) sees gossip as playing a negative role in the context of the literature. Without gossip it is difficult to know who is ill or who needs some kind of assistance. In literary texts female characters provide the ideal physical location for the exchange of gossip. Some even continue to make several visits each day to the friend and many go more than once.

Men in literary works are seen as less prone to gossip and are portrayed as people who spend their time doing fruitful things. However, in reality their gossip has the same effect as that of women. It reinforces group solidarity and helps maintain certain standards. Among many men, gossip is dreaded as a way of losing one’s reputation and of getting a bad name in their communities. Having a good name meant having community respect and being able to hold up one’s
head as a man. Losing this could mean being looked down on, not respected, sometimes being ostracized, and occasionally verbally abused. Females are portrayed as people who are aware of the dangers caused by gossipping:

UNonjoli:

*Ningandenzi bafazi ndiyakoyika ukubethwa nokubanjwa.*

(Please do not say anything women. I am afraid of being beaten and condemned.)

(Mmango, 1983:75)

The above words uttered by Nojongile emphasizes the fact that female characters are stereotypically portrayed as being gossippers who really intend to ruin the lives of other people through malicious gossip. Men treat gossip like humour. They do not directly refer to male characters as gossips, but refer to them in private conversation as being gossips. They belittle them by attributing feminine qualities to their speeches.

Although these literary works carry hefty negative connotations with the word in pre-colonization form being dictated, gossip is used primarily to describe females and is now denoted as being no proper way for females to carry on conversations with others. Men become outraged at the gossip in which females engage themselves, and females who gossip are seen as catty, insensitive and envious.

According to Alice Walker (1995:260), there are two primary reasons why women are not taken as seriously as men. One is that women are seen as lacking a critical skill and are ill-equipped at handling social problems intelligently. They are perceived as people who do not even make an attempt to deal with their social problems. They prefer to talk about the peripheral lives of other women involvement, and not about what they feel about themselves as women. This
kind of stereotypical treatment of tends to be very unfair toward female characters in literature.

It seems as if Alice Walker (1995) sees female characters as women who have suffered. Even women critics sometimes have assumed that a literary text which deals with the relationships between female and male characters, is less important than one showing men as primarily antagonistic. In many literary texts written by male writers tell very little about the role of females in their communities.

Siphambo in Izinto Zimana Ukwenzeka portrays female characters as gossips who badmouth other people. This is confirmed in the following statement by MaBhongo:

UMaBhangqo:

*Hayi wethu MaNtethe, kha undiyeke ngeendaba zolwimi lwenu kule Manzana.*

(No MaNtethe, please leave me with gossiping news of this Manzana.)

(Siphambo, 2001:23)

Literary writers resort to stereotyping merely because they are either unable to portray or unwilling to present female characters in their totality. These females are portrayed as gossips in these texts, expressing thereby the traditional view that females' social responsibilities revolve around nothing more than gossiping. These females are portrayed as malicious gossips who are elevated to the status of witches. It is this criticism that damages their lives and their images, but because they are females they are rarely considered on their own terms.

Surely it is better to be thought of as a female, and to experience bad things in your life, exactly as female characters experience them in these literary works, than to be a token female. They are considered to have contempt for their
autonomous existence which makes them a menace to human life. A continuation of the struggle for self-definition and affirmation is the essence of what it means to be a female. This is what it means in male-dominated literary texts.

Hurston (1969) says female characters have been discriminated against and reduced to a divisive cancer that has chopped the female race into polarized sections. Consequently, it has devoured its own soul and is doomed. What is the insanity that has made women turn on themselves and caused them to clan together to create a type of psychic annihilation? Many female characters in male writings find it hard to identify and speak disparagingly of the privileges that stem from being worshippers of their men. Yet they themselves are portrayed as not being permitted to speak their minds.

Female characters are portrayed as people who want men with high social status in their communities, based on their possessions. They are portrayed as being perfectly happy to trade their looks for materialistic gain. Like Nosipho in iZinto Zimana Ukwenzeka, they are portrayed as females who want affluent men who drive posh cars and they willing to use their looks and charm to get these men.

4.6 Potrayal of division of labour

Occupational segregation by gender might be due to supply-side factors; demands on both the male and female life span. For instance, the major supply-side theory depends on the explanation which states that, since females generally anticipate shorter and less continuous working lives than men, it is be in the interest to choose occupations which require less strenuous work.

In Becker’s ‘Treatise on the Family’ (1991), the gender division of labour arises due to gains from specialized investments and intrinsic differences between the sexes. He assumes two types of human capital: the household and the market
sector. He further believes that a female's inherent advantage in household activities and the presence of increasing returns on human capital investment prompts them to specialize in household work, while their spouses specialise in market work. Thus, the model relies on the biological differences between the sexes to support the sexual division of labour.

Mfolo in *Inene Nasi IsiBhozo* approves of this view. This becomes clear in his conversation with his male family members that Masukude’s job is to fetch water from the river, cook and perform nursemaid duties, and not to discuss family issues.

UMfolo:

*MaSukude, thatha, i-emele uyokukha amanzi, upheke, sakukubiza xa sikufuna.*

(MaSukude, take the bucket and go to fetch water and cook, we will call you when we need you.)

(Mtingane, 1992:25)

The above passage reminds Masukude of her maternal role. In womanist terms Mfolo's idea is to be viewed as the constructive thinking of a man who shows concern for a female's place. But from a stereotypical view, his utterances reinforce this role categorization, especially with regard to females. Masukude should know her role.

Thus, gender-stereotypical discrimination against the woman, as a water fetcher and nurturer is re-affirmed. This is typical of men’s attitudes. They expect their wives to stay in the kitchen when they discuss family matters. Gender text, therefore, is not simply produced by masculine thought, but is rather a product of that thought, as it relates to the particular ways in which a female’s productive, reproductive and domestic life is organized. Buchbinder (1991:133) rightly asserts that: "The myth of the mother is the effect of a division of reproductive
labour, as well as the result of the repression of the feminine within the masculine imagination of self”. Mfolo refers to the carrying of water to Masukude because he sees it as a feminine task.

As portrayed in these literary texts, men are seen as people who should pay attention to their family issues and not to feminine matters like fetching water. Hofsted asserts (1991:81) that:

Men are supposed to be concerned with achievements outside the home - hunting and fighting in traditional societies, the same but translated in economic terms in modern societies. Men, in short, are supposed to be assertive, competitive and tough. Women are supposed to be more concerned with taking care of the home, of the children, and of people in general, to take tender roles.

The above statement expresses the traditional perception that females’ responsibilities revolve around their domestic tasks. It can be further argued that a female cannot enter into any disputes. The fact remains that a female’s place is in the kitchen, where she has to keep herself busy with household chores such as cooking, washing, sweeping and scrubbing the floors.

This is in accordance with the stereotypical division of work, as Krige (1950:184) pointed out that:

On the whole, the rougher tasks requiring strength are done by the men, while to the women falls the work that requires more continuous attention. The housework naturally falls within the sphere of woman’s activities, cooking and beer-making, sweeping, washing of utensils and fetching firewood and water. In this they are helped by their daughters, who at an early age begin to fetch water, sweep and look after their baby brothers and sisters.
The above statement shows a stereotypical view of females as being less physical, and they should therefore carry out the less important housework. Their future role as adults is determined during these formative years. However, as Hadfield (1999) points out, the sexual division of labour is fairly constant across societies, i.e. all tasks in a society tend to be gendered easily identifiable as either women’s work or men’s work. However, sexual division of labour, varies considerably across cultures.

The biological theory does not account for this fact. But literary works have portrayed female characters’ roles as being to gather wood for making fire. In iZinto Zimana Ukwenzeka females are in the veld to gather wood.

UMaBhangqo:

Inene singatshonelwa lilanga singathezanga iinkuni xa sinokuphulaphula wena.
(Really, the sun will set without us gathering any wood if we listen to you.)

(Siphambo, 2001:28)

The above extract reflects gender roles clearly, where all the characters of one gender are trained for only specific tasks, while the opposite gender is trained solely for the complementary tasks. In such a case, it can be observed that individuals of the same gender receive training according to their sexes Sexual division of labour emerges. Females are expected to perform certain tasks, and vice versa.

4.7 Portrayal of female characters as witches

Females are accused of metamorphosing their human form into bats, converting people into zombies, and of causing death through the use of toxic medicines. Bongmba (2001) says practices to which the witchcraft labels have been applied
are those which influence another person’s mind, body or property against his or her will. These practices are believed to undermine the social order.

Many male writers have stereotypically and disinterestedly portrayed female characters as witches. Both Hellen and Olubi Sodipo (1986) are seen as having such a criterion that actually puts them into a hodge-podge of observations, cultural models and images derived from mother figures. In any event, the attitude of females in literary work does not depend on how closely they correspond with one another’s experiences or preconceptions.

The attitude of male writers is part of the reason for addressing this problem. Until fairly recent times female characters have been predominantly stereotyped and incorrectly portrayed by male writers.

4.7.1 Portrayal of female characters as witches in Ngani’s Umkhonto KaTshiwo

In Umkhonto KaTshiwo it can be observed that female characters are relatively marginal in their society. Society permits a form of hospitality and aggression towards those who are accused of witchcraft. The following statement is evidence of what these witches do when they attack their victims:

UNonkosi:

*Banditsale bandirhuqa kambe ndingoxha thisayo.*
*Bandirhuqel engaphandle, bendi thethela ngamandla:*  
*Sesihamba ngomyalelo; silifumene ixhoba.*
(They pulled and dragged me and I resisted. They pulled me outside, they spoke harshly to me: we are following our instructions; we have got the victim.)  
(Nguni, 1993:8)
The above statement indicates that females use dirty tricks as supernatural tactics to ruin the futures of other people and even engage in physical tricks on easy targets. This literary text projects the idea that females, who are capable of physically harming any direct physical contact. A literary text shows that there are number of different techniques that can be utilized by females who are witches all of which involve learning how to manipulate certain objects and substances.

The content of the belief in witchcraft can be understood more fully, and its contrast with sorcery can be seen more clearly by examining two of its major features. Marwick (1965) says witches are almost always thought to be females, particularly married females, who are past the age of childbearing. There are a few cases in which men are suspected of being witches, but in each case the person is a somewhat marginal individual, not an active male.

They are portrayed as assertive people who are representative of the norms. It is also true that some of literary texts written by males emphasise the thought that men have control over a witch who will then do their bidding. Then their ability to control a witch is said to be a kind of sorcery. Marwick (1965) further says that as females grow older and no longer bear children, their behaviour shifts into the public arena by speaking out in group discussions, finding a male trading partner in another group, or becoming the social custodian of the male flutes.

However, it is not these older females who are most often stereotypically portrayed and likely to be thought of as witches, but younger females whose families are not yet fully established and whose extra-familiar interests are largely subordinate to those of their husbands. Secondly, witches are found among the women of one’s own local group and not some distant place. He further say they are to be found among women who are associated with daily activities in the village, not shadowy figures from places seldom visited or little known.
In *Umkhonto KeTshiwo* the stereotypical murdering of innocent female characters as victims of witchcraft, is confirmed. Female characters are beheaded with axes and cut into parts. Some are murdered, while others are simply victims of wild accusations. This is confirmed in the following portion, which triggers the killers by saying:

Inkosikazi:

*Nomdlezana onje ngam nje na, thole leleduna*  
(And even a woman with a young baby like me, young man?)

UKhwane:

(You always leave that baby and go to witchcraft. There are many children who are orphans today because of you. The grace that we are giving you here is that you go to the spirit-world with your baby. The waging of sin is death.)

(Nguni, 1993:26)

Through witchcraft this female has killed many innocent people. This is in marked contrast to those about sorcery. Particular individuals may be accused of being sorcerers, but it is happens much more commonly that a village or clan is identified as containing the sorcerer with the individual seldom becoming known.

According to Gerald (1981:106), witchcraft is not a technique like sorcery, but it is a particular type of person. Gerald further believes that witches act because of a
substance inside the body known as “bird” which is used by witches for witchcraft to take their targets. Although this substance can be passed from mother to daughter, its transfer is not a matter of intention on the part of either mother or daughter. Gerald says females who have been stereotypically accused of witchcraft may suffer severe physical deprivations.

These are attempts to make her admit her deeds or to extract the “bird” from her body. They are the motivating forces behind the deeds of a witch. They also confer special powers, including powers of flight and transformation into other living forms usually insects or bats and of invisibility. They can enter other physical substances, particularly to eat them away from the inside.

Society continues to ascribe different psychological attributes to each sex, and assign different duties and ways of living because it is assumed that they have different capabilities, moral, social and intellectual, as well as physical.

Gerald (1981) believes that frustrations from these demons can be the causes of death, disease, failure and misfortune. The literary texts regard these as witchcraft which is caused by an evil female. This literary perception of witches, uTshiwo believes, provides an explanation for most of the evils that befall man. Witchcraft is a phobia among the African tribes and the intensity of their socio-perceptional belief and conviction lead to the eliminating of many female’s life.

The following statement indicates that it is a female who is trying to show them their importance to their children who will be left alone. Feneagan (1993) strongly believed that females who are experiencing problems in their life situations sometimes project their pain through song. They always sing the song of what they experience in their communities. As may be seen in Umkhonto KaTshiwo:
The above statement indicates the fear of a female in her song to voice her awareness of the killings that would be destructive to her family, and this might even lead to females leaving their crying children without anyone to take care of them.

In general literary works, witches are tortured and murdered. Hatred ensures the discovery of witches and the most terrible modes of torture are used to extract confessions. These female characters are blamed for the death of their neighbours, or for causing various plights and rendering some bridegrooms important. Freudians interpret these persistent myths of satanic creatures with horns, big and red tails, and huge sexual appetites, of kidnapping and sexually abusing, mutilating or killing children. These females are portrayed as people who put broomsticks between their legs and rub on a magic unguent and fly to a sexual liaison with a demonic he-goat and, as creatures with supernatural powers, such as metamorphosis. Evans-Pritchard (1937) guesses that witchcraft and sorcery are for the most part brewed in the cauldron of sexual repression and served up as a justification for the public trading in art and literature, if not in life.

According to Gerald (1981), many illnesses, particularly terrifying dreams in which the targeted victim is being strangled, are diagnosed as an attack by female devils. Invariably the attack is attributed to an enemy, a witch who has sent her Tikoloshe to throttle and kill. In Umkhonto KaTshiwo the daughter of the King has a terrible dream and she tells her father about her dream. This act is
associated with witchcraft, which is caused by women who live in the same
neighbourhood. Many females are killed because of such a dream that is
believed, that people are suffering illnesses because these females have caused
sicknesses through their practice of witchcraft.

The following statement shows this stereotypical belief in witchcraft that is the
cause of sickness in the King’s daughter:

UTshiwo:

*Gqwilhandini namhla uza kundazi!*

(Witch, today you will know me!)

(Nguni, 1993:10)

The above words indicate a stereotypical view of a society that always believes
that females are the cause of sickness. This leads to innocent females being
killed without any substantial evidence of involvement in the practice of
witchcraft. Heald (1986) believes that it is females who are victims of
stereotypical accusations of bewitching other people in many cases, and they are
killed or burned in their houses or isolated by their communities. If a witchdoctor
is diagnosed with an illness as being due to witchcraft, they will point out who is
responsible for such sickness, and in most cases the people who are accused
are innocent females who are then forced to make a confession and even
exorcised to expel the spirit. A witchdoctor is regarded as a priest and a healer
as one who among other things, detects, exposes and eradicates witches.

Literary works depict a stereotypically superstitious belief that witchdoctors have
the exceptional power of speaking directly to the ancestral spirits, conveying their
messages and insisting on various rites to honour, placate or exorcise evil. In
that process females become easy targets.
4.7.2 Portrayal of female characters as witches in Mtingane’s Inene Nasi IsiBhozo

Inene Nasi IsiBhozo below confirms the general perception on females as being a deep and dangerous section of the community, capable of bewitching other people and give misleading advice at times. MaSukude is to blame for doing the dirty work which is regarded as witchcraft ill-treating her stepson unfairly.

UMaDlamini:

\[ Gqprimirandini elingenanceba ngumntwana ongenanina! \]
(You witch who does not have sympathy with a child who has no mother.)

(Mtingane, 1992:2)

The above statement shows that MaSukude’s actions are regarded as the work of the witch, who is seen as unsympathetic, and is not accepted by her family for the way she treats stepson. What it suggests is that she has got the heart of a witch, which is tantamount to the killing of an innocent person. This clearly indicates that people who are doing dirty work are taken to be associated with witchcraft.

The following statement shows that the female is ready to kill an innocent person:

UNoayini:

\[ Lifihle ke kweyona ndawo uyiqondayo. \]
(Hide it in a place you understand.)

(Mtingane, 1992:45)

The above quotation portrays Noayini as being a cruel and disgraceful female character. It shows that this female character is willing to murder. Noayini is portrayed as a filth female character who is giving dangerous support and bad advice to MaSukude.
MuSukude gives uThemba an African salad which is poisoned to kill him. Her intention is curb him from getting married before her biological son.

UThemba:

Lo mvubo usuke wabulumeza
(This African salad is unpalatable)
(Mtingane, 1992:46)

The above statement demonstrates how MaSukude poisoned Themba. This witchcraft work is done through the love, as she pretends as if she is serving Themba food.

Poisoning Themba was not enough for MaSukude. She engages her in a spree of killing anyone who stands in her away of obtaining full authority in her household.

UMaSukude:

Uyabona ke, le komityi ize iphunge uLolo uyeva
(Do you see this cup, Lolo should drink from it
do you understand?)
(Mtingane, 1992:58)

The above extract indicates that MaSukude uses another tactic to kill her brother-in-law, but witch idea turns sour on her because this cup never serves its purpose and instead it becomes self-inflicting.

4.7.3 Portrayal of female characters as witches in Mmango’s uDike noCikizwa

In uDike noCikizwa, NoNjoli is portrayed as a witch who makes light of other people’s misery to serve her own interests. She is portrayed as engaging in malicious practices which assist her in fulfilling her personal interests. She further says that she intends to make sure that she gets Mjongwa.
UNojoli:

*Ngoko ke ndiza kuzama ngako konke endinako ukuba ndimfumane uMjongwa, abe ngowam.*

(I’m going to try as hard as I can to get Mjongwa to be mine.)

(Mmango, 1983:13)

The above phrase indicates that uNoNjoli has an interest in Mjongwa how is already engaged in preparations to marry another woman, but she is determined to do anything to get her man. Obviously she is not helping Cikizwa, but playing a dirty game as if she is bringing a solution to her plight. She pretends to be assisting Cikizwa, but all she is doing is misleading her. Nonjoli gives Cikizwa some advice on who Cikizwa can get out of marriage:

UNojoli:

*Nangoku ukuba umfana okanye intombi inokuphendula ithi; “andisayikwenjenjalo,” akangeke atshatise umfundi.*

(Even if a man or girl can answer by saying: “I am not going to do so”, the reverend will not continue).

(Mmango, 1983:15)

According to Werhol (1993:X), feminism shares certain beliefs that seem to be the common denominators amongst all women. Feminist critics generally agree that the stereotypical portrayal of women leaves its traces in various literary texts. Feminist literary criticism plays a worthwhile part in the struggle for the liberation of women. Nonjoli is portrayed as a female witch who is engaged in doing wrong things:

UPhuthi:

Bendicing'ukuba ungusisi kanti uligqwrhakazi kodwa ubonwe ndimnje Uza kuduma ngentlondiYobuggwirha
(I thought you were a sister, but you are a witch and that you have been seen by me; you are going to be known as a witch.)

(Mmango, 1983:60)

The above phrase portrays a female character as a witch who is seen to be someone who does bad things to others. This suggests that a witch is not someone to be respected.

It is clear that Nonjoli wants to take Cikizwa’s life. She feels rejected by Mjongwa after she had proposed to him. This rejection makes her out to be seen as a failure. Thereafter her efforts to marry Mjongwa become hopeless. Her last resort is to kill Cikizwa by poisoning her.

UNonjoli:

Maliphuumele eli linge! UCikizwa mandimenzele isiselo aya kuthi akusisela angaliboni xa litshonayo namhlanje!

(This plan must succeed. I must make a drink so that if Cikizwa drinks it, she will not see when sunset today!)

(Mmango, 1983:58)

The above statement shows the heartless of a female character who wants to poison an innocent person. Nonjoli is depicted as a horrible witch who makes several attempts to stop Cikizwa’s marriage because she loves Mjongwa.

4.7.4 Potrayal of females as betrayers in Mkhonto’s Inzonobila

It can be observed that the writer claims that he fully understands female behaviour. The writer’s portrayal of female characters in Inzonobila is bold and courageous. The bittersweet complexities of true womanhood are daringly depicted in each of his female characters. MamNtakwende, as a female
character in Inzonzobila’s trilogy, possesses such an authentic depth that even the little that is seen of them has a profound impact on the social changes.

Cohen (1973:38) says: The stream of consciousness penetrates into the inner life as Ewen (in Rimmon-Kenan, 1983:38) calls it. This confirms the fact that the writer describes the expected logical order and transitions of the flow of inner thoughts, feelings, memories, and psychological associations jostling within a character’s mind. Through characterization, the writer offers insights into what it means to be female in an unequal society.

This strikes a delicate balance between the extreme attitudes of feminism. Mkhonto’s female characters, although drastically different from each other in personalities, like MamNtakwenda and MamTshawe, manifest at their core true womanly femininity. In Inzonzobila the author demonstrates, through the internal conflict of MamNtakwenda, that she betrays and stabs her beloved husband. The implication of MamNtakwenda’s actions as expressed in this scene and other parts of the drama, is that females cannot be trusted. The outcome of this trust is that MamNtakwenda is a liar.

Although this drama book gives an artistic impression of the social facts, the dramatist does not only communicate his own individual thoughts, sentiments or motivations. In Inzonzobila, he also shares his personal feelings about African women’s deeds. He identifies with an entire tradition and contributes an important link to the tradition of the future. Female characters are most often the ones who are vulnerable in this type of situation. They suffer emotionally and socially, like MamNtakwenda in her interior monologue which reveals her psychological state of mind.

UMamNtakwenda:

Mandimxelele na bethu ngale nyewe?
Mandiyiqhaqe na intliziyo yam? Aziyi kumbulala
na kodwa ezi zixingxi zam? Kudala
The above quotation shows how dangerous this female is. MamNtakwenda is suffering because, in her heart, she does not want to tell her husband. MamNtakwenda finds herself in a tug-of-war between the id and the superego. The superego imposes the moral code that each person learns during the socialization process, and its main function is to suppress the drives of the id. This is a portrayal of MamNtakwenda as being a person who lacks incorporation and integrates the ideals and values, the inhibitions and the taboos of society. She wants to retain her marriage in order to keep her marital status, but unfortunately she does this at the expense of her beloved husband.

This stream of consciousness of her is the confluence of thoughts which record mental activities ranging from absolutely consciousness to unconscious thoughts. MamNtakwenda is seen as a female character who could guide and protect her family against any outside forces. She portrays the picture of a female who has lived a full life. Although she is a liar to her husband, she is content, even utterly
satisfied, in the role of being his wife. She shows tranquillity, serenity and calmness as ideal female qualities that are a part of the charm of the womanhood she expresses. There are many types of these female characters in the literary text. MamNtakwenda represents just one of them. She pretends to be a pillar of calmness that is a source of strength for her family.

4.8 Gender stereotypes in the naming of female characters

Attention is paid to the fact that names convey various cultural attributes which characterise females in different ways. This issue is about the character inequality between the sexes. It indicates that some of the attributes, displayed by a name, point to the current sexual roles to be found in literary texts. It is literary texts that stereotypically say that the name-givers are men. Nuessel (1992:3) contends that “those who give names often occupy positions of power and authority in their families. Consequently, the act of naming implies that the naming group has a measure of control”. This however, could mean that the name-giver bestows certain powers on a name. What all this means is that names have power.

Nuessel cites Bosmajian (1974a) who frequently observed that the ability to name is an important power. More specifically Bosmajian states:

The power that comes from names and naming is related directly to the power to define others - individual race, sexes, ethnic groups. Our identities, who and what we are, how others see us, are greatly affected by the names we are called and the words with which we are labelled.

(Bosmajian, 1974a in Nuessel, 1992:3)

There may be a nugget of truth that is contained in the common belief that names contribute to the way in which writers perceive situations and how other
people see them as well. This further depicts the strong relationship between a person's name and the whole psychological perspective on females. A name is assumed to have the most significant effect on an individual’s ego.

This also points out that names contain a certain kind of power and that this emblem, in turn, determines the distinctiveness and uniqueness of each person. To be named by someone who is in a powerful position means that the name-giver is always likely to exert some control over the existence of the person. A literary naming technique is already known whereby names are carefully considered so that exactly the right name is bestowed on a person. This name is chosen by a male, in most cases, various literary works.

Men are often portrayed as name-givers to their families and they always provide names that give hope that the name will be a self-fulfilling prophecy, i.e., the child will have the attributes and the powers attached to the name. Nuessel (1992:4) adds that “from their perspective, it may be said that you are what you are named.”

4.8.1 Naming of female characters in Tamsanqa’s Buzani kuBawo

Writers give names to their characters with a specific purpose in mind. As such, the names of these characters may contribute to the plot, theme and other literary elements of a text. In Buzani kuBawo the name that is given to Thobeka, is the most submissive name for a girl. Murphy (in Nuessel, 1992:5) confirms a psychological example that reinforces this claim, when he states that: “.... given names, and assumed names have numerous important significances in the development of a person, and often give clues to their attitudes toward themselves and others with whom they have been closely associated.”

The psychological effect of Thobeka’s name on her nature is made evident by her kindness and her personality, as it manifests itself in her behaviour. In this
way it seems that a name partly influences the way in which an individual thinks and behaves. Herbert (1994:3), in the following statement, shows the stereotype in naming the children. He indicates that the naming of boys is most significant in most of their works:

"Boys, on the other hand, are more likely recipients names commemorating family members or acknowledging roles within the family."

The above statement indicates that male’s names are linked to an ancestor or to the roles of the men should later assume in life. John Stuart Mills’ (1806–1873) observation (in Nuessel, 1992:1) that: "... proper names are not connotative; they denote the persons' personality and this is very important." Nuessel (Ibid: 7) further quotes Nicolaisen (1978:40) who observed that “... words connote and names denote.”

The fact that names denote suggests that they signify or symbolize something. Some names, as stereotypical portrayals, signify femininity. Thobeka’s name epitomizes someone who has resigned herself to explicit subordination to control. The name Thobeka means “ukuthobeka, i.e. to humble.” Because of her humility, Thobeka finds herself in an awkward situation where she gets married to a man who never loved her; but because of her submission to her parents and to her customs she agrees to marry him.

Thobeka is portrayed as an impassive female who does not take any initiative to stop her parents from forcing her into marriage with a man whom she does not know. Perhaps this endorses the fact that humility, dignity, and perseverance are highly rated attributes in womanhood. Thobeka is stereotypically portrayed as totally dependent on her father-in-law who makes decisions on her behalf. Thobeka’s submission may be viewed in two ways.
It may be that the male writer re-affirms the fact that a female has no power to solve problems without the assistance of a man. The other reason could be that the writer wants to depict the fact that men control women’s lives. Thobeka is deserted by her husband, but she could not move out of that frustrating situation on her own. This literary work shows a female stereotypically portrayed as contingent on someone else, either as a wife, or as a sex object.

Nkumane concurs with Marshall (in Jarrett-Macauley, 1996:16) and makes a relevant comment:

> Men just see us here as breeding animals. I do not think they see us as women who have a right to say what we want.

Thobeka is stereotypically portrayed as having excessive respect, following her name, and decides to remain silent about her emotional and spiritual suffering.

Jones (1987:2) shows quite clearly that females of all races, and womanhood itself, have not been treated fairly by male writers in their literary works. Female writers comment on their silence on matters that concern them as follows:

> While it is true that most male writers have not been able to communicate to us how women feel on the burning issues of polygamy, motherhood and relations between the sexes, and have simply presented the traditional picture of the woman accepting her lot. It is not true to say that all male writers have been unsympathetic towards women, or have lacked the ability to present truly complex women, or have merely given us stereotypes.

What is fascinating in the above extract is the idea that male writers resort to stereotyping merely because they are either unable or unwilling to present
female characters in their totality. Thobeka’s name denotes her as a female who is seen to be accepting of her role as a female without question. Adejare (1992) gives a picture of an acquiescent female character with a truly traditional mindset, females who might even want to bear children from unknown husbands. Thobeka is portrayed as a stereotypical female who remains determined to fulfil her task as a female regardless of the fact that Zwilakhe has become so unbearable to her.

In her mind she is portrayed as woman who views herself as doing the correct thing by holding on to what she thinks is rightfully hers. Thobeka’s decision can be viewed in various ways. Literally, being female she has neither the power nor the means to fight against her parents’ decision. Thobeka acts or behaves according to her name. She acknowledges her parents’ decision because, as a woman character, she has no grounds and no right to challenge it.

4.8.2 Naming of female characters in Mmango’s uDike noCikizwa

The name Cikizwa which is from the verb “ukucikizwa” which means “to be beautiful”. This name highlights her physical features. Markey, in Nuessel (1992:1), stated that: “…. it is generally accepted by philosophers and logicians that, while names have reference, they lack sense.”

In essence this claim means that a proper name is an abbreviation of a physical description of a certain individual. This is because most names are descriptive of a particular part of the body, as in the case of Cikizwa who has a beautiful face. The naming of Nomatiletile in this drama follows her name because she does everything in her power to convince her brother to stop forcing uCikizwa to marry Mjongwa.
4.8.3 Naming of female characters in Mtingane’s Inene Nasi IsiBhozo

Aubrey (1981:49) agrees that the name chosen for a female is usually prefixed with “any”, pronounced “Noh”, for example, Noayini. This prefixes “No” mom, “mother of” and has been passed down through untold generations as the handle to the woman’s name. The type of name given to a female, Noayini, which means “steel iron” shows how strange this woman is. She is stereotypically portrayed as a rock-solid character who has a lion’s heart and is a fearless woman. The following statement proves that she is a female with a very strong heart.

UNoayini:

Uza kunqandwa ngomlomo na kuthiwe “Themba, mus ukuzeka”?
(Is he going to be stopped with his mouth, and say “Themba do not marry”?)

(Mtingane, 1992:32)

UNoayini:

Nawe ke susa ilitye endleleni, ukhangele ukuba wophinda ukhubeke na.
(You must then remove the stone on the way and see whether you will be stamped on again.)

(Mtingane, 1992:33)

The above quotation shows that Noayini is a very strong female who is determined to remove whatever gets in her way. She has a steel or stone heart and no sympathy. Her name portrays her as having a strong personality and one who does not care about the norms or values of her society.
4.9 Conclusion

The literary texts are about how female characters who are stereotypically portrayed in isiXhosa literary texts written by males. They show how writers present female characters. Looking at these selected texts which present the stereotypical perception of females that African women have, and the cause of womanhood which has been very inadequately served by African male writers in their literary writings. What is reiterated here is the idea that female characters are currently playing a subordinate role in literature that is written by men.

The universal picture which is portrayed by these literary texts, is that these male authors are oppressive towards female characters. Certain literary texts should be the champions change and justice, and they should inspire other women to fight for their rightful place in their communities and families.

This chapter has depicted stereotypical patriarchal literary works that do not cater for females' feelings. This stereotypical portrayal of men as those who dominate women in literary works does not offer female characters the opportunity to express their ideas about being a woman in a patriarchal society. It has been strongly suggested that female characters are forever expected to keep a low profile in order to maintain their dignity as respectable and respectful females.

This patriarchal perception of female characters should be a good example throughout her life. These literary texts are representative of two kinds of female characters: Thobeka, as representing the submissive woman, and Noayini who represents an arrogant character. The so-called faithful women, like Thobeka, respect their men’s wishes and do not want to be unruly.

Reviewing Thobeka’s behaviour in this light, one can postulate that she propagates the stereotype that every woman should obey the authority of men, even if this means losing one’s individual choice. The second category of female
characters is represented by the resistance villains: Masukude, NomaMpondomise and Cikizwa. These characters, especially Masukude, are the epitomes of women’s resistance and revolution. They strongly represent the new breed of female characters in male literary texts. Female characters have risen above the challenges that have in the past confronted women.

They believe that their fate is not in the hands of their men as it is in Thobeka’s case. NomaMpondomise and Cikizwa’s rebellious behaviour is an outcome of their oppressive male control. These characters, however, managed to outwit their adversaries by resisting and trying to destroy the male dominance that prohibited them from attaining their individual freedom. Such literary texts, which have portrayed men’s dominance, strip females of their human rights.

This chapter shows the relationship that exists between women and literary texts. The psychoanalytical behaviours of the characters are determined mostly by their social environments. It has been demonstrated that these literary texts show the unruly behaviour of these female characters. Therefore, the resistance of these female characters shows a strong relationship between the characters’ actions and the words they utter.
CHAPTER FIVE

THE PSYCHOLOGICAL REVIEWING OF FEMALE CHARACTERS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter is a psychological review of the portrayal of female characters and their behaviour in various literary texts by male writers. This study looks at the negative psychological effects of the prohibition of female characters in making choices. The main objective is to show how male writers try to control the freedom of speech and choice of female characters in their literary works. This can lead to various forms of negative psychological behaviour which can lead to these characters to even commit suicide.

According to Grinberg (1983:157), suicide is a symptomatic act related most often to depression. Grinberg, further says that its etiology is varied and complex, since it is characterized by the collapse of the ego, along with self-reproach and a lowering of self-esteem at the same time. This study has already highlighted the subjective bias evident in the portrayal of suicidal female characters in male literary texts like Inene Nasi IsiBhozo, Buzani kuBawo and uDike noCikizwa. Furthermore, the male writers do not always maintain an objective stance on the issue of gender relationships, but instead align themselves with the existing sexist views.

5.2 Portrayal of female characters as murderers and of being suicidal

Suicide occurs when one is intent on taking one’s own life and a caused by various forms of depressive states. Though it is obvious that people in various incidents commit suicide for other reasons, the vast majority of those who complete the act do so during or in the recovery phase of a depressive episode. Females who commit suicide are actually quite ambivalent about taking their own
lives. Kernberg (1984:71) interpreted suicide as a substitute for a psychosis, which can be linked to an inability to tolerate reality and autoerotic regression.

He further sees suicide as an act of defence of the normal ego against the possibility of developing a full-blown psychosis. The irreversible choice is often made when they are alone and in a state of severe psychological distress, unable to see their problems objectively or to evaluate alternative courses of action. Thus the basic humanitarian problem of suicide is the seemingly senseless death of an individual who may be ambivalent about living or does not really want to die.

A second tragic concern arises from the long-lasting distress among those who are left behind, as Shneidman (1969:249) puts it. The person who commits suicide puts his psychological skeleton in the survivors' emotional closet. Historically, suicide is more common amongst female characters in literary texts. Carson and Butcher (1992:410) agreed that most attempts occur in the context of interpersonal discord or severe life stress.

Female characters, in literary texts, commit suicide more often than male characters and suicidal thoughts may show differing patterns of help-seeking, in females. Suicidal thoughts occur more frequently in young female characters, like Cikizwa and Nonjoli in uDike noCikiwa, or NomaMpondomise in Buzani kuBawo. These females feel trapped in unwanted marriages, or are widows with low levels of social support, or they have experienced stressful lives, like Masukude in Inene Nasi Isibhozo.

The different age patterns of suicide and suicidal thoughts may be because suicidal thoughts and consequent impulsive actions are an indicator of women's rapid mood swings and changes in the life circumstances that surround some females in their hopelessness.
Other contributing factors predicting suicidal behaviour in females are: suicidal ideation, lethality of past attempts, hostility, subjective depressive symptoms, having fewer reasons for living, as well as Morbid Borderline Personality Disorder. The study suggests that the large effect of past suicide attempts on the risk of further attempts may be due to their earlier onset of depression. This may hamper the development of coping skills in Cikizwa, and so make her more vulnerable to suicidal behaviour. Kernberg (1984) emphasises the risk of self-mutilation from infantile disappointments for which are others blamed.

In some cases in literary texts, the high rates of female suicide are found where a female’s status is low and their rights are restricted, for example, Inene Nasi Isibhozo, where MaSukude’s rights are violated by the cultural set-up which causes emotional pressure in undesirable situations. Furthermore, female suicidal behaviour is more common in literary texts in which females are socially discriminated against.

It has been witnessed in uDike NoCikizwa that young female suicides often centre on experiences in which they have been humiliated, discredited, disrespected or unjustly treated in their close relationships. The specific event may be chauvinistic attitude; for example, being forced to accept an arranged marriage. Gender and age-related norms militate against overt expressions of anger and other overt relations. These female characters suffer in their bodies silently; they display the psychic injury and point the finger of blame at the wrongdoers, like Cikizwa who blames her father for the loss of her boyfriend.

The inability to conceive combined with the desire for motherhood is known to produce madness and homicidal tendencies. While these female characters do not give a clear indication as to why they murdered their relatives, the study surmised that these females needed to have the freedom to be with Gugulethu without any strings attached. These females do not deny this accusation. They
find that their relatives interfere with their desire for pleasure and freedom thereby in their minds, justifying murder or suicide.

5.2.1 Potrayal of female characters as murderers and suicidal in Mtingane’s Inene Nasi IsiBhozo

MaSukude is linked to female behaviour in one of the ultimate signs of femininity: motherhood. According to McDowell and Pringle (1992:89), females are supposed to be nurturing, to desire motherhood, and to do anything to protect a child. However, the good mother can go too far with her actions, resulting in her not being a good mother. The desire for motherhood drove MaSukude to commit murder, while the desire to be free from the constraints of motherhood is also a driving force in her actions.

Inene Nasi Isibhozo contains female offenders that in some respects could be considered as being even worse mothers. These females do what is required of them to protect their children from the very real threat of losing their rights and from being an heir to their father’s properties. MaSukude degrades her status by involving herself in street fights. This is to protect her child from the physical abuse of look after cattle and ploughing fields. However, the situation is not presented as self-defense.

During the traditional wedding ceremony of Themba, the stepson of MaSukude, one of the offenders is MaSukude, a mother whose son is killed with poison. According to the plot, MaSukude wants her son to have a better life than Themba and is willing to do whatever she needs to do for this to happen. The desire to protect her child also drives some females to commit murder. Females are supposed to be able to protect their children, so a woman’s inability to do what she is intended to do, may be seen as an understandable reason for criminal behaviour.
This is a drama of a female desiring motherhood so much, that she will do anything in her power to protect her children.

This type of behaviour, which the study refers to as performance violence, is popular in literature about murdering females. It shows the female that self-absorbed turmoil permits anger to emerge in the female’s mind. This interferes with the thirst for the culture’s competing, craving for pleasure, or even hedonism sustained by freedom. In Inene Nasi IsiBhozo, MaSukude is portrayed as a murderer. This shows that her pain is past her remarkably high tolerance level, when the crisis is well into traumatic shock. She further uttered the following words to confirm her killing for her child, Vuma, because her jealousy towards Themba getting married before Vuma:

UMaSukude:

\textit{O! Nkosi yam Bawo wam. O! ngcwele ndambulala ukumbulala. (O! my God, Father. O! grace, I really, really killed him.)}

(Mmango, 1983:15)

The above statement demonstrates that females are capable of taking an innocent life because of the jealousy they possess. With the need to be acceptable in the eyes of her family and her community, MaSukude demands even more perfection from her and reveals the depth of her emotional problem or feeling of loss of control. This again demands a type of self-perpetuating isolation in regard to her pain - a need to minimise and even deny it. As Freud (1986:107) put it, “The id knows no judgment of values or morality.” The id is a dark, inaccessible portion of personality and if it is allowed taking too much control, it can lead a human being to destruction. MaSukude, in her mind, overcompensates in every area of her life, until she can no longer hold it all together. The following statement indicates that Masukude kills her own son:
UMaSukude:

*Ndingathini Nkosi yam ukubulala umntwana wam?*
(Why God did I kill my own child?)

(Mtingane, 1992:60)

The above literary phrase confirms that females are capable of committing murders. MaSukude is preparing to kill Themba, but what eventually happened was that she ended up killing other members of the family as well. According to Schneider (1990:258), the major victimization factors are related to the behaviour of the victim which increases the risk of her falling victim to murder. In his view the potential victim neglects, either consciously or unconsciously, safety precautions and exposes herself repeatedly - consciously or unconsciously - to a victimogenous risk situation.

This also refers to MaSukude who takes the poison with conscious or unconscious intent to kill Themba, her stepson. UNoayini provides uMasukude with the necessary poison to kill her stepson when she says:

UNoayini :

*Thatha le mpahla ibe ngakuwe.*
(Take this parcel with you.)

(Mtingane, 1992:44)

Noayini shows her unwavering support for MaSukude as a stonehearted female who is willing to take an innocent life. She gives MaSukude a poisonous substance to make the death look like an accident. She persuades MaSukude to use this method in order that it might appear that his death was due to natural causes. MaSukude suffers from major depression and social anxiety. She is extremely paranoid, fearing being robbed of her belongings. Trying to prevent him from marrying before her biological son, MaSukude has also committed another murder. She lacks any alternative means of influencing her in-laws about
her plight of gender dominance, as being one of subordination. This, in turn, leads her to attempt to kill Themba. She is in an uncontrollable state of mind:

UNosisa:

Wakhwaza, umama uNoayini, wabaleka waphuma, wasukela utata waza kungena apha. Bajjisana, umama wamxabela.

(She shouted to mother Noayini, and run out, chasing an uncle and pushing each other, and mother hacked him with an axe.)

(Mtingane, 1992:62)

The above quotation portrays a dangerous female who killed an unarmed person with an axe. Because men have striven to control MaSukude, albeit with variable success, MaSukude struggles to resist coercion and maintain her freedom of choice. Brinkmanship and the risk of disaster lead MaSukude to consider this a dangerous course of action. She kills this man as an act of self-preservation when her situation has became desperate.

MaSukude uses violence, as an act of self-defence, in order to ward off any act of lethal violence against her. MaSukude suffers tremendous psychological stress due to the patriarchal behaviour of her in-laws. Bal (1984) argues that the sort of coercion noted here leads to a higher prevalence rate for neuroses, affective disorders and organic psychoses, and this reveals that one of the most frequent factors forcing such women to commit murder, is a conflict situation with her in-laws.

The cultural ideology of masculine domination has a significant impact on MaSukude’s murdering spree. She commits murder as a form of protest against the miserable consequences of gender discrimination. She commits suicide as a means of escape, or as form of protest, against the miserable consequences of
gender discrimination. She feels that she has been mistreated by her family in-laws. Murdering people is her expression of a sense of hurt or rage, because she feels that her in-laws have interfered in her household matters.

5.2.2 Potrayal of female characters as murderers and suicidal in Mmngo’s uDike noCikizwa

Nonjoli in uDike noCikizwa; she says the following words to show her willingness to kill for what she wants. She is arming herself against a threat. Her intention of harming Cikizwa shows that she is a dangerous person.

UNonjoli:

Ndiza kukufundisa kananjalo ukuba ubuhle buyingozi kumninibo. Akungekhe undishiyisele kuMjongwa uze uphile. Yifa nobuhle bakho!
(I will teach you that beauty is dangerous to her owner. You will never take Mjongwa from me and still live. You will die with your beauty!)

(Mmango, 1983:58)

The extract above shows how dangerous Nonjoli can be and that she is willing to murder for the man she wants. This demonstrates that one’s social environment does affect one emotionally and psychologically and, therefore, probably plays some role, in combination with other factors, such as personality and jealousy in precipitating one to consider murder. This female is portrayed as being jealous of the beauty of the other female. She concocts a poisonous substance to murder uCikizwa.

UNonjoli:

UCikizwa mandimenzele isiselo aya kuthi akusisela angaliboni xa litshonayo namhlanje.
The extract above depicts a female character who is portrayed as a jealous murderer who intends to kill Cikizwa. Her manic display of jealousy underlies depression, anxiety, panic, poor self-esteem and a serious lack of confidence. Her irrational jealousy of Cikizwa, and her plan to murder her gives an intimate insight into how this disorder torments her feelings. Failure, due to the unhappiness of being unable to get the attention of Mjongwa, drives her to the act of murder.

Some writers agree with Ernst Kris, who is quoted by Arlow (in Corsini and Wedding, 1989:19), when he says: Psychoanalysis may be defined as human nature seen from the perspective of conflict. Psychoanalysts view the mind as the battlefield of conflicting forces. It has also been discovered that fantasies act as functions in the psychic reality. These fantasies can so easily break away from reality. This occurs in order to fulfil the sufferer’s wishes or to allay any dangerous fears that he/she may be harbouring. Nonjoli threatened to take her life and did so. Although she is distressed by her emotional state, she makes a statement reporting her evil deed by telling the truth about her wrongdoing:

UNonjoli:

*Athe akufadalala amacebo am ndafikelela kwisigqibo sokuba ndizibulale – ndizidlise ngesiselo ebendisifake iyeza lokubulala, ndisithi ngelam ndiza kudlisa uCikizwa.*

(If my plans are not working, I may come to the decision of killing myself – and poisoning myself with a drink into which I have put medicine that can kill, thinking that I will poison Cikizwa.)

(Mmango, 1983:64)
The extract above proves that females are portrayed as people who create problems for others and cannot face the consequences of their actions. Nonjoli desires to kill Cikizwa, but fails and she ends up committing suicide. Freud (1912) in his *Totem and Taboo: The Law of Talion*, which is so deeply rooted in human feelings, asserts that murder can only be expiated by the sacrifice of another life: self-sacrifice points back to blood guilt, which is caused by a failure to achieve success. Nonjoli fails to kill Cikizwa and this leads to her depressed state and reveals a sense of hopelessness. Her subsequent state of mind is linked to suicidal behaviour.

Vuyisswa sees life differently because, to her, life is about happiness. She even sees her present life as the most challenging. She strongly believes that those who pass away will enjoy eternal life:

UVuyiswa:

\[
\text{Mna ndithi ukufa kukonwaba ubomi bubo obukrakrayo.} \\
\text{(I am saying death is happiness and life is bitter.)}
\]

(Mtingane, 1992:52)

The above phrase shows that MaSukude is considering killing herself. She could not afford to see many people die because of her plan to kill Themba; but unfortunately her son died. She is portrayed as a weak character that could not face the consequences of her actions. The statement projects women as being weak people who cannot face social problems. They would rather take their own lives than find solutions to their problems.

Vuyiswa believes that death is better choice than living a life which is full of problems. She decided to take her life, like other women characters who also could not face life and its challenges.
Nonjoli is depressed which predisposes her to being capable of committing murder. She finds life meaningless:

UPhuthi:

_Uyibulalele ntoni inja yam le?_
(Why did you kill my dog?)

UNonjoli: _Ukub’ ufun’ ukuyilandela uza kuyilandela!_
(If you want to follow it you will follow it!)

(Mmngo, 1983:60)

The above extract shows a female who is running away and is ready to kill anyone who gets in her way. She shows her inhuman side by killing an innocent dog and even hints at the responsibility of killing the owner. NoNjoli wants to die and not be found because of the sins she committed against another innocent person who died because of her jealousy of Cikizwa.

UNonjoli:

_Bendifuna ukuba mandicholwe sendingamathambo._
_Kodwa uMcwangcisi wezinto ongavumeli nto ifithakeleyo akavumanga ukuba ndife ndingenzanga ngxelo ngehambo yam emhlabeni._
(I wanted to might find my bones, but the Planner of things did not allow me to die before making a report about my routes on earth.)

(Mmngo, 1983:63)

The above quotation shows that this female cannot take it anymore; her dirty work has been exposed. According to Grinberg (1983), suicide results from a state of crisis dominated by the feeling that something must change. UNonjoli committed suicide to flirt with death in order to convince her paradoxically that life exists (Reber, 1985:799).
Freud mentions three ways in which one can know about the existence of the unconscious. It is through dreams, paradoxes and slips of the tongue, and free associations which take the form of different behaviours. Nonjoli shows her inability to imagine a happy future or see the positive aspect in her present or future circumstances. She suffers emotionally the unbearable challenges of daily living and finds them insurmountable.

Nonjoli thus contemplates suicide; her desire to live is overshadowed by her hopelessness. The decision to commit suicide is really a decision to stop having to endure any more emotional hurt.

5.2.3 Potrayal of female characters as suicidal in Tamsanqa’s Buzani kuBawo

In Buzani kuBawo the author depicts all the weak qualities of females and their tendency of committing suicide when they cannot face their social problems. Laufer (1995) mentioned that circumstances and mental states found to be related to depression are also generally associated with suicidal behaviour. It seems that NomaMpondomise is overcome by the urge of self-destruction and disappointment. She got away from Gugulethu, whom she thought she would marry, but he instead marries someone else.

She was distracted by the news of hearing that Gugulethu had married someone else, whilst he had promised to marry her. She even drives away the lobola from Mcunukelwa with the hope that Gugulethu might come with his lobola. Her disappointment with Gugulethu’s deed leads her to lay charges against him for breaking off his own promise to her. NomaMpondomise says this about her disappointment over her lover:

UNomaMpondomise:

\[ Ndize \text{ kumangalela } uGugulethu Zilindile othe \]
\[ wathembisa ngonditshata waza wasephula \]
esosithembiso ndale omnye umfana selendilobole,
ndazikhupha ezo nkomo zakhe.
(I have to lay charges against Gugulethu Zilindile who promised to marry me and then broke his promise. I have rejected other men who had already paid lobola and drive away those cattle.)

(Tamsanqa, 1987:80)

The words above show that NomaMpondomise is depressed and has been let down by someone she loved. She felt heartache, hopelessness and self-destructive. She feels as if there is no way out for her. The type of situation in which NomaMpondomise finds herself creates emotions that lead to antisocial or immoral impulses. They present a threat of suicide. No preventive action could then stop them from committing suicide.

UMantyi:

Suka uve intombi kusithwa izixomile; suka uve intombi kusithwa izeyelisele emlanjeni; suke uve intombi kusithwiwa idle ityhefu yafa; suka ure intombi kusithiwa iphambene.
(You’ve just heard that the girl has hanged herself; you’ve just heard that the girl has drowned herself in the river; you’ve just heard that the girl has eaten poison and died; you’ve just heard that the girl was mad.)

(Tamsanqa, 1987:74)

The above utterance indicates the intention to commit suicide by disappointed females. The writer has portrayed females as people who are viewed as being suicidal and not afraid of death. The unconscious, according to Freud (1986:71), is that part of the brain which is not controlled by an individual. This is the domain
of the psyche that encompasses the repressed id functions, the primitive impulses and the desires, the memories, images and wishes that constitute anxiety accepted into the consciousness.

This suggests that once NomaMpondomise faces the psychological battle, her self-destructive instinct rises up and controls her reasoning. This suicidal tendency in the female character is also illustrated in NomaMpondomise’s case, since she also committed suicide. The policeman says the following:

IPolisa:

*Naku uNomaMpondomise kusithiwa uzeyelisela emlanjeni eMthatha, kuthiwa selefile.*

(Here is NomaMpondomise; they are saying she drowned herself in the river at Mthatha, they are saying she is dead.)

(Tamsanqa, 1987:74)

The extract above indicates that NomaMpondomise could not face life any more. NomaMpondomise has some kind of hysterical and emotional outburst as a psychotic episode. Reber (1985) explains that psychoanalytic theory has assisted in providing a more reasonable etiology, but the link between gender and the psychosis has not yet been severed. The feeling of being rejected by Gugulethu as her prospective husband triggers her decision to commit suicide.

This should not be seen as an attempt to blame the victim for committing suicide, nor to hold her responsible for the tragedy, but rather to blame the patriarchal culture. She is portrayed by a male writer who degrades her by his definition of her and her actions. The writer sees these issues as being mere chatter, or by their marginalization in the literary text. Moreover, the female’s inner voice is completely mute. The defection from the community of some of its members performs the same critical function as the reflections of the female characters.
5.3 Conclusion

The overwhelming majority of female characters in these male-written literary works are human enough, though quite often extreme views have been considered to be lacking behind the more or less realistic presentations. Such striking feats of characterization chiefly exhibit advances in literary technique rather than new attitudes to the female character, but they do offer a generally psychological view of womankind.

This chapter, in particular, gives a useful indication on how far - apparently in their justification - writers are prepared to go with their characters as having an inherently different psychological constitution from that of male characters. This chapter has sought to illustrate the psychological reviewing of female characters and explores male writers’ tendencies to think, implicitly or explicitly, in terms of masculine and feminine qualities.

It also gives special consideration to those male writers who evidently discern a mystical, as opposed to a merely biological polarity in nature, in their female portrayal. It also looks at female characters who have suffered from the double standards of sexual morality. The dramatists welcome them and use them to entertain their readers, as regards to their manner of life in their literary works. An attempt is made to explain the female’s nature in terms of psychology, of social forces or a combination of both, to discuss their nature more comprehensively. Male writers tend to construct female characters as passive objects of the masculine gaze, which is frequently voyeuristic and almost invariably judgemental.

In this study, female characters are encouraged to be ashamed of their behaviour and to deny their sexuality as being unfeminine, unlawful and shamefully degrading.
CHAPTER SIX

GENERAL CONCLUSION

6.1 Introduction

This study has examined selected isiXhosa literary texts to understand how female characters are portrayed and the images associated with them. (Delmar in Herramann and Steward, 1994) asserts that:

“Many would agree that female suffer discrimination because of their sex; that they have specific needs which remain negated and unsatisfied, and that the satisfaction of these needs would require a radical change (some would say a revolution even) in the social, economic and political order”.

Walby (1990:49) says that patriarchy is a system of social structures and practices, in which men dominate, oppress and exploit women. She identifies six structures of patriarchy: household production, paid work, the state, male violence, sexuality and culture. Some of these structures will be alluded to in this study.

It is not that researchers on female characters did not exist prior to this era, but the literary works had historically been predominantly written by males. A male-dominated publishing industry had not seen fit to publish literary works of female writers. On the other hand, even among the literary works, only the male articulation of life-experiences has been viewed as worthy of literary expression. However, this situation has been dramatically reversed in recent years.
Schipper (in Jones, 1987:46) quotes Mariama Bâ who strongly feels that:

The woman writer in Africa has a special task. She has to present the position of women in Africa in all its aspects. There is still so much injustice in spite of the fact that, for a decade, the United Nations have paid special attention to woman’s problems. In spite of beautiful speeches and praiseworthy intentions, women continue to be discriminated against. In the family, in the institutions, in society, in the streets, in political organizations, discrimination reigns supreme. The woman is heavily burdened by norms and customs in combination with mistaken and egoistic interpretations of different religions...

Bâ continues to maintain that, like men, females must use literary works as a non-violent, but effective instrument to voice their plights. Researchers like Buchibinder D, strongly agree with her when she further recommends that within African literary texts, room must be made for females, a room in which females will see their rights with all their strength.

Adebayo (1996) says African people are estranged from their own experiences and unable to perceive their shape and authenticity, in part because they do not see them mirrored and given resonance by literary texts. An exploration of female nature agreeable to womanists requires a new psychology and sociological methods, free of unfair sexism, as well as new literary texts.

Njoku (2001) believes that females are currently making a valuable contribution to literary works, bringing their own experiences, as females, to life in the form of exciting female characters who confront one another. Nevertheless, 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. 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. Goodman (1996:153) refers to this as “multiple jeopardy”: marginalization by gender, race and class. She put this point across in this manner:

Women of colour were long excluded from higher education, from learning and teaching about creative writing, by a double or even triple oppression: race, class and gender.

The exclusion of females from taking part in education has contributed enormously to their denial from any literary production and also from making valuable contributions in the decision-making processes, in being consistent with literary texts when male characters are portrayed as the main decision-makers in their families. The current argument that has been propounded by this study is to show the cause of the negative portrayal of females’ characters as effects of social perception in societies.

The spirit is also catching on in institutions of learning, such as Universities, colleges and schools, given that the curricula of these institutions have traditionally been male-oriented literary works. Readers and critics are slowly coming to grips with a distinctive and diverse body of literary work that demands to be given as much attention as, and treated differently from, the dominant male literary works. One facet of these male literary texts that has come increasingly under attack has been the subservient image of female characters as they are portrayed in traditional male literary works.

In male-authored writings, female characters are portrayed as being passive, as always prepared to do the bidding to their male counterparts and families, as having no status of their own, and therefore being completely dependent on their men for support.
It is right to state that “the neglect of the female as writers in Africa has been an unfortunate omission. They could have offered self-images, patterns of self-analysis and general insights into the female’s situation which are ignored by the male writers in their portrayal of female characters.”

The significance of this chapter is to present a vivid picture of female characters in male’s literary works. Most male writers they looked down upon female characters. Their portrayal of female characters encourages the patriarchal perceptions so much practiced in society. It is a fact that in some literary texts females are verbally, physically, emotionally and mentally abused but do not have a platform from which to speak. In most African communities females try to do so, but they do not have shoulders to lean on.

This is especially true as regards females from the rural areas, where some of them did not have any formal education because of the patriarchal system, where it is, believed that they should marry, so it would be a waste of money to send them to formal schools. In addition, these females have had little social status, other than being the wife or daughter of a respected man. An unmarried female always carries a negative stigma, because she is regarded as a failure and as an embarrassment to her family and society at large.

The exclusion of females from social settings and their bing denied their rightful opportunities to stand up for themselves in their communities also gives substance to the marginalization of females from important decision-making processes in their communities and families.

This traditional perception of excluding female characters from decision-making in their families leads MaGaba in Buzani kuBawo to operate behind the curtain and put more pressure on her husband, "Ndingavuya ukuba unokwenjenjalo Rhadebe; ndiyathemba ke ukuba akuyi kujika kwinto oyithethileyo uzenze ixoki. “(I will be glad if you would do that Rhadebe, I hope that you won’t change from...
what you have said, and render yourself a liar.) It has also been shown in Buzani kuBawo of traditionally arranged marriages that, in general, customary practices are patriarchal, and consequently discriminatory to women, as they put Magaba in a state of being perpetually insignificant. The literary texts have rarely, if ever, afforded female characters equal decision-making power within their marital status and in their families.

6.2 The evaluation of female characters as portrayed in literary works

This study has dealt with the negative portrayal of female characters, and has focused mainly on literary works written by male writers. It has focused mainly on selected isiXhosa dram texts and gives a critical analysis on how these literary texts illustrate the theme of this treatise.

The employment of a womanist framework theory in Chapter two not only provokes a sympathetic response towards female characters, but also induces angry reactions from females. This is because womanist theory has been the main opposition of these male-dominated literary works and strives for a better life for both the sexes. Womanism theory is one of those theories which seek to uplift all females and to expose all ill-treatment committed against them. It seeks to play a significant role in all such literary works.

Womanism theory has been highlighted as a black women’s liberation movement that not only believes in black sexual power between the two sexes, it also seeks to encourage the celebration of black backgrounds and the ideals of African life. By using a womanist theory framework, these activists have highlighted the significance of gender in this research. It is shown through the literary texts of womanists like Alice Walker and Barbara Christian that womanist theory has always played a pivotal role in consciousness-raising, while it also acts in the public spotlight to improve the life of women in general.
In the field of literature, womanist analysis has not been very influential. It has emphasised the traditional silences of female writers from the production and creation of literary works, and this has had a severely negative influence on the image of females.

The unfair portrayal of female characters calls on literary text researchers to stand up to the research on female characters in male writings. Some womanists acknowledge that the obvious physical differences between males and females might be a contributing factor in females being stereotypically portrayed in a negative light by male writers, and thereby being perceived as weak and incompetent by society as a whole.

Register (in Donovan, 1989:14) quotes Firestone (1987) who adds that:

> The sex role system has divided human experience; men and women live in these different halves of reality; and culture reflects this. Thus novels that are true to "female experience" and those that are true to "male experience" will not only differ in style but also in subject matter.

These two differences in emotional and physical experiences between males and females have resulted in them being different in their perceptions of life. Few male writers, even those who are very sympathetic to females, have succeeded in portraying female characters with which female readers can identify themselves. Womanists believe that there is a need for female readers to see their own experiences depicted in such literary works. Female characters must express their own ideas about women’s status in literary texts and, thus, correct or complement the bias of certain perspectives about them.

The biased presentation of these literary texts 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.

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. Psychoanalytical theory acts as a measuring instrument for assessing the behaviour of characters like Cikizwa. Female characters are put into a particular socio-perceptive environment in time and with all the discriminatory factors of a particular society.

Carl Jung’s theory of personality that reflects on the ego, the unconscious and the collective unconscious has been looked at. The structural psychoanalysis of Jacques Lacan has also been put to the test. Lacan’s psychoanalytical theory assumes that the unconscious is structured like a language. He believes that the text itself is a Linguistic being with its own psyche. The psyche of the text, or rather the psyche of the character in a text, is seen to be related to the psyche of the human beings that are represented by the characters in the literary text.

Psychoanalysis has, therefore, assisted the viewers of literary works to analyze the behaviour of the characters in these Xhosa selected texts. Psychoanalysis suggests that there is a rebellious link between a specific behaviour of a female character and her social setting. These female characters have had to suppress their love for their chosen lovers, in order to fulfill the wishes of their fathers.

Conflict then is bound to occur between the Id which drives, and the superego, which represents, their fathers’ restrictions. NomaMpondomise in Buzani kuBawo (1987) drove her lobola from her father’s kraal. She humiliated her family and they were embarrassed and insulted by her actions.
The psychotic disorders suffered by the characters, because of cultural injustice are clearly displayed in these literary texts which have already been discussed. 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. It Chapter four it was shown that gender can be seen as a sexual stereotype and as a power relationship between the sexes. In Mtingane’s Inene Nasi IsiBhizo, Masukude is depicted as a nonentity; she is the subordinate person who cannot discuss any of her family issues. She is portrayed as a minor in this drama, or as a person who cannot play a major role in her own household.

The writer of Inzonzobila portrays female characters as being indecisive, with a lack of confidence and with poor social values. His paramount concern is to show the position of females in society, by allocating to his female characters stereotypically portrayed acts of dishonesty to their spouses. An example of this is when MamNtakwende failed to support her husband from the ill-treatment he received from certain members of the community.

Female characters in Inzonzobila are presented as caricatures who are just there to carry out the wishes of their male counterparts. All the female characters in this text, such as NoMatshawe, appear as pillars of strength for men. It is interesting to note that a character like NoMatshawe is shown Inzonzobila to be manipulated by her husband, uDlangisa, to achieve his needs. NoMatshawe unconsciously assists Dlangisa to achieve his aim of getting his own wishes.

Mtingane in Inene Nasi IsiBhozo represents a female character of a different calibre. He portrays some popular female stereotypes as rebellious female characters who do not accept anything from society without questioning. Mntingane presents us credible female characters who do not conceal their true selves in order to conform to the norms and values of society. Female characters in this drama are stereotypically portrayed as people who are rebellious, and do
not respect social norms, thereby putting their personal interests above those of their society.

MaSukude in *Inene Nasi Isibhozo* (1992) is engaged in actions to fight the unjust perceptions of a patriarchy that prevent them from participating in household discussions regarding issues that affect them. Mmango (1983) in *uDike NoCikizwa* also depicted as a young female character who protested against arranged marriages. However, some old females also discourage it.

Nomatiletile in *uDike NoCikizwa* (1983) defies the cultural perception of arranged marriages and supports her Cikizwa in the struggle to free herself from the oppressive custom of arranged marriages. Cikizwa advocates female emancipation from the traditional submission of these arranged marriages. She is presented as a very domineering character who resisted her father's idea of marrying Mjongwa who is her father's choice of a husband. Her father, Sando, killed Dike, her fiancé, but Cikizwa stood firm against her victimization in this arranged marriage and challenged her father openly on the matter.

These literary texts can reinforce gender stereotypes in literary works. Chapter five gives a psychological review by portraying female characters who are negatively self-actualizing, and who cannot find identities for themselves. Attention is also drawn to the relationship that exists between females and males regarding their gender roles.

The categorization of names by Suzman (1994) shows that names have a referential value. This means that names point outwardly from the individual towards different circumstances. Hence, a name such as Thobeka, in *Buzani kuBawo* (1987), is classified as emotionally related names that points to the predictions of the future personalities of her as a female. It has also been highlighted that her name, as a female character in male literary works, shows submissiveness.
Besides being a socio-traditional perception, it has been discovered that male writers use names with different motives. Psychoanalytical theory, in Chapter two, looks at the various actions shown by the characters who are affected by the bias of their social and environmental settings. It reveals the effects of these diabolical repressions by analysing of their deviant female behaviour.

Chapter Three also shows that research into literary texts and gender victimization does not simply mean a literary analysis of texts with regard to the sex or sexuality of characters. It implies a broad research of literary texts, as they are written, read and interpreted, within the traditional literary perception, by men as well as women.

The researcher highlighted that these traditional stereotypes were not only apparent in these IsiXhosa selected texts, but may also be seen in the literature written by male writers. The numbers of female characters who are portrayed as female offenders, particularly murderers, are more prevalent in crime novels than they are in reality. These female characters commit crimes of out of love or greed. The factors that are linked to the criminal behaviour of these female characters reinforce the belief that the family is completely responsible for their murders, and when they are not, it is their own weakness that has landed them where they are.

Most of these female characters are portrayed as people who are motivated to commit crimes for selfish reasons, particularly for love. Thus, overall the portrait of female characters as offenders in suicidal and murderous literature not only ignores the reality faced by these women who are marginalized in society. It also creates a lack of sympathy in real life, whereby literature reinforces the belief that these female characters deserve to be punished.
Female offenders in such literature are not only violent, but they are also emotional and, at times, powerful. Yet they are still quintessentially feminine. Some female offenders are shown as being weak and helpless. Others are portrayed as powerful, using their power to control others, particularly men into doing what they want them to do.

6.3 Concluding remarks

In this study, texts have been reinterpreted to reveal the centrality of female presence in understanding them. Male critics are accused of imposing male values on literary conventions and specific texts. Kate Millet and Elaine Showalter, in particular, revel in providing female sensibility to literary critical discourse: Millet by excavating male prejudices are hidden beneath these narratives while Showalter makes an intriguing re-interpretation of the tradition of the English novel.

It also seeks to assist in enlarging the definition of intellectual activity to encompass and foster the engagement of womanism and feminism of colour by audiences outside the womanist and feminist colour constituencies.

Ngcobo (1994) emphasizes the significance of literary work for both sexes when she comments that:

> Literature is a crucial part of culture because literature is the embodiment of a heritage. In it is coded the compressed experience of the whole society, its beliefs, its progress and its values; in short the universal truth.

(Humm, 1994:204)

Womanist theory should encourage an art form that is true to women’s experience and not filtered through a male perspective to lift male standards, because a particular literary text emphasises the male’s importance. Womanist
criticism, in particular, views genderal practice as an important matter between the sexes and it therefore invites a reappraisal of literary texts and literary work from the ground. Goodman (1996: IX) supports this idea as follows:

In recent years, academic institutions have witnessed just this shift, which may be referred to as a firing canon: a re-evaluation of the standards by which authors and texts have been singled out and canonized followed by an active research for other authors and texts for inclusion.

They must assist readers to understand what the female experience is, what it is like to be a female character, what a female character thinks, and how females function. Literary texts must tell the world what it feels like to be a female. Well-constructed literary texts should provide role models. They should instil a positive sense of feminine identity by portraying female characters who are self-actualizing and whose identities are not dependent on men as providers.

Ntuli (1984:133) comments on the writer’s role in writing about society’s problems:

Throughout the ages writers have been found to express their displeasure about certain conditions or practices. There is always an argument as to the degree to which an artist should involve himself with the problems of society.

The question of an artist’s interference in the life of other people in his community is asked by Egudu (1978:1), who says:

The question whether the literary artist should or should not be concerned in his works with what is happening in his society has been the issue over which artists and critics have argued and disagreed through the ages.
According to the above researcher, protest literature expresses discontent about the order of things in such literary works. Literary texts are part of a particular community and their texts automatically reflect what is happening in their communities. Literary texts, then, are the means through which many societies come to know the social problems that exist in their communities.

The development of literary works of this nature may well be ascribed to the breaking of the silence about some negative portrayals of female characters have been accepted without any questioning. Miller's statement seems to be relevant in this regard when he points out that:

The dictionary “says” the author “talks” about a subject; books are written to break “silence”. When a text’s meaning is revealed, we insist even more on metaphors of morality, as if communication itself were intrinsically oral and aural; a text that moves me “speaks to me” (1990:247).

Various African male writers have written about many subjects of their choices. Writers have stereotypically portrayed females as they are influenced by their social setting. It is only after reading the content of the subject that the reader may be able to give any real meaning to what he has been reading. Readers therefore, react differently to textual material. A text that speaks to the readers will evoke a response of some kind from them. The metaphorical meaning obtained from the literature written by male writers, is that a patriarchal perception is perceived from a womanist perspective in this study.

Ogundipe-Leslie (1987) argues that most literary work reflects the belief that female characters have been forced into a denial of their rights, and largely excluded from a man’s literary world. Ogundipe-Leslie further shows a strong desire to rediscover the status of females, while providing a context that may be
supportive of females. She also wishes to manifest what it is to be female and to declare the experience and perceptions that have, thus far, been unheard by female characters in male literary works.

Aware as they are that critical attention has been concentrated mostly on male writers, these critics now demand a status together with some recognition for being females in such literary works. According to Adeleke (1996) the main objective is not simply to fit females into a world that is dominated by men. Given this perpetual disruption and also the self-hatred that has alienated females from any sense of collective identity, it is surely now high time that something is done about this injustice.

Humm (1992) believes sexual equality combined with a commitment to eradicate such sexist domination and to transform society. Women are seen as human beings who suffer injustice because of their gender. This is also visible in the Xhosa drama works written by male scholars that the researcher is going to analyse.

The inequality between the sexes is not the result of biological necessity, but it is produced by the cultural construction of gender differences. Weintrau (in Jones and Olson, 1991) makes the point that feminists stress that it is society, not nature that gives men the drive to dominate and keep women from achieving careers and obtaining power. Rosaldo and Lamphere (1974:73) argued thus, “…if women are considered part of nature, then culture would find it natural to subordinate them, but not to necessarily oppress them”.

This study of the female characters seeks to transcend current pressures to normalize the adversity and disunity in the African female’s experience and facilitate their full participation in the literary world. The literary works written by males always present images of their female characters as being subordinate and who need to be by supported by their male counterparts.
The negative portrayal of these female characters as murders, suicidal and unruly behaviour varies in literature, but their negative characteristics are fairly consistent. These females are portrayed as murderers and suicidal. They are primarily shown as rebellious individuals who are driven by greed, revenge and are mostly common, selfish people.

Overall, these literary texts create a relatively threatening image of females. These characters are seen to be offenders, while simultaneously reinforcing their guilt, thereby making them appear to be deserving of the death penalty.
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