A CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF THE PORTRAYAL OF WOMEN IN SOME SELECTED XHOSA DRAMAS

BY

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ISIXHOSA

AT

NELSON MANDELA METROPOLITAN UNIVERSITY

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DECLARATION

I, the undersigned, hereby declare that the work contained in this study is my own original work, and that all the sources that I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to my wife Mrs Nombuyiselo Mntanga, to my parents Mbangi Isaac Mntanga and Nomawethu Hilda Mntanga, to my children Mpumzi, Sibongile, Njongo, Sisanda and Khakhalomzi.
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ABSTRACT

This thesis entitled “a critical analysis of the portrayal of women in some selected Xhosa dramas”, endeavours to examine the effect of gender inequality. Women who are
submissive toward some cultural aspects. It endeavours to give a critical analysis of women’s self assertion in some selected Xhosa dramas.

According to the findings in this study, in African tradition women like to enforce patriarchy upon younger women. Older women feel that they have the duty of passing on cultural practices from generation to generation. Everything from manner of dress, posture, appropriate seating positions, eating patterns, performance of household chores, sexual expression, and voice tone and infection, self-esteem and self-concept, flows from the gender one is assigned at birth. From birth then, women and men are set on different physically based psychological paths. Of all the obstacles that limit the advancement of women, those touching upon knowledge and values are the most difficult to remove.

When a woman lacks the independent capacity to assert her own positive truths and values, she is unable to contribute her insights and experiences to the various fields of human knowledge. When denied opportunities for higher forms of self expression, women may out of frustration attack the modes of understanding upheld by men.

In this study theories such as black criticism, psychoanalysis, feminism and African womanism are relevant for discussing the portrayal of women. The descriptive method of research has been applied. Both observation and participation have been used for exposing barriers that block the development of women. This study will enable literature students and researchers to view culture in a broader perspective. It will enable them to consider conventions which determine the way human experience is presented in literature.

Chapter one provides literature students and the researchers with a broad overview about how to develop an introductory perspective. Chapter two aims at developing a theoretical framework which serves as the basis of this study. Chapter three examines the effect of gender inequality. It opens an area of extensive examination that differentiates sexual practice from the sexual roles assigned to women and men. Chapter four examines women who are submissive or radical in some cultural aspects. Chapter five discusses women’s self assertion. Chapter six concludes this study.
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CHAPTER 1

1.1 GENERAL INTRODUCTION

In this study the researcher will discuss the effect of gender inequality, the influence of culture on women and critical analysis of women’s self assertion in some selected Xhosa dramas.

There exists, among many societies including amaXhosa, a strong belief that the actions of characters in their private and public relationships is what actually revealed in fiction. As drama, is the most enterprising genre of all literary expressions, this notion finds more meaning and purpose. A challenge posed by drama is presented by both the dramatic and theatrical forms since these explicitly and sometimes implicitly reveal character. Regarding theatrical forms, I must hasten to say that in isiXhosa these are found in organized and performed before an audience and is characterized by a spectacular element. And because they also include characters performing, they become “dramatic” in the sense that they are full of action. I raise this point because it is common to see these plays put on stage before big audiences where role playing by characters and dramatic action is revealed for appreciation. During such societal interaction, the behavior of characters presented by the playwrights is always an attraction as people generate their own opinions and critiques about the social relevance of character roles and placements in the societies.

I have, for a long time, been fascinated by the relationship of the behavior of people in real life situations and characters found in isiXhosa literature, especially in drama books. In this study the intention to analyze the character’s behavior and their attitude towards anything in the play through the main and subsidiary texts is motivated by this curiosity to establish any semblance of truth or reality in respect of this contention about the relationship.
The researcher feels that culture influences the manner in which characters behave in the drama. Paddington (1950: 3) defines the culture of people as the sum total of the material, and intellectual equipment, whereby they satisfy their biological and social needs, and adapt themselves to their environment. Ayisi (1992: 1) also observes that Malinowiski defines culture as that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, law, morals, customs, and all another, react to the events of the plot, behave in conflict situations that develop, how they change or develop during the course of the play is worth approaching from the conceptual development angle.

For a character to develop, he or she must first take on a substantial reality in our imagination. We must “believe” in the character and be convinced that in some sense he or she “exists”. Thus, Bentley (1964: 4) discusses types and believable persons. By this he distinguishes between characters that only present one or two aspects of humanity and fullness. The latter term refers to a character that is, indeed a believable person as found in real life. Foster (1974: 130) discusses flat characters, characters with certain fixed characteristics, and round characters, by which is meant free, unpredictable and able to surprise characters. It is therefore important, for instance, to establish whether the authors in the selected dramas have managed to show that women characters in drama are shaped by their culture and the fact that dialogue and action reveal characters as dramatic techniques in the expression of themes.

**Early Dramas**

The following five early dramas will be used to illustrate the expression of culture together with the portrayal of characters during the period 1932 to the 1970’s.


Later Dramas

The following six later dramas will be discussed to illustrate the expression of culture and the portrayal of characters during the period 1970’s to the 1990’s.

*UDike noCikizwa*: A. M. Mmango (1982).

The above mentioned Xhosa dramas are chosen for this study because these dramas deal with women characters who occupy leading roles in the construction of plot structures. Since all the dramas deal with fundamental social problems and dilemmas which are periodically encountered by both men and women, the researcher feels that the chosen texts will illustrate the expression of amaXhosa gender inequality in the portrayal of women.

In this study the researcher also feels that literature students will have a broader perspective on the expression of culture and they will be able to discover that culture has acquired other meanings, besides those given to it by sociologists. In other words literature students will be able to view culture and the portrayal of characters from different perspectives.

The criteria for the selection of the Xhosa dramas investigated in this study is based on several issues: it was important, for instance, to establish whether the actions of characters in their private and public relationships, are what actually is revealed about them in drama. The researcher investigated both dramatic and theatrical necessities which reveal character. The researcher investigated whether the real impact of character is determined by the way in which dialogue is actually used or whether it is determined by the action itself.
The researcher in this study wishes to analyze the characters’ behaviour and their attitude towards anything in the play through the main and subsidiary texts. The researcher feels that culture influences the manner in which characters behave in the drama. Paddington (1950: 3) defines the culture of people as the sum total of the material, and intellectual equipment, whereby they satisfy their biological and social needs, and adapt themselves to their environment. Ayisi (1992: 1) also observes that Malinowiski defines culture as that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, law, morals, customs, and all other capabilities and habits acquired by both men and women as members of society. This implies that culture entails everything that contributes to the survival of both men and women, comprising both physical factors and sociological factors.

Ayisi (1992: 1) points out that man became the first creature to inhabit this planet and struggled for survival between himself and nature. He had to live, and find his place in the universe. During this process, he has left behind traces of his achievements at various levels of his development. The cumulative knowledge of his various achievements constitutes what we refer to as culture. Payne (1997: 128) shares the same view as Ayisi (1992). For example Payne defines culture as a term of virtually limitless application, which initially may be understood to refer to everything that is produced by human beings as distinct from all that is a part of nature. This, therefore implies that Payne’s (1997) definition spells out Ayisi’s view that man has to struggle for survival and also reconcile himself to nature.

The fact that the relationship between literature and culture has been overlooked in the past is one of the reasons that might have motivated the researcher to investigate culture in literature. The researcher feels that presently, little has been done on the aspect of culture and also on the portrayal of characters in literature.

This study aims at facilitating conceptual development in relation to the various aspects of culture and the portrayal of characters in literature, in order to encourage literature students to move from the common - sense understandings of the portrayal of characters and culture to more complex, critical understandings of these aspects. The researcher
aims to provide useful subject matter for facilitating this process of conceptual development, because both culture and the portrayal of characters who play an important part in many arts and social sciences, are broad abstract aspects, which are open to many interpretations.

1.2 PROBLEM IDENTIFICATION

Some writers maintain that culture is an elusive concept because it means different things to different people. The intention is to examine such a view. Payne (1997: 128) defines culture as a term of virtually limitless application, which initially may be understood to refer to everything that is produced by men and women as distinct from all that which is part of nature. The manner in which men and women behave is culture. Characters in drama resemble people despite the fact that they are paper people, they talk, walk, act and interact with one another. They experience pleasure and endure pain. They feel, and they act on their feelings. They believe and they act according to their beliefs. (Scholes, 1986: 800).

This study will also focus on the effect of gender inequality on the characters involved. Men are always given high social status, whereas women are given low social status. Male dominance over women has motivated the researcher to focus on the effect of gender inequality on the characters as they are portrayed in selected Xhosa dramas.

The effect of gender inequality on the characters has also forced the researcher to focus on womanism and feminism in this study. Culture, womanism and feminism cannot be treated as separate entities, although feminism and womanism are two disciplines that partly differ. The researcher feels that culture, psychoanalysis, womanism and feminism deal with how the characters are behaving therefore to a certain extent they are intertwined.

According to Cummings in Sanders (1959: 59) as quoted by Kwatsha (2002: 32) womanists are concerned about the entire community and are holistic in approach, which
means that both men and women can come together in dialogue to define and address the needs of the African American community. Dr Kwatsha further contends that the womanists’ view looks at the importance of the positive aspects of black life. They focus on the integrative images of the male and female concepts together.

Humm (1992: 1) as quoted by Kwatsha (2002: 37) defines feminism as follows:

Feminism is a belief in sexual equality combined with commitment to eradicate sexist domination and to transform society.

1.3 PURPOSE OF STUDY

The aim of this study is to discuss both culture and the portrayal of characters in selected Xhosa dramas. The researcher’s feeling is that so far very few researchers have considered investigating the above mentioned aspects in Xhosa drama. By this the researcher does not mean that there is no preliminary work which has been done in this area. The researcher is aware of the following preliminary works: Sirayi’s (1993) thesis: “A characterization of some Xhosa Dramas”; Nkumane’s (1999) thesis: “Themes of forced and forbidden love: Cross-cultural trends in language literature with special reference to Zulu novels”; and Mtuze’s (1990) thesis: “A feminist critique of the image of women in the prose works of selected Xhosa writers (1909 – 1980”).

The lack of research on the above mentioned aspects has motivated the researcher to investigate more about culture and the portrayal of characters in these selected Xhosa drama.

The preliminary works which have been quoted have shown the investigator that to a certain extent culture keeps on changing. Whether cultures change in the same direction and at the same speed in the manner in which characters are shown as behaving in plays still needs a lot of investigation. Thus the researcher feels that by undertaking this research on culture and portrayal of characters he will close the gap.
The study of culture cannot be underestimated because culture is learned through socialization, the differences in culture derive from several factors such as race, ethnicity, climate and so on. It is for this reason that culture is treated as part of every society.

In this study culture, feminism and womanism cannot be treated as separate entities in literature. The researcher’s feeling here is based on Bauerlein’s (1997: 62) viewpoint, which maintains that gender signals assert that inequalities between men and women are socially derived, not biologically determined. On the other hand, Payne (1997: 217) believes that more recently, the sex gender opposition has begun to be questioned by theorists who argue that our perceptions of biology, nature or indeed sex, are formed only within language and culture. Brooker (1999: 105) further argues that the conflation of sex with gender equates male and female with masculine and feminine. Such a conflation neutralizes the standard traits of sexual difference established in society i.e. (men are physically strong and therefore associated with the world of labour, sport and physical combat and are active in the public domain, women are physically weak and therefore passive, their sphere is the home, their bodies determine their roles as mothers and objects of male desire).

The researcher feels that this is a dualism that reinforces male authority over women and also perpetuates the norm of male heterosexuality as the model of natural sexual identity. The notion of a hierarchical binary opposition of male / female reinforces patriarchy and sexual privilege to the disadvantage of women. If gender is understood as socially and culturally defined, it can be undefined or deconstructed. Thus, feminists understand the analysis of gender as necessary to the defeat of sexism and important to gender social change.

An aim of this study is to show that in drama the person is, in principle, capable of playing a major role in his or in her own character formation through reasoned reflection and decision. This therefore implies that the manner in which characters behave also affects culture because culture refers to the manner in which people are doing things. The
new insight this study seeks to open is to prove whether our culture will forever remain a tributary of Western culture, or a full culture in its own right with a legitimate place in the modern culture of Africa.

Drama is intended to be staged before an audience. It is for this reason that one of the aims of this study is to find out what indications the reader can find in the text. For a character to develop, he or she must first take on a substantial reality in our imagination. We must “believe” in the character, be convinced that in some sense he or she “exists”. Thus, Bentley (1964: 4) discusses types and believable persons. By this he distinguishes between characters that only present one or two aspects of humanity and fullness. The latter term refers to a character that is, indeed a believable person as found in real life. Foster (1974: 130) discusses flat characters, characters with certain fixed characteristics, and round characters, by which is meant free, unpredictable and able to surprise characters. It is important, for instance, to establish whether the authors in the selected dramas have managed to show that character in drama is shaped by action, and action has characters as its material cause.

Space in drama refers to the physical space in which the drama is enacted, and can be expositional, telling the spectators something about the characters in terms of the character’s cause of conflict, because the author is the only person who can see what is happening inside and outside the room and also because time determines what is to be enacted. The researcher feels that the culture of and the portrayal of characters cannot be examined without investigating the influence of time and space in these selected Xhosa dramas. Du Toit (1989: 36-37) differentiates between inner space (the space which is visually and acoustically perceptible to the audience) and the outer space (e.g. an actor talking behind the coulisse, suggesting a part of the dramatic space not visible to the spectator). He also differentiates between conceptual space (which serves as a context of time and space for the events on stage) and metaphorical space (the referential framework within which the drama is represented concerning symbolism of dialogue and the visual space on the stage).
Time refers to the time within which the drama is enacted. Time can also be expositional, but in a more limited way than space. If the spectator knows what man’s general trend of action was in relation to the world around him during a certain era, we can to some extent determine the views of the life and the world held by the character. The content of time also refers to the dramatist’s division of his drama into acts and scenes and the time allotted to each one. Du Toit (1989: 38) refers to a closed time structure (where acts and scenes follow each other directly) and an open time structure (where acts and scenes are separated from each other by gaps in time).

The researcher’s feeling is that the presence of space and time in the drama plays an important role in the creation of character. The character’s adventures are interwoven in time and space. Space has also been neglected in Xhosa drama. It is important to note that no character can exist in a vacuum. For a vacuum does not provide any space for the spiritual and mental moulding of character. Characters exist and perform actions in a well-defined geographical space. The actions of the characters as well as the places, within which they act, determine whether the time in which the events take place is traditional or modern. Space and time are therefore interrelated, and they contribute to the psychological make up of characters.

1.4 SCOPE OF STUDY

The focus of this thesis is on culture and the portrayal of women in some Xhosa selected dramas.

This study comprises six of chapters. Chapter one deals with introductory perspectives. It is the general introduction of the study. It entails introductory perspectives such as; problem identification, purpose of study, scope of study, definition of concepts, method of research, approaches of study, a brief discussion of each and every subheading will be given.
Chapter two focuses on the theoretical framework of this study. Theoretical aspects of culture such as subjectivity and consciousness, ideology, hegemony are discussed. This chapter will also focus on gender theories such as psychoanalysis, feminism, womanism, African womanism, historical perspective of womanism. Psychoanalysis will also be discussed as it is closely related to gender theories in the sense that personality is being made up of three component parts called the Id, the Ego and the Super Ego. Lastly, concepts related to womanism and feminism such as Afrocentricity and the literary canon will also be discussed.

Chapter three examines the effect of gender inequality on the characters involved in some selected Xhosa dramas. The effect of gender inequality on the characters involved in some selected Xhosa dramas will be investigated under the following subheadings: male dominance over women, why parents treat female and male children differently in variety of ways that directly or indirectly influence or define the physical and the psychological, whether gender identity is established by the possession of certain genitals or chromosomes; misogynous ideas which maintain that women are fond of talking incessantly, nagging, gossiping, being concerned with appearance which is part of women’s life, the life of a woman revolved around a circle of domesticity; the pursuit of moral and legal equality as an essential means for overcoming discrimination against women e.g: why most traditional women are often excluded from direct participation and decision making in their homestead. In short Chapter three tries to show the readers that society always gives men high status as compared to women.

Chapter four examines the influence of culture on the characters involved in some selected Xhosa dramas. It tries to establish if culture is static or dynamic. This chapter aims at showing the readers that the concept culture is an elusive concept: it means different thing to different people.

Chapter five shows that assertion as a social construct has many and varied meanings. Assertion is defined as a communication style concerned with the expression of personal rights to protect oneself and maintain one’s equality, without aggression. Chapter five
shows that women have recently been seen to place a higher emphasis on self than on marriage and family. To be good wife, you had to be able to sustain a good marriage.

Chapter five examines character portrayal of women in some selected Xhosa dramas. In this chapter the researcher will concentrate on introverts and extroverts. By introverts the researcher refers to a person predominantly concerned with his or her own thoughts and feelings rather than with external things. By extroverts the researcher refers to a person predominantly concerned with external things or objective considerations. In this chapter the researcher wishes to express the idea that character portrayal is always evaluated against certain cultural standards of moral behaviour. Strictly speaking “personality” itself is governed by moral consideration. For example, a man or woman character may reject the moral standards of his or her society and provided he or she has the courage, she or he may be said to have a strong personality. In this chapter the researcher also wishes to express the idea that moral standards differ from culture to culture and also within cultures.

Chapter six deals with the conclusion, findings and recommendations.

1.5. DEFINITION OF CONCEPTS

1.5.1 Culture

What could be deduced from the above mentioned discussions is that culture entails a way of behaving, it is the way we do things. The fact that human behaviour is also influenced by ecological factors shows that cultures have a symbiotic affinity with their environments and geographical factors.

1.5.2 A norm

This is a specific guide to action, which defines unacceptable and appropriate behaviour in a particular situation (Haralambos.1980: 6). Members of society generally share norms
which define acceptable male and female apparel and which specify appropriate dress for
different age groups. In most societies, for example, an old grandmother dressed as a
teenager would contravene the norms for her age group. This implies that norms of dress
provide guidelines for what to wear on particular occasions. And a funeral is governed
by norms which specify appropriate attire for the funeral.

1.5.3 Value

A value is a belief that something is good and desirable. It defines what is important,
worthwhile and worth striving for. Individual achievement and materialism are major
values in Western industrial society (Haralambos 1988: 6). The obvious fact about values
is that without shared values, members of the society would be unlikely to cooperate and
work together. The lack of values in any society may easily result in disorder and
disruption.

1.5.4 Patriarchy

According to Moi (1986: 214) a system, which enables men to dominate women in all
social relations, is known in feminist discourse as patriarchy. Ruthven (1984: 2) contends
that the task of feminist critics is to expose the way in which male dominance over
females constitutes perhaps the most pervasive ideology of our culture and provides its
most fundamental concept of power. It is argued that feminists have to be pluralists, there
is no pure feminist or female space from which we can speak. All feminists ideas are
contaminated by patriarchal ideology. For example, it has been explained that Mary
Wollstonecraft was inspired by the male dominated ideas of the French Revolution and
Simone de Beauvoir’s “The Second Sex” was also deeply influenced by Sartre’s
phallocentric categories.

The researcher’s feeling in connection with the above mentioned arguments is that the
move which enables the patriarchal powers to define all women as marginal to the
symbolic order and to society posits all women as necessarily feminine, and all men as necessarily masculine.

1.5.5   Gender

Bauerlein (1997: 62) defines gender as a way of referring to the social organization of the relationship between sexes. This concept puts more emphasis on the fundamentally social quality of distinctions based on sex. Gender cannot be dislodged from sex. Brooker (1999: 105) maintains that gender is a concept used for the social, cultural and historical construction of sexual difference. It is to be distinguished from essentialist conceptions of sexual identity or subjectivity founded on a natural core of biological sex in the body. In my view, gender reinforces male authority over women, and it also perpetuates the norm of male heterosexuality as the model of natural sexual identity. The hierarchical binary opposition of male / female reinforces patriarchy and sexual privilege to the disadvantage of women. If gender is understood as socially and culturally defined, it can also be undefined or deconstructed.

1.5.6   Feminism

Kemp and Squires (1997: 13) define feminism as the struggle to end sexist oppression. It is a political oppression. It is used to refer to women’s writing practice and criticism. Feminism sees women’s involvement in the domestic domain as an expression of their exclusion from the male world. It implies consciousness of all the sources of oppression of women in a universal phenomenon.

According to Guerin (1999), the goals for the feminist critics are to expose patriarchal premises and resulting prejudices, to promote discovery and re-evaluation of literature by women, and to examine social, cultural and psychosexual contexts of literature and literary criticism. They study sexual, social and political issues once thought to be outside the study of literature.
What can be deduced from the above mentioned definitions is that a fundamental goal of feminist theory is to analyse gender relations. Feminist theory might then be characterised as critical analyses of the dynamics of gender and sexuality. It fights for the end of sexist oppression.

1.5.7 Womanism

Womanism is a concept, which challenges the patriarchal oppressive structures that impede the development of women. It emerged in the African American community. Womanism attempts to break down all the barriers that are formed by patriarchy. (Mngxekeza, 2004: 26 – 27). Sanders (1995: 9), as quoted by Kwatsha (2002: 32) defines womanism as follows:

In essence, a womanist is a black feminist who is committed to the survival and wholeness of the entire people, male and female. The implication about the above mentioned definitions is that a womanist is a real, supportive, willful woman, who is committed to the well-being of both sexes. Womanism fights for the ideals of black life. It strives for black unity.

1.5.8 Psychoanalysis

This theory, helps to expose the impact of female subordination. Psychoanalytical theory has much of value to offer to women in order to understand among other things unconscious forces that lead them to collude with their own subordination, (Mngxekeza, 2004: 29).

According to Collier’s Encyclopaedia (1973: 450) as quoted by Kwatsha (2002: 21) psychoanalysis is the investigation of psychological motivation of human behaviour
through the study of mental content by a special technique. It is both a method of treating some mental illnesses and a system of psychology.

1.5.9 Afrocentricity

Afrocentricity is a concept that is indispensable whenever there is a discussion about womanism. It represents the African American male perspective, which too often defines women in traditional roles. (Nkumane 1999: 32). Williams (in Sanders, 1995: 46) as quoted by Nkumane (1999: 32) defines afrocentrism as follows: afrocentrism is a spiritual and philosophical ideology (a way of living, thinking, and knowing) that places African-American history, culture and heritage at the centre of black people’s lives. Afrocentrism involves black people’s conversion from conditioned white consciousness to a new African American and African centred thinking and acting. It involves the creation of ritual to support and reinforce new black consciousness. Afrocentrism affirms a universal African consciousness that is a collective consciousness. This definition implies that Afrocentricity is regarded as the starting point in a way of thinking and doing things for all black people who have been grossly affected by for western culture.

1.5.10 Formalism

According to David and Finkie (1989: 598) one of the visible and enduring aspects of modernism is a perspective in literary criticism called formalism. It tries to analyze literature not by its identifiable, or “natural” or “representational” content but consistently by its form – how it is constructed and how it functions so as to have meaning in the first place. It treats a literary work (text) as an organic unity. Formalism, then, concerns itself with the study of the form which consists of all the constituent parts of the literary work (text) existing in interrelationship to each other, within the same literary work (text).
1.6 METHOD OF RESEARCH
This study will be informed by literary theories which have been used by the researcher for the purpose of advocating a change of approach in both teaching and reading of literature. The researcher feels that we need to have a broader perspective about the theories of literature when we are analyzing a literary text. Four theories will be used for the expression of culture and also for portrayal of characters in some selected Xhosa dramas. The theories that are to be applied are: culture, feminism, womanism and psychoanalysis. The motive behind applying these theories is to express their significance in the study of literature.

1.7 METHODOLOGY

English critical works on contemporary literary theory as well as other theoretical research on the analysis of culture and the portrayal of women in some Xhosa dramas using the descriptive method of research will be applied in this study. Both observation and participation will expose barriers that block the development of women, and also show that the cultural belief that the father is the head of the family should be abolished because it is enslaving black women.

1.8 THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

This study will enable both literature students and researchers to view the portrayal of women in a broader perspective, to determine whether the culture as displayed in some selected Xhosa dramas develops, remains stagnant or deteriorates; to determine whether the concept culture is conceived as static or developing. It will also give students of literature and researchers a broader perspective about gender theories such as feminism, womanism, African womanism, psychoanalysis.
The researcher hopes that this study will be able to draw a distinction between two senses of character namely “character” and “personality” and between two perspectives on human psychology.

For many years, literature was taught with the assumption that students had already read widely, responded directly to what they had read, and that with limited guidance, they should deduce from their reading, the principles of both literary construction and critical analysis. Emphasis was usually placed on the historical development of literature. Literary education, however, has already spread from its traditional base as an institution of the middle classes in the mainstream of European society, which establishes and preserves that particular cultural identity (Taylor, 1981: 9). Therefore, this study will supply literature students, researchers and all other interested readers of literature with a scheme of ideas which govern literature and it will enable them to consider conventions, which determine the way human experience is presented in literature, the selection and ordering of characters and actions, expressed, and the style of language suited to that expression.

The researcher feels that it is possible to discuss cultural issues and the portrayal of characters in this study as they pertain to literature in African languages.

1.9 CONCLUSION

It has been mentioned that the aim of this study is to provide interested people in literature, students of literature and those researchers who are doing research in literature, with a broader perspective about how the authors have managed to handle culture and the portrayal of characters in some selected Xhosa dramas. The definitions of concepts serve as the pillars of this study. The method of research of this study is based on several theories such as follows; culture, womanism, African womanism, feminism and psychoanalysis. The researcher feels that we need to have a broader perspective about the theories of literature when we are analyzing a literary text. The relationship between the theories is also postulated.
CHAPTER 2
DEVELOPING THE THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter will develop a framework which will serve as the basis of the study. This chapter discusses gender inequality, black criticism, culture, feminism, womanism and psychoanalysis. The relationship between these theories will also be postulated. Gender inequality, black criticism, culture, feminism, womanism and psychoanalysis reinforce the struggle to reject a patriarchal perception of women and to value women’s ideas and action. Gender inequality, black criticism and culture cannot be discussed as separate entities from feminism, womanism and psychoanalysis because they are related to these new theories. Both theories will be used jointly in this chapter, but psychoanalysis will supplement the theoretical framework of the study.

Black criticism will be used in this chapter because it considers gender to be a fundamental category of analysis. Culture will also be used in this chapter because it is the common possession of a body of people who share the same traditions in social terms, and such a body is a society, therefore culture is related to gender inequality, womanism, feminism and psychoanalysis.

The theoretical framework of this study will be based on a synthesis of five approaches to literature. The second part of this study concentrates on concepts related to womanism. The third part of this chapter focuses on gender inequalities: it tries to find out whether gender inequality is socially, culturally or biologically determined. The last portion of the chapter is posited on a view that the implacable power of men derives from a sexual hierarchy which has an influence on social and political relations. Such a sub structure can only be seen by reaching down to examine its roots in the family. This will show that
patriarchy is not based on maleness as such but rather upon the social positions of males as heads of the households.

2.2 BLACK CRITICISM

Black criticism encompasses the study of African American literature, culture and theory. In its broadest it includes the study of certain cultures. It coincides with the feminist concerns of women of colour. It assumes that race is a fundamental category of literary and cultural analysis. It considers gender to be fundamental category of analysis, (Makaryk,1993: 5).

Black criticism is related to gender inequality, culture, feminism, womanism and psychoanalysis. Black criticism explores black cultural difference and it derives its principles of literary criticism from the black tradition itself. In this sense, it is related to culture, considering the fact that culture refers to the manner in which we do things. If the interpreters of the playwrights are not prepared to take into consideration the whole imaginative tradition in black societies, they are going to miss the finer modulations which give the best in our traditional black literature. The literature of a country must be situated in its cultural and historical context. In black criticism, blackness becomes a subject position in relation to the cultural dominant. In womanism, women want to see unity amongst the blacks everywhere, including both male and female.

The obvious lack in black criticism is that it does not explain exactly what constitutes race. It views what constitute race as less an essential or biological category than a social construct in which blackness becomes a subject position in relation to cultural dominant. Black criticism contends that race owes nothing to biology as such, but rather to the cultural valuation of its social make up. Black feminist theory can be defined as a way of reading inscriptions of race in modes of cultural expression.
2.3 ORIGINS AND DEVELOPMENT OF BLACK CRITICISM

Black criticism grew out of Albeit’s and Du Bois’ whose concept of the double consciousness of the African American is still influential. Locke’s work and the theorists of the Harlem Renaissance support Pan-Africanism and saw art as a way of defining a black identity and fostering racial pride.

Black criticism talks of art as a way of defining a black identity. This is related to womanism because a woman does not necessarily feel herself as a female, she rather feels herself as a person and as a human being. To feel herself as a female, not as a person, will drive her to accept the role that she is going to be given by society as a woman. By saying she is a person she makes her whole self part of society. If she identifies herself according to gender she will be looked on only as a woman by society.

Thanks to the works, black criticism began to flourish in the 1960’s and gave rise to the radicalization of the “Black” and the emergence of the Black Power philosophy. Black criticism has taken a variety of forms and approaches. Henry Louis Gates as quoted by Makaryk (1993: 4) states that the challenge of black literary criticism is to derive principles of literary criticism from the black tradition itself as defined in the idiom which constitutes the language of blackness.

The black critical essay refers to two contexts, two traditions, the western and the black. Makaryk (1993: 5) states that if critics want to explore black cultural difference, they must redefine theory which is not neutral, by resorting to the black vernacular tradition for models. People of colour are fond of theorizing but in forms quite different from the Western form of abstract logic. Their way of theorizing is always in narrative forms in the stories they create. They tend to do the same thing in riddles and proverbs, in the play with language.

Black criticism is of great significance to this chapter. It can be used as a theoretical resource for analysis. For example it has been stated in the above mentioned arguments
that black criticism gave rise to the radicalization of the “Black” and the emergence of the Black Power philosophy. Black womanism is as a philosophy that celebrates black roots, the ideals of black life, while giving a balanced presentation of black womanhood. It is also greatly concerned with the unequal power relations between men and women. Black criticism is responsible for the emergence of womanism.

Black criticism can be used as a theoretical resource for analysis considering that literature of a country must be situated in its cultural and historical context. Literature does not operate in a vacuum. It mirrors the philosophy as a social act and also as a social product. As far as possible every aspect of a society should be taken into consideration when evaluating literature.

The variety of African American criticism which has been practiced at any given time creates a problem when it comes to the issue of tracing a simple historical development. Only Baker (1965:14) as quoted by Mararyk, (1965: 5) has sketched broad generational shifts in this criticism over the past 40 years. Baker labels a period of integrationist poetics, marked by a faith that recent landmark legislative states signaled the advent of social equality in America. It has been assumed that this shift would be able to integrate American cultural forms into the artistic mainstream accordingly. Such integration would lead to the disappearance of any sense of a separate black tradition. Separate forms of cultural expression might call for separate standards of critical judgment.

Among the proponents of integrationist poetics mention may be made of the following; Richard Wright: (1990) *The literature of the Negro in the United States* and Arthur Davis: *Integration and Race literature.* It is believed that no simple integrationist has ever claimed time that black writers needed to appropriate the Western cultural heritage for the purpose of making their own romantic voyage of self discovery.
Black power is a call for black people in this country to unite, to recognize their heritage, to build a sense of community. Black power is a call for black people to begin to define their own goals, to lead their own organizations and to support those organizations (Makaryk, 1993: 6).

The Black power movement led by Baraka (1980) as quoted by Makaryk became the first cultural wing which managed to find a relevant approach. The Black Arts movement proposed a radical reordering of the western cultural aesthetic, and also proposed a separate symbolism, methodology and critique. Baraka’s theatre school created the model for revolutionary black cultural groups. Black cultural heritage gave rise to the establishment of Black studies programmes at many American Universities.

The theory of the Black aesthetic reached its boiling point in Henderson’s essay *The form of things unknown*, claiming that the commodity “blackness” is most evident in black poetry and that such poetry can be truly appreciated by a black reference public or audience. The ultimate criterion for critical evaluation must be found in the Black community itself.

Black aesthetic was overtaken by failure to achieve its own goals. It failed to move audience to revolutionary action and in the mid 1970’s it was accessed by the critics of chauvinism, introspection and Marxist rhetoric. Neal (1991) as quoted by Makaryk, (1993:6) became the first person to notice that art had failed to bring about social and political change. Neal (1991) maintains that the Black aesthetic is just a Marxist literary theory in which the concept of race is substitute for the Marxist idea of class. Neal (1991) believes that through propaganda alone the black writer can never perform the highest function of his art, that of revealing to man his most enduring human possibilities and limitations. Neal (1991) advocated more rigorous attention to the uniqueness of expressive form in black art.

Black criticism, as a theoretical resource, is of great significance to this study. It has been stated above that black criticism gave rise to the radicalization of the black person and the
emergence of the Black Power philosophy. Black womanism is a philosophy that celebrates black roots and black ideals whilst giving a balanced perspective on black womanhood: it is also greatly concerned with the unequal power relations between men and women and in this sense black criticism is responsible for the emergence of womanism.

After 1975 formalism and structuralism emerged and the study of literature began to move from a formalist to a more structuralist stage called a new black aesthetic. It gave rise to the generation of close readings that attend to the social text. The concepts of “black” and “white” were no longer thought to be pre-constituted, rather, they are mutually constituted and socially produced.

Such a type of criticism was promoted by Gates in his works which trace the relationship between African and African American vernacular traditions and cultural forms. (Makaryk, 1993: 8).

2.4 CULTURE

Ayisi (1992: 1) argues that man became the first creature to inhabit this planet and struggled for survival between himself and nature. He had to live and also to find his place in the universe. During this process he has left behind traces of his achievements at various levels of his developments, the cumulative knowledge of his various achievements constitutes what we refer to as culture.

Payne (1997: 2) also shares the same view as Ayisi. He defines culture as that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, law, morals, customs and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society. This therefore implies that Payne’s definition spells out what Ayisi has said, that man has to struggle for survival and also reconcile himself to nature. But there are other definitions of culture, and it is worthwhile for us to look at them.
According to Brooker (1999: 56), culture is a multi accented term with a complex and still open history which in itself expresses the complexity of general history. Culture is used to refer to organic cultivation, as of soil and crops, or to a biological culture made in the laboratory and so by extension to individual human accomplishment. Culture is used to refer to intellectual and artistic works or practices which in their very forms and meanings, define human society as socially constructed rather than natural. The second meaning can be easily generalised to produce descriptions of the tenor or spirit of a social group or whole society, period or nation.

Our knowledge about the institutions of the society can give us a better understanding of the basic principles on which human society functions. We expect human beings to behave in prescribed ways if they want to live normal lives, in reasonable peace.

Human beings can acquire these ways of behaving only during the period of socialization, education and through experience. We refer to these ways of behaving as “social facts” or “collective manifestations”. Social facts, then constitute the various institutions which guide and direct our actions in society (Ayisi, 1992: 2).

What could be deduced from the above mentioned discussion is that culture entails the way of behaving, it is the way we do things. Elements of culture are implements, artefacts, paintings, figures for religious observances and all the integrative forces such as religion.

The fact that human behaviour is also influenced by ecological factors proves that cultures have a symbiotic affinity with their environments and geographical factors.

Ayisi (1992: 2) argues that as there are many and varied environments, there are also many and varied cultures. In English society, a man may kiss a lady on the cheek as a symbol of affection. The continental Europeans do something quite different, men kiss their fellow men on both cheeks. The Ghanaian who has never lived in either of these cultures would consider men kissing their fellow men ridiculous and feeble, although
chiefs may embrace distinguished guests as a sign of cordiality and welcome. When a man behaves in a way considered to be feminine in Ghana it is said to be odd, and the only explanation given to this behaviour is that the man is impotent, the English gentleman gets up for a lady, but the Ghanaian lady, unless she is westernized, gets up for a man (Ayisi, 1992: 4).

Among the Xhosas it is a common practice to see a husband walking in front of his wife carrying a stick while his wife is following behind carrying heavy luggage on her head. It is taboo for woman to carry luggage on his head. Black women are not allowed to propose love to men. According to our traditional culture society does not recognize women who propose love to men. Such practice is regarded as an embarrassment.

In a Xhosa society, father’s word is final in his household, because he is the head of his household. A married woman is always loyal to her traditional role more especially when it comes to her constant use of the “Hlonipha” language. In this sense a married woman becomes a custodian of social values. When a female is betrothed to a man, his relations expect her to conform to certain traditions and norms of the family. Everybody takes an interest in how she sits, speaks, laughs, acts and reacts to situations.

In Xhosa society, when a woman marries she is given a new name. The choice of a name for a married woman is a comparatively simple matter as there is a wide field and limitless subjects from which to make selection. A married woman is not allowed to parade bareheaded in her household.

In Xhosa society, hospitality and kindness to visitors form the basis of every household where the man plays the key role which his wife plays a subordinate but complementary role. While the preparation of beer is the woman’s prerogative, her role ends as soon as the beer reaches the person to be entertained. Only the husband can say a few words to a stranger in connection with such pleasures as drink and meat. This, as it is with many similarly subtle actions on the part of men, helps to reinforce man’s superiority over woman.
While men walk across the Thina River without having to show outward reverence for the river, women are compelled to show overtly that they respect the river and the “inkwakhwa”, the totem snake of the amaMpondomise.

Culture is concerned with the “art” customs and ways. The different ways of viewing culture differ from the so-called “scientific” approach. Sometimes the culture of a place is said to be indigenous which means that it is exclusive and peculiar to that society, but because of cultural contact or acculturation this is invalid. There is no culture that may be said to be pure. For example, Roman and Greek cultures have influenced other European cultures in many ways. Most African cultures have been influenced by Western culture.

This difficulty is circumvented by the use of the term “traditional” to imply the perceived pure culture of a place. The term “traditional” applied to government or dancing implies the indigenous government or dancing of that part of Africa. Anthropologists are concerned with such things as conventions, customs and the material objects that are the main items that keep a society going.

Culture consists of the ways, morals, beliefs transmitted from generation to generation. It may be generally shared by some group of people; it should represent the collective conscience of a group of people and differences in culture derive from several factors such as race, ethnicity, climate and so on.

According to Payne (1997: 2) the study of culture or cultural theory, is no less a multiplicity than culture, even though cultural studies have generally come to be identified with the Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies at the University of Birmingham, and with the influence of Richard Hoggart.

Payne (1997: 2) further contends that as cultural studies developed in Britain under the influence of Hoggart and Williams, a set of concepts came to determine much of the
discourse of this new interdisciplinary or anti disciplinary field. Human subjectivity and consciousness, ideology and hegemony, critique and polysemy provided then, as now, the key co-ordinates of cultural studies, especially since the 1970’s as cultural theorists have become more fully responsible to continental European developments in semiotics, psychoanalysis, critical theory and philosophy. The thinking of cultural and critical theorists clarified.

Culture is related to my study. Chapter four of my study deals with the influence of culture on women in selected Xhosa dramas. The influence of culture is of great significance because it yields specific evidence about the whole organization of society in which we live. Without the knowledge of culture we cannot really claim to know the society. Culture aims at keeping the traditional customs, norms and values alive as they are being passed from generation to another generation. In other words the traditional customs, norms, values and taboos are responsible for the making of the society.

In examining the influence of culture on women in my study I will be identifying a clash between a traditional culture and Western culture, and tracing the effect of such a clash on women. There are familiar aspects, customs of our own society that we do not understand by introspection, but that we can explain to ourselves, by applying the very same principles, aspects and customs of cultural materialism. Women’s roles in families vary according to cultural and historical circumstances.

The analysis of the influence of culture on women is significant because it will give literature students a broader perspective about our traditionally patriarchal recognized form of marriage. Chapter four of my study actually reconciles African culture with modern values. It shows that no culture should be imposed on another culture, no culture should be mystified or romanticized. It also shows that colonialism, with its new values and cultural institutions, introduced modern culture and that there was nothing wrong in borrowing from other cultures so as to promote cultural dynamism.
Literature does not operate in a vacuum. It mirrors the philosophy of life held by people. It must be regarded as a social act and also as a social product. As far as possible every aspect of a society should be taken into consideration when evaluating literature.

2.5 IDEOLOGY

Ruthven (1984: 31) states that the concept “ideology” is a never fully articulated system of assumptions by which a society operates, and permeates every thing it produces including, of course, what is deemed to be literature. The theory of ideology is derived from the writing of Karl Marx. It can be understood in two ways, both as a fixed set of ideas, and as a process whereby the partial view of a ruling class come to hold sway over the whole society. In this manner, ideology has come to be associated less with an “x-class”, than with a political party, extremist action or fundamentalist movement (Brooker, 1999: 127).

Ruthven, (1984: 31) points out that ideology is manifest in the ways we represent ourselves to one another, thus we speak of different ideologies. For example, sexual ideology determines what is deemed to be socially acceptable behaviour for men and women. An “ideology of enlightenment” can represents exploitation as trade, and condone murder as a means of eliminating savagery. Patriarchal ideology according to Moi, (1985: 123) is patriarchy that insists on labelling women as emotional, intuitive and imaginative, whilst converting reason and rationality into an exclusively male preserve.

The function of ideology is to justify the status quo, and to persuade the powerless that their powerlessness is inevitable. Fragments of a dominant ideology are sometimes identified by writers, and held up for inspection.(Ruthven, 1984: 31). This is what Conrad does with the ideology of imperialism in Heart of Darkness (1902) where European greed for the natural resources of African is shown to be displaced by a humanitarian desire to civilise the dark continent. (Ruthven, 1984: 31).
Ruthven, (1984: 34) further observes that sexist ideology, which is the ideology of male dominance, operates by repressing what is repressible, and displacing what is not, thus producing false resolutions of manifest contradictions in our society. One such contradiction is the gap between the ideal of sexual equality in the work force and the reality of sexual inequality. The indisputable fact of inequality can be either suppressed by the ideology of equal opportunity inherited from meritocratic theories of education, or displaced by the ideology of domestic fulfillment: “a woman’s place is in the home”. (Ruthven, 1984: 32).

The business of a critic, therefore, is to examine a literary work for traces of the ideologies which shape it, whether its authors are aware of them or not, and to point to discrepancies between what the work purports to tell and what a careful reading of it shows. In this type of enquiry, a good book is one which questions the ideologies it articulates like *Tess of the d’Urbervilles* or *Jude the Obscure*, whose heroines are not constrained by contemporary ideologies for female virtue and bourgeois marriage. (Ruthven 1984: 32).

In my study I intend to refer to the ideologies mentioned in the above arguments. Sexist ideology and the ideology of equal opportunity are of great significance to my study. For example, chapter three also examines male dominance over women which is mainly caused by sexist ideology. This study shows that from its beginnings, patriarchy was based upon man’s obedience to a superior divine will. Submission to God’s power over man also legitimized man’s dominion over both women and nature. From a woman’s perspective, the purpose of human action should be the realization of felicity rather than the surpassing of incarnated existence. Women recognize nonetheless, to live a harmonious life in which delight has supremacy over deprivation. The masculine drive for transcendence, as perpetuated by masculine myths, is unacceptable to women because it requires a repudiation of happiness. Sexist ideology will show whether is it nature or society which puts women in an inferior status.
The ideology of equal opportunity will be alluded to my study to discuss laws, taboos, customs and values that prevent women from achieving full equality with men in all aspects of domestic and public life. My own personal feeling here is that although the power of men to define themselves is the most pervasive power in the world, this power can be corrected only when it is matched by a comparable capacity of women to be free to express their own experience of the course of human events. By rebelling against a destiny created for her by men, a woman insists upon fashioning a future of her own and, like men, a woman will exercise a will to power if this is the only means by which she can find meaning in her life.

2.6 PSYCHOANALYSIS

According to Collier’s Encyclopaedia (1973: 450) as quoted by Kwatsha, (2002: 21) psychoanalysis is the investigation of psychological motivation of human behaviour through the study of mental content by a special technique. It is both a method of treating some mental illness and system of psychology.

2.6.1 PSYCHOANALYSIS AND LITERATURE

According to Mngxekeza (2004: 32) the theory of psychoanalysis plays a vital role in the analysis of literature. She further contends that the emphasis is on the fact that the human being, whether reader or author, is a psychological being. It helps to analyze an author’s work and the reader’s response to literature psychologically. A psychological approach to literature is centered on interpretation and is used as a source of knowledge that produces useful interpretations of literature. Psychoanalysis exposes the effects on the reader that are caused by literature and how the characters in the literature are being portrayed and how they feel and think.

Since literature is expressed within texts it needs a reader who will be able to discover, uncover or recover it. A reader therefore must be somebody who attributes to the text whatever it represents to him. In this sense meaning would be something imputed or
attributed to a text. At its extreme it would allow the widest possible range of meanings suggested by a text. Since the literary work is neither a vehicle for ideas, a reflection of social reality, nor the incarnation of some transcendental truth, it needs a psychological approach to it.

Theorists argue that effects on the reader demonstrate that psychoanalysis has a place in the literature because literature is made up of people despite the fact that they are paper people, but the fact remains, they resemble people. Atkinson et al (1983: 497) as quoted by Kwatsha, (2002:22) maintains that the goal of psychoanalysis is to make the individual aware of unconscious conflicts and of the defense mechanism she or he has been using to control anxiety.

Freud’s theory is relevant to my study because in my study I am examining social issues which are affecting women. For example women according to Freud are considered as human beings who are likely to have a weaker super-ego than men and they (women) are exclude from the values of the super-ego. The study aims at showing how far is the truth of this view. It aims at showing whether Freud knows that women have the same potential as any other person, or whether he knows that women have the potential of winning. Freuds theory also deals with how the mind of a person works, and in analyzing literature one deals with the behavior of the individual characters which is controlled by the mind.

Kant, Jung, Kaschok and Murphy examine the illusion of gender dichotomy, women’s oppression, reason and gender, the effect of gender inequality, antigone phase, masculinization of thought, psychological androgyny, cultural opportunities and moral philosophy. All these issues are relevant to my study.
Freud postulated that the mind is made up of three sections: the conscious, the pre-conscious and the unconscious or sub-conscious. The conscious part of the mind is concerned with phenomena and events of which the individual is aware. One is not immediately aware of the events in the pre-conscious mind, but they can be brought into focus by an act of will. In the sub-conscious which constitutes the greater part of the mind, one is not normally aware of incidents and events, but one can become aware of them under special circumstances, as for example in dreams, hypnosis and psychoanalysis, (Ferron, 1976:6).

Freuds further conceived of the personality as being made up of three component parts which he referred to as the Id, the Ego and the Super-Ego respectively. The Id which is the agent of the Libido, operates on the basis of the “Pleasure Principle”, and it insists on immediate and total gratification of its needs of the moment. It is a moral, infantile, irrational, demanding, impulsive, selfish and pleasure loving. It cannot tolerate frustration, and the realities of the situation, and if it cannot obtain immediate gratification in reality, it seeks it through fantasy as wish fulfillment. (Ferron, 1976: 5).

Freuds contends that the Ego is man’s conscious self which resides in the conscious part of the mind. It is endowed with free will, judgement, and reason, and it operates on the basis of the “Reality Principle”. Left to itself, the Id would result in negative consequences but it is held in check by the Ego. The function of the Ego is to satisfy the desires of the Id, but in accordance with social norms and the demands of the Super Ego. This implies that if one may consider the realities of the situation, the Ego may block the desires of the Id, divert them into more constructive channels, agree to postponement in the best interest of the individual. (Ferron, 1976: 6).

Freud further observes that the characteristic way in which the Ego resolves the conflicting demands of the Id, the Super-Ego and external realities, determines to some
extent, the nature of the individual personality. In trying to resolve such conflicts, the Ego may resort to what are known as Defense Mechanisms, (Ferron, 1976: 7).

The indisputable argument of Freud’s theory is that all human beings have physical, psychological and social needs which must be satisfied. When an individual’s needs are not being satisfied he or she is blocked from reaching a goal, the result is frustration, anxiety and tension. Another obvious fact about Freud’s theory is that since everybody is thwarted to some extent periodically, we all make use of defense mechanisms in order to release tension to a greater or lesser degree, (Ferron, 1976: 7).

The researcher learns from Freud’s theory that attitudes, sentiments and complexes represent different aspects of the personality, they form the most important determinants of human behavior. The “Self-Image” is a sort of picture of the kind of person the individual would like to be. Of all the attitudes and sentiments that a person may form throughout life, undoubtedly the most important is the “Self Regarding Sentiment.” Our duty as parents and teachers is to help children build up healthy, realistic self – images, (Ferron, 1976: 7).

Freud was accurate in observing that anatomy is destiny, but erred in his explanation, in his level of analysis, which was both phallocentric and reductionist. Destiny is inherent not in biological anatomy but in anatomy gendered and meaningful contextualized. One of the most existential profound and psychologically meaningful issues with which each of us must contend is the arbitrariness of anatomy and its assigned meanings, which then determine every individual’s life path to an extraordinary extent. Once assigned, it is gender, as the basic psychological organizing principle in the family (along with age) and in larger society (along with race and class), that determines and organizes development an identity, (Kaschok, 1992: 44).

Research has indicated that gender identity is generally established somewhere between an infant’s twelfth and eighteenth month and is well in place by the third year. By that time the child has developed an organized concept of itself as a girl or a boy, along with
many of the associated meanings. That identity will then continue to grow in complexity and to incorporate new levels of meanings and behaviour as the individual matures.

2.6.3 THEORIES OF PSYCHOANALYSIS:

Freud postulated that the mind is made up of three sections: the conscious, the pre-conscious and the unconscious or sub-conscious. The conscious part of the mind is concerned with phenomena and events of which the individual is aware. One is not immediately aware of the events in the pre-conscious mind, but they can be brought into focus by an act of will. In the sub-conscious, which constitutes the greater part of the mind, one is not normally aware of incidents and events, but one can become aware of them under special circumstances, as for example in dreams, hypnosis and psychoanalysis.

Freud further conceived of the personality as being made up of three component parts which he referred to as the Id, the Ego and the Super-Ego respectively. The Id which is the agent of the Libido, operates on the basis of the “Pleasure Principle”, and it insists on immediate and total gratification of its needs of the moment. It is a moral, infantile, irrational, demanding, impulsive, selfish and pleasure loving. It cannot tolerate frustration, and the realities of the situation, and if it cannot obtain immediate gratification in reality, it seeks it through fantasy and wish fulfillment.

Freud contends that the Ego is man’s conscious self which resides in the conscious part of the mind. It is endowed with free will, judgement, and reason, and it operates on the basis of the “Reality Principle”. Left to itself, the Id would result in negative consequences but it is held in check by the Ego. The function of the Ego is to satisfy the desires of the Id, but in accordance with social norms and the demands of the Super Ego. This implies that if one may consider the realities of the situation, the Ego may block the desires of the Id, divert them into more constructive channels, agree to postponement in the best interest of the individual.
Freud further observes that the characteristic way in which the Ego resolves the conflicting demands of the Id, the Super-Ego and external realities, determines to some extent, the nature of the individual personality. In trying to resolve such conflicts, the Ego may resort to what are known as Defense Mechanisms.

The indisputable argument of Freud’s theory is that all human beings have physical, psychological and social needs which must be satisfied. When an individual’s needs are not being satisfied he or she is blocked in reaching his other goal, the result is frustration, anxiety and tension. Another obvious fact about Freud’s theory is that since everybody is thwarted to some extent periodically, we all make use of defense mechanisms in order to release tension to a greater or lesser degree.

The researcher learns from Freud’s theory that attitudes, sentiments and complexes represent different aspects of the personality, they form the most important determinants of human behaviour. The “Self – Image” is a sort of picture of the kind of person the individual would like to be. Of all the attitudes and sentiments that a persona may form throughout life, undoubtedly the most important is the “Self Regarding Sentiment”. Our duty as parents and teachers is to help children build up healthy, realistic self – images.

According to Kaschok, (1992: 45) the organizing principle of gender is general rather than specific. It does not involve, for example, whether one wears one’s hair short or long, or dresses in skirts or pants, rather, it creates the illusion of being a girl or a boy, a woman or a man, by dictating what a female or a male in this society does.

To add to this, Freud in Mitchel, (1985) as quoted by Kwatsha, (2002: 22) contends that a little girl behaves differently from a little boy. She makes her judgements and her decisions in a flash. She has seen the penis and knows that she is without it and wants to have it. Penis envy, Freud continues, may result in a masculinity complex in which the girl hopes she will one day get a penis, or pretends that she has one and behaves as if she were a man.

Women can never directly exercise the power invested in the position of father because they do not have a penis, and this biological fact has, in Freud, important psychic consequences for feminine subjectivity. This implies that the penis becomes a more basic identity.

Many empirical studies have demonstrated, beginning at birth, parents treat female and male children differently in a variety of ways that directly or indirectly influence or define the physical and the psychological. Both mothers and fathers rated female children as significantly softer, smaller, finer-featured, and less alert. Fathers were more extreme in stereotyping. They rated boys as more alert, stronger, firmer, hardier, and better co-ordinated than girls. Other studies (Alberle and Mnegele, 1952; Tasch, 1952; Pedersen and Robson, 1969) have found that fathers expected their newborn sons to be aggressive, their daughters pretty, sweet, fragile and delicate. Mothers have been observed to be more physically responsive to male children than to female children. Kaschok, (1992: 46).

Miller, 1989 as quoted by Kaschok (1992: 46) contends that it is not the possession of certain genitals or even chromosones that establishes gender identity and related characteristics and behaviors but whether meaningful others treat the individual as female or male and, in that way, teach the individual how to be a female or a male. In order to survive psychologically, each of us must be educated in how to be either female or male.

Thus Kwatsha, (2002: 22) points out that most commonly in African tradition, old women enforce the principle of patriarchy upon younger women in their homestead. They do this not because they have developed a masculinity complex or female homosexuality or envy the penis, but they practice what was practiced towards them by the older women when they were young. They feel that they have the duty to pass cultural practices from generation to generation.
This implies then that a woman wears or dresses in skirts or pants simply because she wants to create the illusion of being a woman by dictating what a female in our traditional society does.

Everything from manner of dress, posture, appropriate seating positions, eating patterns, performance of household chores, sexual expression, and voice tone and inflection, to freedom of movement in public, safety, educational path, career choice, self-esteem, and self concept, flows from the gender one is assigned at birth as a function of anatomy. From the beginning, then, females and males are set on different physically based psychological paths. Under ordinary circumstances, to have a body means to be alive, to move to act and to interact. In this society, however, literally everything about how, when, and even if we do any of these activities is gendered. Any question about the physical is meaningless until it is gendered. (Kaschok, 1992: 47).

Theorists believe that it is women who generally have to alter their bodies and restrict their movement to maintain the illusion of dichotomy. With the use of razors, depilatories, tweezers, hairstyling, makeup, nail polish, nylons, high heels and garments that tighten and reduce, women do not look anything like men. Women must make themselves pleasing to men.

Certainly men also participate actively in physically and psychologically signaling their gender appropriateness, but in less artificial and physically - constricting ways. They must consistently signal ways in which they take up more space and make a greater impact on the environment than do women. They must be more powerful in every way, from the personal to the institutional.

Women are perceived to be fond of talking incessantly, nagging, gossiping, being concerned with appearance and dieting. This is a form of misogyny that is a part of their daily life.
A daughter in a patriarchal society cannot live outside the world of her father. The girl is the extension of the father, providing him with whatever he cannot provide himself.

This, therefore, implies that in a patriarchal society the manner in which a daughter is treated differs completely from the manner in which a son is treated. For example a daughter cannot resolve the Antigone complex as long the world of adulthood is a man’s world, as long as she is the extension of her father or some other man, as long as she is constantly subject to definition by even strange men in public. A son can and does escape from the early world of the mother to a world of men, as the mother is reduced to a person from whom separation is to be accomplished.

Murphy, (1994: 44) states that of all the obstacles that limit the advancement of women, those touching upon knowledge and values are the most difficult to remove. Women seeking acceptance within professional and intellectual communities are often expected to exhibit qualities of thought and action that characterize the lives of men. And if their performance does not meet standards established by men, it is likely that nothing significant will be expected from them. Through knowledge men maintain their dominance over women in the context of sexual oppression. This is another way that men maintain their dominance over women. The capacity of every person to have a full human life depends upon their opportunities to develop and express the deepest potentials of the mind and heart.

The early stages of feminism focused its attention upon the improvement of the situation of women within a patriarchal culture, directing its reform primarily toward political and legal emancipation. It is clear that the exclusion of women from full participation in the universe of moral and rational discourse activates a deeper aspiration for liberty.

According to Murphy, (1994: 44) the women’s liberation movement is not only explicitly feminist in that it arises from a developed feminist consciousness, but it is much more inclusive in its agenda than was the women’s emancipation movement of the early 1900’s. The liberation which contemporary feminists seek is not merely freedom from
marginalization, oppression, discrimination, but freedom for self definition, self affirmation and self-determination, in other words, the effective recognition of their full humanity as persons and the freedom to exercise that personhood in every sphere. This implies that the contemporary movement visualizes not only political and legal rights for women equal to those of men but the liberation of women and men into the fullness of human personhood.

When a woman lacks the independent capacity to assert her own positive truths and values, she is unable to contribute her insights and experiences to the various fields of human knowledge. This inhibition also affects relations between the sexes. When denied opportunities for higher forms of self-expression, women may, out of frustration, attack the modes of understanding upheld by men. Masculine claims of cognitive objectivity are then dismissed as spurious modes of knowledge, (Murphy, 1944: 45).

It could be deduced from the above mentioned arguments that such user of the intellect represent a limited and partial perspective of men. The obvious fact about women is that women hope to do away with the mind-set that maintains such dualism of subject and object, body and spirit, reason and emotion. It is this masculine attachment to an abstract universalism which excludes the experiential understanding of women from the development of human culture.

Feminist theoreticians believe that within the women’s movement there is disagreement over the relation between reason and gender. Some are convinced that the full attainment of equality will provide women with the opportunity to demonstrate that their own cognitive abilities and show that their moral conceptions are substantially the same as those of men. Others see a danger in such an approach, because they fear it would deprive women of the uniqueness of their feminine perceptions.

For the medieval philosophers, men and women were equal with regard to reason. The subordinations of woman to man arose primarily from bodily difference. As an immaterial power, reason existed in the soul, and in the soul there was no sex. In this
limited sense, human nature was complete in both men and women. A related and somewhat different insight has been developed within modern psychology. Jung and his followers assert that every person has both male and female components in their psyche. There are primal patterns, or archetypes, of the unconscious, which attract the soul of every human being. Included among these are two basic sexual archetypes: the animus, or masculine spirit, and the anima, or feminine spirit. (Murphy, 1994: 46).

Murphy, (1994: 46) further contends that the point of psychological androgyny is to show that although each person is predominately masculine or feminine, she or he possesses significant qualities of mind and heart that are generally attributable to the opposite sex. At the level of intense intellectual activity, it is difficult to determine which disposition is operative. Coleridge as quoted by Murphy, (1994: 46) believed that great minds are androgynous. The implication about all this is that it is difficult to determine the gender origins of any particular expression of intellectual life.

Murphy, (1994: 47) suggests that as women take full advantage of their enlarging cultural opportunities, they should bring their own powers to bear upon the entire range of human experience. Those women writers who have noted the androgynous dimensions of mental life have at the same time insisted that the creative power of women is different from that of men. They feel that it is important to draw out and develop these differences rather than to stress the similarities of reasoning power and perception among men and women. Such distinctions not only insure the self realization of women, they also force men to assume responsibility for their own distortions of reason which have been developed within a patriarchal culture.

The belief that women lack the capacity to exercise the powers of human reason is a deeply rooted prejudice. From the beginning of Western culture, the separate creation of woman and her profound involvement with the reproduction of human life virtually excluded her from those higher intellectual operations that were thought to define human nature more fully. The predominance of reason was in the male, and masculine primacy
was assured by contrasting the positive elements of thought with lesser qualities symbolically associated with women, Murphy, (1994: 47).

The above arguments show that women are also great thinkers: their reasoning power is just the same as that of men. Women and men should be placed on an equal footing as far as the reasoning power is concerned. Murphy maintains that reasoning must be fully operative, reason must control passion and assert its superiority over mere sense perception. Reason as a higher realm of thought is characterized by the explication of universal principles and logical order of ideas.

Some feminist theorists believe that the development of masculine conceptions of thought and action was accompanied by the articulation of gender distinctions that reinforced male dominance. Differences between reason and emotion were articulated over a wide range of human activities. It was acknowledge that the inwardness of women, with their interior knowledge and compassion for others, gave them a certain moral superiority, but their assumed incapacity for universal thought doomed them to an inferior status. Even their champion, John Stuart Mill, believed that women were more suited for public activities that did not require sustained reasoning directed toward the general good.

Rene Descartes (1992) as quoted by (Murphy, 1994: 48) became a crucial figure in the development of this disparagement of the feminine. For him, abstract thought was the only sure means of increasing knowledge and advancing human understanding. The acquisition of knowledge was carefully distinguished from the arts of persuasion. Cognition was generated through the mind’s conversation with itself. The struggle for clear understanding was not, as with the ancients, a conflict between parts of the soul, Descartes says there is a radical separation between the soul and the body. The body is thought of as being opposed to reason. And the achievement of rational thought requires a complete transcendence of the sensual. Love, as a passion is now distinguished from purely natural affection and becomes a desire to unite with what is good for the soul. For Descartes, true knowledge exists beyond the realm where woman is at home, (Murphy, (1994: 48).

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The researcher deduces from the above mentioned arguments that nature places women in an inferior status. Women are meant or suited for public activities that do not require sustained reasoning. Reason should operate in a world of uncontaminated feeling.

Some feminists theories maintain that the development of moral theory gave rise to a similar disposition which separated the world of mind from the world of nature. For example to protect morality from individual caprice, it was thought that the ethical must be based upon the universal. The disparagement of the feminine was intensified. A woman’s fulfillment of her life roles as wife and mother gave her life a moral dimension, the significance of which was confined to the domestic. The biological characteristics of women connected their existence with the rhythms of animal reproduction, while the distinctively human world of reason and will was reserved for men. The specificities of material love were considered admirable but inferior, since they were qualities held in common with other animals. Knowledge derived from theoretical principles was to be the uniquely human form of philosophical and ethical understanding, (Murphy, 1994: 49).

Kant carried this moral generalization to a high level of articulation. He believed that in the development of ethical awareness there is a progression from subjectivity, which represents the immaturity of consciousness to a public space of universal principles. Since morality is a form of self legislation, adherence to generalized imperatives must be autonomously pursued. This pursuit requires a distancing of reasoning from emotion. As feelings are excluded from the ground of morality the separation between reason and nature is reinforced, (Murphy, 1994: 50).

Kant’s moral philosophy was directed toward the articulation of rights that would assure the mutual external freedom of individuals. This requires a disinterested disposition, which allows the liberty of one to be impartially reconciled with the freedom of all. For Kant, the duties that the self owes to others are essentially duties that the individual owes
to himself, and this lack of connectedness in Kant’s theory has been a stumbling block for women, (Murphy, 1994: 51).

Feminist theories maintain that Kant’s theory is incompatible with those feminist views which maintain that some form of attachment to others is essential to any conception of the good life. What is not sufficiently appreciated is the fact that the Kantian tradition includes an attitude toward the meaning of life that is profoundly offensive to the sensibilities of women. Kant tends to give a higher regard to the individual than to the community, and his view that the world is driven by discord introduces fundamental rivalry and competition difficult to reconcile with feminine values of relatedness and friendship. Kantanian idealism is an aspiration of the masculine spirit to defeat the transience of destiny of autonomous man, (Murphy, 1994: 52).

The researcher notices from Kant’s theory in the above mentioned arguments that Kantian idealism is meant to dignify man, but it excludes him from the pursuit of happiness.

Kant believes that patriarchy was based upon man’s obedience to a superior divine will. Submission to God’s power over man also legitimized man’s dominion over both women and nature. This act of primal obedience was detached from any explicit desire for happiness. Kant’s ethic is a secular expression of the same attitude. Ethical life is now thought of as a pure form of duty, an expression of will through which man reveals to himself the unconditional value of moral obligation. From a feminist perspective, the purpose of human action should be the realization of felicity. This is not the same as an unrestricted hedonism. Women recognize that limitation and sorrow are unavoidable, the objective is, nonetheless, to live a harmonious life in which delight has supremacy over deprivation. The masculine drive for transcendence as perpetuated by masculine myths, is unacceptable to feminists because it requires a repudiation of happiness. Masculine heroes are lonely, homeless wanderers forever searching abstract truth. This is the consequence of a quest for universal meaning, a quest that has become detached from all that is authentically human, (Murphy, 1994 : 53)
What could be deduced from the above mentioned argument is that a feminist morality is embedded. It gives to the values of care, connectedness, and nurture a preference over unconditional imperatives derived from a theoretical ethics. A morality based upon women’s values is directed toward a well-being rather than realization of abstract perfection. At the most intense levels of creativity, distinctions of gender recede. What is accomplished by either a man or a woman begins to influence the whole of human culture. If we are aware of that expansiveness which in her is in thought, we may see how attitudes toward the meaning of mind and value originally promoted by men have influenced the outlook of both men and women as they have struggled to understand the meaning of personal existence in the modern world.

All the discussions from the above section are related to my study. For example chapter three of my study examines the effect of gender inequality. It has been clearly shown in chapter three that women seek not only freedom from marginalization, oppression, discrimination but they also seek freedom for self definition, self affirmation and self-determination. Women seek the effective recognition of their full humanity as persons and the freedom to exercise that personhood in every sphere. Gender inequality excludes women from full participation at their households. Due to gender inequality women have been placed on pedestals as goddesses, but imprisoned within domestic injustice. Custom has been nothing but a tyrant hidden in every home.

The discussions from the above section are connected to my study considering that against the background of traditional life, women are depicted as home-bound and gender roles are a product of culture. Men and women are directed by genetically based pre-dispositions to adopt their particular roles. A woman is tied to home base because of her physique.

Women are seen closer to nature than man and therefore as inferior to men. Another connectedness of the above section to my study is that my study provides a universal explanation for a universal phenomenon, the second class status of women. It shows that
the subordination of women owes nothing to biology as such, but rather to the cultural evaluation of their biological make up. It has been explained in my study that a change in this evaluation will remove the basis for female subordination. The manner in which some of women characters are reacting to traditional customs shows that woman’s role has certainly changed, a woman is no longer docile and submissive.

2.6.4 INDIVIDUALISM AND EQUALITY IN AN AGE OF ABSTRACTION

A matriarchal ethos creates a bondage to blood or soil which can impede the development of individuality. To exist as a separate self, one must move beyond the circle of domestic warmth, this impulse is strongly experienced by the male. As he seeks to find his manhood beyond the domestic circle, the male begins to realize new potentialities of reason as he moves into the broader universe.

Although it is obvious that the drive towards masculine fulfillment have been actualized in Western history, the results have been a mixed blessing. Feminists have recorded the destructive effects of this widening effusion of male energy, and they protest against the marginalization and subordination of women. The development of Western civilization even when conceived as a patriarchal system, has brought enduring benefits to all humankind. Developments in science, the arts, economy, law and government, derived primarily from masculine initiatives, have enhanced the lives of both men and women.

In women’s views of men, as well as men’s views of women, generalizations are given priority over what can be learned from specific encounters. Such a spirit of objectification is reinforced by the values of individualism. Individualism encourages a person to rise above contingencies. This theory of the individual as a complete being, capable of independent self-actualization, is no longer an exclusively masculine ideal. An ethic of self-interest and a distancing of oneself from union with others, which began as a form of male self-assertion, has become gradually associated with the emancipation
of women. Feminists may protest that their intuitions of connection are epistemologically antecedent and morally superior to the values of individualism, but at the same time they are strongly attracted to the idea of absolute personal independence, (Murphy, 1994: 55).

Murphy, (1994: 55) further observes that the individualistic model of personal existence was initially held up as a standard of masculine self determination. Man was an end in himself. At the time the ideal was formulated, women were excluded from the advantages of self-realization. Caught in the routine and drudgery of domestic life, the life of a woman revolved around a homebound circle, and it was only within that sphere that she was allotted her opportunities for happiness. Unable to become a complete person, she eventually rebelled against the narrowness of her status and claimed for herself the same rights to self realization as those that have been asserted by men.

As women have advanced in the acquisition of an independent existence, they have begun to experience a tension between the goals of anatomy and the values of connection and commitment.

Feminism as an ideology developed in interaction with the development of individualism and cannot be understood apart from it. Feminist theorists believe that women have been colonized by the ideology of individualism; it has shaped their ways of thinking about themselves and the world. Born with the emergence of individualism, feminist theory has been torn between two illusions: the illusion that the abstract possibilities of autonomous individualism could be fully realized for women (if indeed they ever have been or could be for men); and the illusion that the individualist view of woman as other can, by some miraculous transubstantiation be converted into a general and feminist law of female experience.

A feeling of independence implies that one is a person. As persons, women refuse to be thought of as just the opposite of the masculine. To be a woman must be something in itself. However, as the ideology of individualism becomes pervasive, it can affect a
woman’s pursuit of her personal identity in a way that endangers the vitality of distinctively feminine virtues, (Murphy 1994: 56).

Thus, a woman’s pride of individualism has been inspired by receptivity, assertion, self-sufficiency and connections, as she moves out of a status of subordination into a liberating experience of personal autonomy.

Murphy (1994: 57) further contends that the relatedness of men and women is an aspect of their sexual polarity. Fundamental differences between them establish elemental distinctions which, when they flourish, enrich both personal and social existence. The pursuit of moral and legal equality is an essential means for overcoming discrimination against women and creating the conditions necessary for them to achieve personal fulfillment.

Murphy (1994: 57) further suggests that on the plane of philosophical reflection, broader considerations must be taken into account. In an age of abstraction, it is extremely difficult to articulate and apply an ideal of equality that will not destroy sexual uniqueness. An equality of sameness is oppressive because it denies the individual the opportunity to become either a masculine, or a feminine, person. This leveling is a consequence of social and political forces, but is essentially rooted in the order of ideas. Where significant distinctions between men and women are ignored, the freedom and dignity of women, as women, is compromised. That is why feminist theorists are always insisting that, although men and women are equal as persons, they are sexually different. If women had not made such demands for personal independence, they could never have overcome their oppression.

Murphy (1994: 58) in the above mentioned arguments stresses the view point that subjection of women has been facilitated by their own fears of self-assertion. Murphy is also stressing the point that when women become conscious of their personal dignity they can no longer live solely for others and never for themselves. Men and women must struggle to determine for themselves the outer boundaries of the quest for individual self-
determination. Women have a natural advantage in the struggle to determine the limits of personal independence because their self-consciousness includes an awareness of concrete responsibilities to persons than themselves. This sense of relatedness can be seen in the revival of interest in the experience of mothering.

2.6.5 FEMININITY, FEMINISM AND LITERATURE:

The words feminist or feminism are political labels indicating support for the aims of the new women’s movement that emerged in the late 1960’s. Moi (1986: 205) argues that feminists often accuse male intellectuals of stealing women’s ideas, for instance, the title of one of Dale Spenders many books. Moi believes that Spenders examines cases of clear intellectual dishonesty, men presenting women's ideas as their own, without any kind of acknowledgement of their borrowing, which must be said to constitute an obvious example of the widespread patriarchal effort to silence women. Many feminists object to the idea that thoughts should be considered as anybody’s personal property.

Moi (1986: 209) feels that, if we define feminism as a political position, and femaleness as a matter of biology, we are still confronted with the problem of how to define femininity. Nevertheless, we may define femininity as an essence of femaleness.

To posit all women as necessarily feminine, and all men as necessarily masculine, is precisely the move which enables the patriarchal powers to define, not femininity, but all women as marginal to the symbolic order and to society, (Moi, 1986: 213). This implies that if patriarchy sees women as occupying a marginal position within the symbolic order, then it can construe them as the limit, or borderline, of that order. From a phallocentric point of view, women will then come to represent the necessary frontier between man and chaos. Women, seen as the limit of the symbolic order, will share in the disconcerting properties of all frontiers. They will be neither inside nor outside, either known or unknown. It is this position which has enabled male culture sometimes to vilify women as representing darkness and chaos to view them as whores, to venerate them as virgin and mothers of God.
In her article, “Women’s Time” Kristeva maintains that the feminist struggle must be seen, historically and politically, as three tiered which can be schematically summarized as follows:

(i) Women demand equal access to symbolic order. Liberal feminism equality.
(ii) Women reject the male symbolic order in the name of difference. Radical feminism, femininity extolled.
(iii) Women reject the dichotomy between masculine and feminine as metaphysical (Moi.1986: 214)

Moi (1986: 214) further contends that a feminist appropriation of de-construction is therefore both possible and politically productive, as long as it does not lead to repressing the necessity of incorporating Kristeva’s two first stages into women’s perspective; that women’s positions in the political struggle have not changed. In another sense, however, it radically transforms women’s awareness of the nature of that struggle. A system, which enables men to dominate women in all social relations, is known in feminist discourse as PATRIARCHY. Some feminists share the same view that this concept is unhelpfully vague, but is used continuously since there is no other alternative available.

According to Ruthven (1984: 2) feminist theorists believed that in the phallocratic order of knowledge perpetuated in our patriarchal society, the kind of looking which results in knowing, is likely to be exploitative. Many theorists treat knowledge as a separate entity from the knower, and knowledge as capable of being known objectively, provided the knower aspires to impersonality, separating self from object in order to give the self power over objects. Knowledge is seen as something to be mastered in the way that women are to be mastered. It is suggested that any thorough going critique of phallocentric oppression must recognize that the cult of so called objective and impersonal modes of knowing makes what we call knowledge, complicit in that oppression.

According to Ruthven (1984:3), in Dally’s (1996) terms, women will remain powerless until they themselves exercise the power of naming. Ruthven feels that the tactic of
attempts to discredit books before they ever get written is therefore one which Ruthven is obliged to ignore, for to capitulate to it would be to deny the possibility of saying anything at all about the nature and development of feminist criticism. If that seems an arbitrary attitude to adopt, it is worth remembering that this is what happens whenever criticism gets itself into an impasse, as most recently in the case of deconstruction (Ruthven 1984: 3).

According to Payne (1997: 191) femininity refers to the ensemble of cultural forms, meanings and values, conventionally associated with women. It refers to gender identity, to the sense of self that enables social subject to say “I” as a woman. It is common in many areas of biological and medical science to root distinctions between women and men in biological differences. In this account, femininity appears as a natural essence, which is both, tied exclusively to women and, whose influence is felt directly in all areas of social life. The main impulse for a critique of essentialist versions of femininity has come, however, from feminism. Here the argument that a woman’s biology is her destiny is seen as a source of women’s subordination, for if women are naturally inferior, then feminist demands for women’s equality, for the cultural validation of femininity, are null and void.

Payne (1997: 191) maintains that in practice, however, women have regularly been excluded from or marginalized within culture and history. Payne further points out that Marxism has offered an understanding of subjectivity as the product of socio economic determinants, thus femininity appears in Marxist feminist accounts as socially produced, centrally via the sexual division of labour of care and nurturing. Here femininity becomes a position in, or an effect of culture, rather than a pre given essence bequeathed to women by nature.

In psychoanalysis then, femininity appears as a result of a complex process of psychic development in infancy, a process which moreover, is never fully achieved, since as Jacqueline Rose puts it, the unconscious never crazes to challenge our apparent identity as subjects, (Payne, 1997: 192).
2.6.6. GYNOCRITICISM

Brooker (1999: 111) believes that Elaine Showalter in her essay *Towards a Feminist Poetics* (1979) introduced gynocriticism and theorized her earlier book. It stimulated both academic work and the publishing of women’s writing. Showalter distinguishes gynocriticism from criticism by women of male authors. Its object is to draw a historical map of women’s writing, to analyze female creativity and to study and promote the work of women authors. Gynocriticism uses a committed woman centred approach. It has been criticized; however, from within feminism for its latent essentialism, the belief that there is a distinct and autonomous female writing derived from an unproblematised commonly recognized female experience. Moi (1985) argues that this reinforces a liberal humanist notion of the unified subject, and commits writers and critics to a realist mode, since this is deemed to reproduce the values and experiences most successfully. Brooker (1999: 112) observes that Moi contrasts Showalter’s emphasis on female writing with the interest of French feminists in feminine writing. According to Moi (1985) the term female is biologically based, feminine is culturally constructed, while feminist is an elected political category.

When it comes to the position of isiXhosa in respect of my choice of male authors it would be imperative for me to point out clearly that male authors in Xhosa dramas seem to be dominated by an element of subjectivity. They believe that the place of a woman is in the kitchen. They treat a woman as a second sex.

Most of the time they are highlighting the evils of forced marriage and woman’s determination to launch the strongest opposition to it. The image that arises in their writings is that of Xhosa women tightly fettered by unreasonable cultural norms regarding the choice of a marriage partner. Parental power is so strong that whoever tries to resist it has to face the wrath of public sanction.
The Xhosa playwrights write with a keen sense of feeling of tradition. Culture and custom are depicted in such a way that makes it patently clear that if women do not submit to male dominance, they are, without doubt or exception, doomed. In their writings they confirm that misfortune is regarded as punishment and restitution for misbehavior. Their contention is that the woman is only the left hand to the husband and should therefore not seek to seize his power. This demonstrates the tremendous force of acculturation. They depict the woman as untrustworthy when it comes to love and marriage. They believe that it is stereotypical of all mothers to want to see their daughters married at all costs. It is equally typical of them to possess manipulative power over their husbands in such affairs. Male authors in Xhosa dramas are good at introducing the popular stereotype of the woman as a gossip.

What transpires is that male authors differ from women writers. For example women writers aimed at eradication traditional concepts that have been largely imparted by male written texts. Women writers want to retell their stories to the audience from a woman’s point of view. Womanist writing empowers women to express themselves through literature.

Moi (1986: 215) states that Showalter has suggested two kinds of criticism. The first one deals with works by male authors, but it remains within the field of criticism with a female orientation in that it is supposed to be carried out by women whose female perspective, presumably based on their female experience, will enable them to see through the male authors’ ploys. Her categories enable us to distinguish between early images of women criticism and the later women centred approach, which her work exemplified. It would seem that in the case of feminist critique, Showalter is conflating female and feminist.

There is, for instance no valid reason why the critical feminist perspective of the feminist critique should not be applied to works written by women, given that it is a historically grounded enquiry which probes the ideological assumptions of literary phenomenon (Showalter, 1979) as quoted by Moi (1986: 215).
Moi (1986: 216) states that gynocritics focus on women’s writing. This implies that Showalter is not confusing female with feminist. Gynocritics should illuminate every aspect of women’s writing, such as history, Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar’s *The Woman in the Attic* is only the most accomplished example of a prolific and important genre within feminist criticism. Moi (1986: 216) further contends that Showalter here maintains that the very fact of dealing with women writers is a feminist act, and at least in the context of male dominated institutions something which is to be said to be true. Moi also maintains that Showalter does not however, assume that the women writers studied will turn out to be feminist. For her acquisition of new knowledge about the dark continent of female creativity is the important thing, not the idea of finding women’s own political positions reflected in *our* literary foremothers.

According to Guerin (1997: 197) the goals of the feminist critics are to expose patriarchal premises and resulting prejudices, to promote discovery and re-evaluation of literature by women, and to examine social, cultural and psychosexual contexts of literature and literary criticism. They study sexual, social and political issues once thought to be outside the study of literature.

Kemp and Squires (1997: 4) argue that feminist theory is traditionally marked by its interdisciplinary approach: literary, historical, philosophical, psychological, anthropological and sociological. They also believed that the emergence of Femocrats, a new breed, who have used feminism as a tool to engineer professional success, generates a language of feminist theory.

The question to be raised in connection with feminist theory is as follows: what then are the aims of feminist theory? Jane Flax (1967) believes that a fundamental goal of feminist theory is to analyze gender relations. Tillie Olsen believes that women’s silence arises from being born into the wrong class, race or sex, being denied education, becoming numbed by economic struggle, muzzled by censorship or distracted or impeded
by the demands of nurturing. This implies that feminists are examining the experiences of women from all races and classes and cultures.

2.6.7 THE NATURE AND HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE OF WOMANISM

Womanism aims at challenging the patriarchal oppressive structures that hinder women’s development. Womanism originated in the African American community. Theorists believed that African American women took the first initiative, which ultimately resulted in womanism which aims at breaking down all barriers that are formed by patriarchy.

The concept womanism is closely associated with Alice Walker who strove for the recognition of tradition of black women writers by viewing black womanism as a philosophy that celebrates black roots.

According to Walker’s view (1996) womanism can be regarded as black unity. Womanism refers to black feminist, which is rooted in those mothers who moulded their daughters by reprimanding them for acting in a girlish manner.

It is for this reason that womanism should be regarded as mature behaviour which differs from that of a young girl.

Womanism and feminism are related. For example womanism aims at breaking down all barriers that are formed by patriarchy. Feminism questions prejudices and assumptions about women made by male writers. A feminist fights for discrimination suffered by women because of their sex. A feminist believes that women have specific needs which remain negated and unsatisfied. A feminist also believes that the satisfaction of women’s needs would require a radical change in the social, economic and political order. This implies that both womanism and feminism support the notion that women should have the same rights and chances as men. Both womanism and feminism feel that women should be placed on an equal footing with men. Feminism and womanism complement each other because they have related and similar ideas.
According to Sanders (1995: 9) as quoted by Kwatsha (2002: 32) womanism refers to a black feminist who is committed to the survival and wholeness of the entire people both male and female. Kwatsha further observes that womanists are concerned about the entire community and are holistic in approach, which means that both men and women can come together in dialogue to define and address the needs of the African American community.

Kramarae and Treichler (1985: 495) as quoted by Nkumane (1999: 24) say the term “womanist” is a black or feminist of colour, from the black folk expression of mothers to female children, “you acting womanish” i.e. like a woman, usually referring to outrageous, audacious or willful behaviour. They further explain a womanist as:

A woman who loves other women, sexually and/or non-sexually. Appreciates and prefers woman’s culture, women’s emotional flexibility and women’s strength. Committed to the survival and wholeness of entire people, male and female.

What is noticeable in both definitions is that they are important in the sense that they state the origin and the nature of womanism. The first definition stresses mature behaviour which differs from that of a young girl, it regards a womanist as any black woman whose characteristics are bold, daring, adventurous and determined actions. The second definition tells us that a womanist appreciates women’s culture and women’s strength. This implies that womanism is culturally coded. Its nature gives us a picture of African women’s historical, cultural and spiritual experience, more especially when it comes to the uniqueness of, and the struggle involved in, being black and female in a society that is hostile to womanhood.
The obvious fact about womanism is that it fights for the self-determination of black unity and also for the welfare of all black people. It also aims at abolishing the unequal power relations between men and women; it also strives for the abolishment of the white power that conquers blacks.

Makaryk (1993: 9) observes that Black feminist criticism and theory originated from the complex and conflicted relationship of black women to black men during the Black Power Movement in the 1980’s and the civil rights movement of the 1960’s, and of women of colour to white women during the women’s liberation movement of the 1970’s.

The Women’s Liberation Movement of the 1970’s gave rise to the establishment of a new academic subject called Women’s Studies, representing either the exploitation or the de-radicalization of feminism and the women’s movement. It proposed a radical change in the theoretical organization of the universe and may be regarded as a self conscious determination to show that the content and form of existing knowledge is related to the unequal distribution of social power between men and women.

Womanism challenges the patriarchal oppressive structures that block the development of women. Womanism seeks the liberation of the African woman, which involves probing African culture, values, tradition and understands the real location of the woman. African women manage to make history for themselves through their traditional roles.

2.6.8 FEMINISM/WOMANISM IN THE SOUTH AFRICAN CONTEXT

Nkumane (1999: 25) maintains that the distinguishing factor that links womanism to black women is recurrent. Although womanism fights for the attainment of black unity and the welfare of all black people it is also greatly concerned with the unequal power relations between men and women, as it is also aware of the white power that subjugates blacks.
To my understanding African women were feminists before the concept feminism was introduced more especially black women. For example black women as women differ from other women because of the common African cultures they believe in. Patriarchy has been abused to put black women down. Black women, more especially illiterate women, used to take societal and cultural practice so intensely that they thought it is the way it should be. Black women challenged patriarchy and knew that they could act in a way that was comfortable for them, not according to the oppressive societal expectations of women. Long before the advent of feminism, black women were prepared to challenge patriarchy.

Migrant labour laws means that wives were left behind by their husbands to look after the family including children. This separation of families resulted in a high rate of single parent families because some of the husbands started new families and forgot about their families back home.

Although womanism fights for the attainment of black unity and the welfare of all black people it is also greatly concerned with the unequal power relations between men and women, as it is also aware of the white powers that subjugates blacks.

Gardner (1991: 178) points out that for a long time the only acceptable currency in respect of literary criticism has been that by whites who wrote about, thought, spoke and criticised on behalf of blacks. This is especially noticeable in the case of white and black women, since the latter were discriminated against so severely that their development, education, participation in life as a whole were seriously curtailed by the powers that be. White women consequently took it upon themselves to speak and think on behalf of their black counterparts.

Gardener (1991: 202) further argues that in South African literary circles, gender subordination is seen as a joint form of oppression that both Black and White women can fight against. Such a focus, however, ignores the existence of yet another form of oppression within the female gender, that of racial subordination.
Nkululeko (1987: 88) defines self-determination for an oppressed nation, the exact nature of the oppression suffered by black women in countries such as South Africa and the relationship between white settler and indigenous African women.

The question Nkululeko (1987: 88) poses here is: can an oppressed nation or segment of it, engaged in a struggle for liberation from its oppressors, rely on knowledge produced, researched and theorized by others, no matter how progressive, who are the members of the oppressor nation? Can the right of a people to self-determination in the production of knowledge be overlooked and liberation attained for them through knowledge produced by others?

The force of Nkululeko’s argument depends on the validity of the settler/indigenous dichotomy. If one accepts that the integrationists want to cover up national oppression by artificially integrating the oppressor and the oppressed, then it follows that the history of South African women has also been written by alien researchers. African women either do not have the necessary educational background or the funds needed to do research and determine priority questions to be investigated.

The result of this is that alien scholars, mainly female, still examine and analyse the role of the South African woman, focusing on whichever of the forms of oppression they saw as important for themselves and harping on that until the other forms were forgotten by all except those who suffered them. The over-emphasis on apartheid, to the exclusion of colonialism, class exploitation and sex oppression, is an example of this practice. The anti-apartheid movement formed its own views and theories about the oppression of women in South Africa in order to shift the emphasis away from the anti-colonial strategy, with repossession of the territory and the right of self determination, to one of reformism. (Nkululeko, 1987:97)

Nkumane (1999: 29) contends that the usage of the term womanism has now gone beyond Alice Walker’s definition. Black women in many parts of the world, as well as in
South Africa, have adopted womanism as a symbol of their unique experience as women. This experience is exclusive to women because it touches on all structures that denigrate a woman. It remains a priority for men and women, even in South Africa, to mobilise and organise the nation for the liberation and the respect of women. Nationalism and patriarchy continue as the major themes in women’s politics.

Violence and against women and the abuses that result from gender inequalities become another major theme in women politics. Black women want to belong to an organization where they will not be marginalized because of their race. They need to belong to a movement that will cater for their unique cultural needs. Sexual identity and sexual divisions are deeply embedded in the cultural experience of African women. They take their pens and describe their own life experiences as they really are.

Nkumane further observes that womanism, like other women’s movements challenges the patriarchal oppressive structures that block the development of women. Hassim (1991: 67) as quoted by Nkumane (1999: 29) stresses that womanism only challenges patriarchy but matriarchy too is challenged, in order to enhance the development of women to a very great extent. This reminds the researcher of what other womanists and the Africana womanists argued about at the first international conference on *Women in Africa and the African Diaspora: Bridges Across Activism and the Academy* held in Nigeria in 1992.

This also reminds me of the convention on the elimination of all forms of discrimination against women signed by South Africa and ratified in September 1995.

“Discrimination against women violates the principles of equality of rights and respect for human dignity, is an obstacle to the participation of women, on equal terms with men, in the political, social, economic and cultural life of their countries, hampers the growth of prosperity of society and family and makes more difficult the full development of the potentialities of women in the service of their
countries and of humanity. Convinced that the establishment of the new international economic order based on equity and justice will contribute significantly towards the promotion of equality between men and women. Emphasizing that the eradication of apartheid, all forms of racism, racial discrimination, aggression and domination and interference in the internal affairs of States is essential to the full enjoyment of the rights of men and women in society and in the family is needed to achieve full equality between men and women.”


All barriers that are formed by patriarchy which hinder women’s development have been removed. Women have managed to challenge patriarchy and they can act as they wish. Practices of women against women and the abuses that result from gender inequalities are condemned. The unjust laws, customs and practices that traditionally sustained masculine domination that used to mark women with a stigma of inferiority have been removed. Women are no longer experiencing a tension between the goals of their anatomy and the values of connection and commitment according to the new dispensation in South Africa.

The fact that women’s silences result from circumstances of being born into the wrong class, race or sex to quote women’s conference which was held in Nigeria in 1993. Gardner (1991: 2-5) as an eye witness at the conference argues that the conference opened to the floor in an emotionally charge session which moved through three distinct phases. “All Whites must get out, all whites presenting papers about black women must get out, all white South Africans must get out.” Gardner (1991: 5) further contends that it was mainly black women of various nationalities who spoke. Let some of the participants speak for themselves.
A Nigerian woman:

I hope the white South African women who are here have not been sent by their government but have come as individuals. I see them as people who are on our side. I don’t think they should be sent away. We should allow them to stay. We are all women.

A black woman speaking with a British accent:

White women and all men (should) acknowledge black women’s need for our own space and stop encroaching on it.

A Nigerian man (A teacher in the United States):

I appreciate the issue being raised but I do not think the exclusion of white women from this conference is the solution. It will be in the criticism that we can express on our differences.

An African-American woman:

I feel a connection with my ancestors who guide me and take care of me. We from the United States came assuming this conference was one think. The issue is assumptive domination – the habit of taking over. I want to know my folks. I feel like I have been a stranger so long.

The obvious fact about the words uttered by the participants in the above mentioned arguments is that women want to fight all forms of discrimination, they want freedom for self-definition, self-affirmation and self-determination, in other words, the effective recognition of their full humanity as persons and the freedom to exercise that personhood in every sphere. The researcher learns from the participants mentioned in the above arguments that womanism also fights the abuse of women by other women.

Nkumane (1999: 29) feels that this is unique to African women because, for example, it takes into consideration the situation of women in a polygamous situation where the chief wife has authority over the other wives. It also refers to the situation between the mother-
in-law and the bride. The emphasis in all this is that womanistic scholarship remains one of the most powerful critical and analytical tools in African literature and has immense possibilities for fostering intellectual maturity and social change.

Nkumane further contends that there is no difference between Black women in South Africa and the other women in the world. She bases her argument on the fact that Black women in South Africa are no exception to the social marginalisation that other women experience all over the world. They also need to belong to an organisation where they will not be marginalised because of their race. They need to belong to a movement that will cater for their unique cultural needs, and womanism is an ideal haven for them. South African black women need to belong somewhere after they realized that their involvement in the struggle did not earn them their freedom.

Makaryk (1993: 9) points out that: many black women recognized that while the Black Power Movement of the 1970’s was radically Afrocentric, it also remained powerfully androcentric, with the liberation of women within the group being subordinated to the aspirations of the group as a whole.

Womanism goes in hand in glove with gender inequality between men and women. Womanism has emerged to assert itself in the context of the broader political transition in the whole world and in South Africa. Women perceived wrongly in connection with the liberation of the nation, they perceived that both the liberation of the nation and the liberation of women would happen at the same time, hoping that the abolition of apartheid would gave rise to an overthrow of patriarchy. But in terms of social liberation women still find themselves in the same position they were before 1994: in South Africa. Although women marched for their freedom, the freedom attained at the end of the day did not necessarily include freedom from oppression on the basis of sex.
2.6.9. AFROCENTRICITY

Theorists maintain that Afrocentricity is inevitable whenever there is a discussion which involves womanism. It is believed that both womanism and Afrocentrism originated as part of an oppressed people’s culture of resistance. This implies that neither can be hidden if we are discussing matters related to women.

William (in Sanders, 1995: 46) quoted by K.C. Nkumane (1999: 32) defines Afrocentrism as follows:

Afrocentrism is a spiritual and philosophical ideology (a way of living, thinking, and knowing) that places African American history, culture and heritage at the center of black people’s lives. Afrocentrism involves Black people’s conversion from conditioned white consciousness to a new African American and African centered thinking and acting. It involves the creation of ritual to support and reinforce new black consciousness. Afrocentrism affirms a universal African consciousness that is a collective consciousness.

The above mentioned definition regards afrocentricity as a point of departure as a way of thinking and doing things for all black people who have been obviously affected by Western culture. Afrocentricity digs out the African past in attempt to free African Americans and all Africans from an oppressive yoke of Eurocentric consciousness in order to create for them a new, African centered way of thinking and acting. It advocates the re-building of a universal African collective consciousness among all black people and it conveys its spiritual nature. It expresses the black people’s shared commitments, fraternal reactions to assaults on black people’s humanity, collective awareness of black people’s destiny, and respect of the ancestors. But although womanism fights for the attainment of black unity and the welfare of all black people it is also greatly concerned
with the unequal power relations between men and women, as it is also aware of the white power that subjugates blacks.

Makaryk (1993: 9) observes that feminist criticism and theory emerged from the complex and conflicted relationship of black women to black men during the Black Power Movement in the 1980’s and civil rights movement of the 1960’s, and of women of colour to white women during the Women’s Liberation Movement of the 1970’s. What could be deduced from Makaryk’s statement is that the womanist idea emerged because African-American female voices had been left omitted from feminism, and from the writings of black male writers.

Cummings (in Sanders, 1995 as quoted by Nkumane (1999: 26) remarks that:

The minimal presence of African American women in Afrocentrism points to an even greater need for the womanist perspective. The apparent lack of African American women in the conceptual framework of Afrocentrism is a continuation of their exclusion from dialogues about African-Americans so a reason for the womanist concept emerged. The exclusion by white feminists from the literary tradition is perceived as the precondition for the establishment of womanism. Womanism is empowered through its opposition to established theory and its resentment against exclusion. The claim is that the literary tradition has been insensitive to any alternative tradition.
2.7 CANONS OF AFRICAN TRATIONS

2.7.1. House work and house service

House work and house services are of great significance to my study. One cannot discuss the effect of gender inequality, the influence of culture on women without mentioning something about house work and house service. The relatedness of men and women is an aspect of their gendered polarity.

My study aims at showing that a woman’s fulfillment of her roles as wife and mother gave her life a moral dimension. According to our traditional cultural practices, women are excluded from the advantages of self realization. Caught in the routine of the home life of a woman revolved around it, and it was within that sphere that she was allotted her opportunities for happiness. Unable to become a complete person, a woman eventually rebelled against the narrowness of her status and claimed for herself the same rights to self realization as those that have been asserted by men. For women to be freed from domestic tyranny they need the full protection of the law and this include political rights.

The inclusion of house work and house service will help me in my study to show that women display resistance under difficult conditions. To show that in most cultures, women’s efforts are discounted whilst men’s efforts are seen as achievements and they can be rewarded. To show that nurturance, patience and the rest are not valued because it is considered “only natural” that women should care, selflessly and unconditionally, not only for children, but for adult men also.

2.7.2 The literary canon

Canonicity refers to the yardstick for the evaluation of a literary text. Women experienced marginalisation in political and traditional social structures and also in the literary tradition.
Feminist theorists maintain that the literary tradition has been dominated by male writers: African women’s works were not taken into consideration. Black women were excluded from most critical texts. Humm (1994: 173) contends that until 1970’s Black women were misrepresented or marginalised in most critical texts. Even as late as 1979, anthologies either did not mention the work of Black women at all or casually dismissed writers. The writings of Afro American women are simply absent in the Black literary histories written by men.

It was only men who wrote about women’s experiences and they were dominated by an element of subjectivity in the sense that they always prefer ways that suited their needs. In describing the lives of women their writings were based on their male perspective. Traditionally women were confined to the home and this confinement resulted in the marginalisation of black women from the literary tradition. Colonial education also promoted the relative scarcity of women writers in the African literary canon.

Women were responsible for doing domestic tasks. They may have to stop writing because their male relatives feel they are being disloyal by telling too much about issues considered private. They were forced to maintain their silence on issues that touch on their marital relationships. Husbands have been known to threaten to take actions such as leaving the marriage or establishing other relationships if their wives do not stop writing (Nkumane 1999: 37).

According to Owomoyela (1993: 312) as quoted Nkumane (1993: 312) the domestic pressures on women easily explain the gaps in women’s writing. When women started writing during the late colonial period, their works were not recognized, unlike those of male African writers of the same generation. The non-participation of women in the literary tradition seems to have fostered the view that literary works by men were representative of all views of life, including those of women. The literary canon was structured in such a way that it favoured men’s literature as universal.
In the African tradition the housewife role is marked by the following characteristics: it is exclusively allocated to women. It is economically dependent on men. Housework is unpaid, privatized and isolated. The role of housewife is a dead-end job with no chance of promotion. The debilitating effects of the housewife role are so great that in terms of the number of people involved, the housewife syndrome might well be viewed as public health problem number one.

Wives are sincere about their housewifely duties and they don’t even feel the “housewife” syndrome. Child care, which remains primarily the responsibility of wives, affects their use of time and their opportunities for participating in the market. Inadequate provision of clean water, energy sources, sanitation, health care and housing particularly affect wives because of their many household responsibilities.

Black rural wives, usually carried out all the major farming tasks such as breaking up the soil, planting, weeding, harvesting and carrying the harvest home and fetching woods from the forest with little or no male help. Most traditional African women, who are wives and mothers at the same time, are often excluded from direct participation and decision making in their homesteads. The decision making in their homesteads falls under the jurisdiction of their husbands, the words of their husbands are final and they cannot be opposed. This limits their ownership and control of their homesteads and development processes that affect their lives.

African women, especially black rural and peri-urban women, have limited access to resources for production, including land, credit, training and extension services. These processes must be understood if women’s capacity to participate in the economy is to be enhanced.

The low literacy of adult women, particularly in rural areas, limits their ability to participate in decision-making structures and to benefit from training and extension services.
Kwatsha (2002: 46) observes that for Bryson (1920) the role of the housewife is as strategically important as that of the factory worker, and the home itself can be seen as a site of anti capitalist struggle, for woman is the slave of a wage slave, and her slavery ensures the slavery of her man. Bryson further argues that for women to be freed from domestic tyranny they need access to education and employment, so that economic need would not force them into marriage: they also need the full protection of the law.

2.7.3 Marriage

I have decided to include marriage in this chapter because the topic of my dissertation deals with the portrayal of women in some Xhosa selected dramas and in my study I am concentrating on married women only. My study aims at showing that women’s oppression by their husbands in patriarchal societies can be regarded as a source of potential strength and power for women rather than merely as a source of weakness. The married woman is the left hand of her husband. Men can be easily manipulated by their wives. In a marriage life where each of the couple wants to be the head, there is bound to be conflict and in a weak position man gives rise to family problems as he can no longer command respect. There is chronic abuse of women at the hands of their husbands. For African peoples, marriage is the focus of existence. It is the point where all the members of a given community meet the departed, the living and those yet to be born.

Society is made up of groups of people, and the basic unity of any society is the family. The union of a man and a woman and children forms the family by the institution known as marriage. Husband and wife have the right of sexual access to each other and in most societies there are rules forbidding or limiting sexual activity outside marriage. This provides sexual gratification for the spouses. It also strengthens the family since the powerful and often binding emotions also helps to stabilize society. The rules which largely contain sexual activity within the family prevent the probable disruptive effects on social order that would result if the sex drive were allowed “free” play. (Haralambos:1988:331)
The family provides both control and expression of sexual drives. Marriage can be disrupted by marital breakdown which is divided into three categories: divorce, which refers to the legal termination of marriage, separation, which refers to the physical separation of the spouses, they no longer share the same dwelling and so called empty shell marriages, where the spouses live together, remain legally married, but their marriage exists in name only.

Who marries who is important for society. Monogamy is the marriage of one man and one woman. It is based on the supremacy of the man, the express purpose being to produce children of undisputed paternity because children will later to come into their father’s property as his natural heirs. Monogamous marriage for African people is a duty, a requirement from the corporate society, and a rhythm of life in which everyone must participate. Otherwise, he or she who does not participate in it is a curse to the community, he or she is a rebel and a law breaker, he or she is not only abnormal but “under-human.”

Western values have influenced the African people. The effect of European colonization has changed the whole marriage system. Now the young man is entitled to take his wife away from her people in return for money (dowry). Women have now lost the protection of tribal laws. Monetization of dowry not only erodes a woman’s economic position but also destroys the support and legitimization that come from dowry payment in cattle. (Parkin and Nyamwayo, 1987: 173) as quoted by (Kwatsha, 2002: 57).

Who marries whom is not simply a matter for the bride and groom. The human group sets up rules about who should marry whom, and channels its members into its expectations. The norms that surround weddings differ from society to society. They function to channel mate selection, control sexuality, regulate child birth and inheritance. Marriage in what ever form is customary in a society.
According to the traditional culture of AmaXhosa some men may have one spouse, while some may have several spouses. A man may marry several women a practice called polygamy (isithembu). A husband who is the family’s sole bread winner tends to make most of the wives generally work well together. The wives each have a separate house but share a common household and farm the same fields. These co-wives are related to each other as husband’s wives. A woman’s child is related to her co-wife’s children by marital links. When trouble arises in the household, it seldom is a result of jealousy over a husband, rather a woman fears her children are being deprived for the sake of a co-wife’s children. Chiefs and those who are rich are fond of this practice. When co-wives share a single household and hearth, the possibilities of conflict between them or conversely, solidarity between them are increased.

Monogamous and polygamous are two types of marriages which are common among the Xhosa population group. The monogamous nuclear family developed with the emergence of private property, in particular the private ownership of the forces of production, and the advent of the state. The state instituted laws to protect the system of private property and to enforce the rules of monogamous marriage. This form of marriage and the family developed to solve the problem of the inheritance of private property. Property was owned by males and in order for them to pass it on to their heirs, they must be certain of the legitimacy of those heirs. They therefore needed greater control over women so there would be no doubt about the paternity of their offspring.

Mbiti (1969) as quoted by Kwatsha (2002: 49) contends that polygamy primarily has to do with the importance of immortality among African people. According to him, longevity is extremely important. In this regard, offspring prolongs one’s life through the elaborate system of ancestry. Since one remains alive as long as he or she is remembered among their descendants, it is important to have many children. The more children, the greater the probability of being remembered. Polygamy increases the number of children, thereby ensuring immortality for oneself and one’s family.
Henn (1984: 286) observes that the polygamous household, headed by one man with several wives and unmarried male dependents or, alternatively, composed of a group of married brothers and sons with their wives and dependents, was the basic production and consumption unit in almost all societies. Within the extended family household, each wife and her children formed an economic sub-unit with a separate kitchen, fields for food production, and perhaps cattle. In most African societies, the key measure of a man’s wealth was the number of dependents in his household. According to Beattie (1964) as quoted by Kwatsha (2002: 50) an effect of polygamy is to see that all the women in a community can be married and so materially provided for. A man with several wives can reasonably hope to have more children than a man with only one. In other societies there is what is called a widow inheritance, where a widow is taken over by one of the dead brothers and of her dead husband his wife. Traditional discussions of polygamy often refer to the second wife as superseding the first wife rather than simply joining the household.

Henn (1984: 289) also contends that a widow had important incentives to accept her inheritor as her new husband. If she did so, she continued to enjoy the social acceptance and land rights her former marriage had provided. If she refused, she had to leave her husband’s village, an option which put her sons in danger of losing their rights to the land she had formed. Furthermore, if her children were beyond the age of seven, a departing widow could not take them with her, the children belonged to the father’s lineage.

2.7.4 Expectation of marriage

Reiss (1980: 35) defines marriage as a socially recognized union of individuals in the roles of husband and wife with the key function of legitimizing parenthood. The family, on the other hand, is a small kinship – structured group with the function of nurturant socialization. What is noticeable here is that both definitions on marriage and family are very general and abstract, so as to allow for the diversity of ways in which marriage and family life manifest themselves in different cultural contexts.
In South Africa a variety of cultures exist side by side. It is for this reason that it is very difficult for one to generalize about people’s expectations of marriage. Due to the ethnic composition of the population there can obviously be no question of just one ideology of marriage. On the basis of factual incidence it would be possible to decide that the dominant model of marriage in South Africa is an indigenous Black model although the matter is not quite as simple as that. All ideologies of marriage have evolved under specific ecological and economic conditions and the continued existence of such traditions is therefore dependent upon the perpetuation of a compatible substructure. Because economic changes tend to undermine the ethnic models in the long run, it becomes extremely difficult for Blacks to conform under such changed conditions to traditional conceptions of marriage.

2.7.5 Western ideology

Western ideology is going to be discussed in this chapter because it is also relevant to my study. For example in the chosen books some of women to be examined represent the part of the community that resists change andromanticizes recolonial values. Some of them to a very large extent, symbolize the African community which feels that colonialism in Africa, with its new values and cultural institutions, introduced modern culture. The implication in using a Western ideology is to show that there is nothing wrong in borrowing from other cultures so as to promote cultural dynamism.

The essential features of the Western ideology of marriage are well-known. For example sexual relations are restricted to marriage between one man and one woman, who through mutual attraction are bound to each other for life with the object of producing and raising children, in a neolocal residential setting, with the husband as breadwinner, the wife as housekeeper, so that the husband occupies the dominant position of authority.

The conditions under which each of these standards came into being differ greatly but, in the course of time they have combined and distilled into what is commonly referred to in the literature as the “isolated nuclear” family.
The oldest of the features is that of patriarchy which, through Judaic tradition, became part of the Western family structure. Descent was determined patrilocally, and men had the right of ownership not only of their children but also of their wives. Complementary to the strict control over the wife was considerable freedom for the husband, so that a double standard of sexual morality become institutionalized.

It was the rise of Christianity which brought about important modifications to this conception of marriage and family. Christ’s teachings categorically rejected divorce, Paul insisted that marriage was a bond between one man and one woman, and the initial exaltation of celibacy among early Christians was transformed, so that parenthood within marriage become a divine injunction, (Reiss:1980: 39).

A single standard of monogamy for men and for women emerged by the time of Augustine and Martin Luther which extended the precept of love between husband and wife to include the idea of companionship. All of this was in keeping with a sustained tendency to deny the “flesh” and to equate it with sin, (Schultz and Rodgers, 1980: 51).

In the medieval societies of Europe the possibility of an ascetic relationship between man and woman gained new significance with the rise of the idea of romantic love. Initially this type of love was reserved for relationships outside marriage, it was not meant to be consummated, on the contrary, it was defined as something unattainable, extra ordinary and sublime which was irreconcilable with the everyday quality of marriage. According to Beigel (1980: 327) this conception of love is “inconformity with the Christian concept of and contempt for sex”. In the course of time, however, romantic love rather than economic considerations was to become the basis for mate selection. The eventual integration of romantic love with sex has made the former an important component of the marriage relationship, (Shorter, 1980: 82).

The neolocal residential pattern has until fairly recently also been associated with industrialization and the concomitant demand for the mobility of labour. However research by Caslett (1969) and others show that the nuclear family was already prevalent
at an earlier stage. Households consisting of only two generations may, as Parsons (1954) argued, be structurally compatible with demands of an industrial economy.

From the generalizations made by Steyn and Breedt (1977) regarding the traditional marriage and family patterns among South African Blacks, there appear to be significant variations from Western conceptions. In spite of this, they conclude that the urban Black family is developing towards a monogamous nuclear family type with a neolocal residential pattern, as in the case of White Western families. The reason for such development is due to the fact that traditional patterns took shape under totally different conditions and could be hardly be realized in an urban environment.

More important however is the fact that the ideal model is also losing its attractiveness and legitimacy. In this respect the observation by Meer (1969: 66) regarding the “Indian Joint family” is becoming increasingly applicable to Blacks as well. When the average young Indian girl marries, she expects to live with the family of her husband’s parents. She is envied and considered very lucky if she becomes the wife of an independent nuclear family. When this happens, the ideal conception of marriage and family life have changed.

People in the working classes are forced by economic necessity to organize themselves into extended families. This pattern is found in all industrialized societies and cannot be explained solely in terms of cultural differences.

2.7.6 Divorce

As far as divorce is concerned there are mainly two circumstances that are recognized as valid reasons for divorce, namely adultery and violence. Interestingly enough, Asians and Coloureds do not show the same measure of disapproval of violence as the others. About half of the total group consider divorce justified when the parties no longer love each other. Blacks stress two circumstances that are regarded as relatively insignificant by the others, namely sexual incompatibility and childlessness. As can be expected,
unsatisfactory relations with relatives carry more weight as a reason for divorce among
the two groups that traditionally have an extended family system, namely Blacks and Asians.

Blacks believe that a woman is not a complete woman if she has no children. Thus
Kwatsha (2002: 51) points out that if women do not bear children, then their
“childlessness” is what defines them. Historically, cross culturally, status as child bearer
has been the test of womanhood.

The theory of marriage which justified a power of husbands over their wives was
increasingly perceived as tyrannical. An emerging protest began to challenge the
patriarchal foundation of married life.

Mary Wollstonecraft sought to apply liberal values to the aspirations of women in order
to relieve them from sexual bondage. Appealing to the idea of universal human nature,
she argued that women, as well as men, should pursue the virtues that can elevate them
both. On the other hand John Stuart Mill saw the subjugation of women within the
family as a relation that was essentially unjust. Mill not only attacked the domestic
dominance of men. He also protested against the exclusion of women from civic and
public life. Enslavement was not just political, it was also economic. Financial
independence was as indispensable to freedom as any other form of liberation. When
recognized as equal citizens, women should be allowed to compete for all lawful
occupations. Mill also saw that women were entitled to the education necessary to such
pursuits. Once women became free to develop their inherent capacities, these
opportunities for self-fulfillment would not only benefit themselves but would also enrich
the whole of human society.

In the later half of the nineteenth century, women protested, with mixed results, against
the social, legal, and political disabilities that had been imposed upon them through
patriarchal governance. Reformers such as Elizabeth Cady Stanton fought for equality of
opportunity and for the right of women to determine their own women to determine their
own destiny. These efforts brought only limited success. Within the common law tradition, women were more separate than equal. Women were excluded from legal profession.

A society is organized patriarchal whenever women are excluded by law or custom from political participation and lack the full legal capacities necessary for the exercise of all civil and personal rights.

In such society only males are educated and children are not free to choose their own marriage partners. In most modern Western societies the explicit, formal obstacles to the emancipation of women have been removed (Kaschok, 1992: 16).

What has been achieved by way of emancipation and formal equality of status is all too often a concession to pressure rather than an honest recognition of right. The power of men to define themselves is the most pervasive power in the world. This can be connected only when it is matched by a comparable capacity of women to fully express their own experience and gain a positive and equal influence upon the course of human events.

From the point of view of radical feminism, the impalpable power of men derives from a sexual hierarchy whose influence precedes the elaboration of social and political relations.

The family structure must be reconstructed, because it is within the domestic sphere that the vulnerability of women and the imbalances of power, esteem, and opportunity in relations between the sexes is most intensely experienced.

Men have striven to achieve freedom and equality for themselves in the public world. Women were not expressly included in these progressive developments, but they could not be completely excluded from the benefits. The spread of liberating values to the
conditions of women was an imperative demand of logic and ethics. It was also inherent in the dynamics of married life.

The perception of inequity begins at home. In modern life, whatever respect is conferred upon a woman as mother and homemaker does not compensate for the personal frustration implicit in the domestic experience.

A housewife marks time. Perpetuating the present, she rarely senses the accomplishment of a positive good. She has no direct influence upon the world. If she merely fulfills a role, her destiny is not in her own hands. The divide between her circumstances and her awareness of her inherent value as a person can become virtually unbearable. A woman may desire political and legal emancipation, but, above all she hopes to experience a greater degree of personal happiness. A modern woman will not accept the exchange though which she yields the public sphere to the male while she reigns at home.

A woman rebels against a destiny created for her by men, and she insists upon fashioning a future of her own. As a free person, the woman resents the man’s position and his unfair access to opportunities for self-fulfillment that he has reserved for himself in the world outside the home.

According to Kaschok, (1992: 20) the actions of a woman against her man are derived more from frustration with powerlessness than as a rebellion against his authority. The repression of their legitimate aspirations led them to a feeling of inadequacy in the overall scheme of existence. Since this lack of self-esteem was most intensely experienced by women through their confinement to domestic roles, the struggle for emancipation arises first in the private contexts of a common life.
2.7.7 SOCIAL STATUS GIVEN TO DAUGHTERS AND SONS

Most commonly in African tradition girls are given low status as compared to boys. The African culture favours sons by giving them more social powers than daughters. A girl in a patriarchal society could not be entrusted with the choice of a husband. Daughters are regarded as the providers of dowries (lobola cattle) for the family.

Girls usually were not sent to school because there is a belief that the future of a girl is at her homestead. Even the few who received education only received an education that would not fit them for the more prestigious and better paid jobs that were opening up for men, or even for the less desirable wage occupations.

The influence of the above mentioned arguments is that when these girls got married they become illiterate and ended up enduring chronic abuse at the hands of their husbands. This factor is related to my study because my study aims at showing that illiterate women take societal and cultural practice very seriously.

In a patriarchal society the girl is regarded as the extension of the father, providing him with whatever he cannot provide himself. A son can and does escape from the early world of the mother to a world of men, as the mother is reduced to a person from whom separation is to be accomplished. A daughter cannot resolve the Antigone Complex as long as the world of adulthood is a man’s world, as long as she is the extension of her father or some other man, as long as she is constantly subject to definition by even strange men in public (Kaschok, 1992: 77).

In African tradition, only adults could initiate and effectively carry out all the negotiations necessary for a valid marriage satisfactory to both sides. Choice of the girl was of more importance to them, since the girl had to be incorporated into their family. Parents had to seek out a bride for their son. They could make heavy demands in the form of dowry. This implies that girls are characterized by a lack of marital freedom.
According to Kwatsha (2002: 53) African mothers, taking traditional Xhosa customs as the norm, do prepare their daughters to bring a good “lobola”. They also show them how to dress as women and they teach them to show respect to any male person in the society.

While black women are affected by the social construction of sexual identity, they are equally affected by African traditions which relegate women to inferior status.

Ruthven (1984: 44) further elaborates that in the Aristotelian tradition, a woman is not a woman but a man manqué, who is defined by what she lacks. Created second according to a Hebrew myth which Christians inherited in the book of Genesis every woman enters history with a piece missing. Whatever the deficiency, men think of themselves as uniquely qualified to supplement it, provided women show their gratitude by submissiveness. The binary opposition between self and other manifests itself therefore in our value system as possession versus lack. Lack is troped as feminine “absence” by contrast with masculine “presence”, “invisibility” as against “visibility”, as against “voice”.

What could be deduced from the above mentioned arguments is that the subjection of women, therefore, is brought about not by their natural inferiority but by their classification as intrinsically inferior by a male dominated culture they cannot avoid living in.

In my analysis of the chosen books I will keep on referring to the status given to sons and daughters. My study also concentrates on the evils of forced marriage and opposition to it. Some married women in the analysis of the chosen books have been forced by their parents to marry husbands whom they do not love. Their parents are the custodians of our traditional culture, they represent the African community that holds traditional values. These women represent the African community which endorses modern values.

The implication about all this is that Xhosa girls are tightly fettered by unreasonable cultural norms regarding the choice of a marriage partner and by parental power among
the ancestors. Women who have been forced to marry husbands whom they do not love are protesting about their marriages. My study also aims at showing that some typical Xhosa girls accept social norms and parental control as the Biblical truth which every girl or woman should obey without question even if, in the process, she loses her identity. In this case Thobeka in Tamsanqa’s drama Buzani kubawo is an example of such girls. My study also focuses on the influence of culture on women. Therefore social status given to son and daughters are of great significance to my study as they are revealing cultural practices.

2.7.8 THE FAMILY

The family institution is a small kinship structured group with the key function of nurturant socialization of the newborn. The flaw in this definition is the flaw common to all functionalist arguments. Because a social institution is observed to perform a necessary function does not mean either that the function would not be performed if the institution did not exist or that the function is responsible for the existence of the institution. This argument compels me to view the family as an ideological unit rather than a function unit.

Lee (1980:107) has this to say on the definition of the family:

> Up to now, most researchers have operationally defined the family as the group of co-resident kin, those who share a household.

From this definition it can be concluded that the definition of the family from a functionalist perspective leads to a stereotyping of the nuclear family as the “normal” form of the family. The structure of the family consists of two family structures in the Black family system namely a nuclear family and the extended family.
The concept of the extended family is based on the rules governing the kinship structure in a society, which makes it possible for certain categories of people to live together and regard one another as family members. Common extended family structures might either be vertical, in a multigenerational link-up, or horizontal, when married brothers of the senior agnate join their families to his household. Another dimension of the extended family refers to the structure made up of plural marriages. The man has more than one wife, and all wives and their children are accommodated in the same household. This form of the family is sometimes described as “composite”. All forms of the extended family exist side by side in African cultures. The extended family structure is generally characterized by the following:

(i) The structure links a wider circle of people who are related by blood or marriage in a network of relatives who normally identify and feel for each other.

(ii) It is more durable as a social unit than the nuclear family and continues over a longer period of time.

(iii) Its growth and decline over the years is affected by fertility, marriage, divorce and mortality.

(iv) In many societies it acts also as an effective social welfare system by providing care and support for a variety of categories of dependent people.

Even though, as stated in (ii) above, the extended form of the family spans a longer period of time, the temporal continuity of the extended family structure is not without end. Murdock (1980: 51) states that its continuity has been found to be subject to changing conditions of life. It has been affected and modified by factors characteristic of the modernization process. Beattie (1966) found that the increase in physical and economic security at the individual level tended to lead to a split in a close-knit social organization. The extended family structure has likewise lost the cohesive force essential for its survival as a unit.
The extended family is also marked by network support, that is, information that one belongs to a network of mutual obligation. This aspect is important in that it implies a structure of relationship and a set of normative behaviour towards one another in a helping relationship. In Black society, the extended family system provides such a structural base through which helping behavior was exercised. Through a set of prescriptions, values and socialization patterns a sense of social obligations for mutual assistance is created and exercised. The overriding factor is the maintenance of group character through the extended family systems.

Among Black people the family, however seen, is ranked as the primary source of social support. Generally, in terms of their culture, Black people relate to one another collaterally, i.e. individuals identify more with the family group than with individual goals. The Black family structure permits and provides for a wide array of support measures in the absence of any other form of formal welfare support. Murray (1980: 101) quotes Barker (1980) to illustrate this:

“… and we cannot forget that the African cultural heritage enshrines a broader, more noble concept of family than that of the West.”

The nuclear family is characterized by a husband, his wife and unmarried children who live as a family unit. This family unit provides for its own economic and emotional support among its members. The wide circle of relatives in Black family structure is still, however, expected to lend a helping hand as a support measure in times of hardships and distress. In a nuclear family there may be a niece, nephew, aunt or uncle who are included because they were in need of support. The nuclear family in Black society is thus not the same as in Western society but is bound by traditional values and obligations.

Other family forms comprise step families which are generally considered to be those in which one or both of the married adults have children from previous unions. These
are also called blended families. Then there are single parent headed families: according to Kwatsha (2002: 59) some women who stay without men (single women) prefer not to marry, but to cope alone. Stegeman (1974: 17) as quoted by Kwatsha contends that:

The new woman represents a theory of personhood where the individual exists as an independent entity rather than her kinship relations, where she has a responsibility to realize her potential for happiness rather than to accept her role, where she has indefinable value rather than quantitative financial worth, and where she must reason about her own values rather than fit in stereotyped tradition.

Kwatsha further believes that the concept of singleness is deceptively simple. Sometimes it is used to refer to the never married, at other times it is used as a residual category so that it also includes the divorced, separated and the widowed. Singleness is still devalued and considered a personal failure. Stereotypes of single women are couched in pathological terms, such as lack of sexual attractiveness, or the inability to form an intimate relationship with another person (O’ Connor 1992, as quoted by Kwatsha (2002: 59). The obvious fact about singleness is that some women choose to live without men meaning they stay single. They develop a negative attitude against marriage for several reasons. Kwatsha (2002: 60) postulates that these women see the uniqueness in singlehood because it allows them their freedom to take decisions. For them it is better to stay single and have children than to marry.

2.7.9 CONCLUSION

Chapter two has developed a theoretical framework which serves as the basis of my study. Black criticism has been chosen as one of the theories which will be used in the analysis of the chosen books because it considers gender to be a fundamental category of analysis. Since my study examines the portrayal of women in some selected Xhosa
dramas black criticism is used because it explores black cultural difference. Black criticism has been chosen because it derives principles of literary criticism from the black tradition itself. My study considers the whole imaginative tradition in African societies, therefore black criticism is used in my study as a suitable tool for analyzing the writings for the playwrights.

Cultural theory has been chosen as another theory which will be used for advancing my arguments in my study. The motive behind choosing cultural theory is based on the fact that chapter four of my study examines the influence of culture on women. The literature of a country must be situated in its cultural and historical context. Culture will be used in my study to refer to intellectual and artistic works or practices which in their very forms and meanings, define human society as socially constructed rather than natural. We expect human beings to behave in prescribed ways if they want to live normal lives, in reasonable peace. Therefore cultural theory entails the way of behaving, it is the way we do things. Cultural theory will be used in my study to show that as there are many and varied environments, there are also many and varied cultures.

I will allude to cultural theory in my study because cultural theory is concerned with the art, customs, taboos, values and norms of society. It consists of the ways, moral and beliefs transmitted from generation to generation. It may be generally shared by some population or a group of people, culture represents the collective conscience of a group of people.

Cultural theory is of great significance to my study because it reveals the evils of forced marriage and woman’s determination to launch the strongest opposition to it. Some married women in the analysis of the chosen books have been forced by their parents to marry husbands whom they do not love. These women represent the African community that holds which endorsed modern values. Their parents represent the African community that holds cultural traditional values. My study aims at showing that Xhosa women are tightly fettered by unreasonable cultural norms regarding the choice of a marriage partner. Parental power is so strong that who ever tries to resist it has to face
the wrath of the ancestors. Women who have been forced to marry husbands whom they do not love are opposing their marriages.

Another theory which has been chosen in this chapter is gender inequality considering that chapter three of my study examines the effect of gender inequality on women.

In my study I will allude to gender inequality to show that patriarchy from its beginnings was based upon man’s obedience to a superior divine will. Submission to God’s power over man also legitimized man’s dominion over both women and nature. Violence against women and the abuses that result from gender inequalities is one of the major themes in my study. My study aims at showing that women’s needs and goals are equally as valid as those of men and that the subjugation of women in families is exploitive. It aims at identifying ways in which gender relations and women experiences in families can be transformed.

Womanism is another theory which has been chosen in this chapter for the purpose of developing a theoretical framework of my study considering that womanism is in my study paramount. In my study womanism shows that in spite of the many cultural assaults, and no matter how much culture tries to communicate to woman she is minor, she should take back seat.

A woman’s fulfillment of her roles as wife and mother gave her life a moral dimension. According to our cultural practices women are excluded from the advantages of self-realization.

What transpires in the above mentioned arguments is that the term patriarchy has been abused to put women down. This has manipulated women in such a way that they can be looked down on and be seen as people with no future so that they can feel inferior in life. But above all, these women have recognized that they need to unite with men in order to
fight or reject racism and imperialist subjugation. African women receive a multiple burden as compared to their male counterparts.

Womanism needs to seek genuine liberation of the African woman which involves probing culture, values, tradition and understand the real location of the woman. African women manage to make history for themselves through their traditional roles. My study aims at expressing African life, African ideals as well as African unity of women.

Womanism will be used in my study in advancing my argument which shows that when a woman lacks the independent capacity to assert her own positive truths and values, she is unable to contribute her insights and experiences to the various fields of human knowledge. This inhibition also affects relations between sexes. When denied opportunities for higher forms of self expression women may out of frustration attack the modes of understanding upheld by men. Barriers that are formed by patriarchy hinder women’s development.

Most traditional women, who are wives and mothers at the same time, are often excluded from direct participation and decision making in their homesteads. The decision making falls under the jurisdiction of their husbands, the words of their husbands are final and they cannot be opposed. This affects women in the sense that it limits their ownership and control of their households.

A destiny is created against women by men and a woman rebels against it, she insists upon fashioning a future of her own. As a free person, the woman resents the man’s position and his unfair access to opportunities for self fulfillment that he has reserved for himself with world outside the home. Due to this destiny she becomes frustrated, she becomes powerless. Women experienced both physical and psychological oppression. The unjust laws, customs and practices that traditionally sustained masculine domination marked women with a stigma of inferiority.
Women are denied by law and custom the basic freedom to organize their life as they choose. Women are bound by a sociological notion of the sameness of their oppression. Their oppression continues when she loses her husband even if she is not supposed to be treated oppressively. For example she is expected to mourn for nine months and she feels the mourning period up to the end.

Feminism has been chosen as another theory which will be considered in developing a theoretical framework which serves as the basis of my study. To my own understanding feminism and womanism are related they complement each other because they have related and similar ideas. Feminism focuses on equality between men and women. African feminism sees the struggle for equal rights between the sexes as more difficult than that of decolonization because it is the struggle between husband and wife, father and mother. It recognizes a common struggle with African men for the removal of the yokes of a foreign domination and European American exploitation. It challenges African men to be aware of certain salient aspects of women’s subjugation.

Lastly psychoanalysis has been chosen as another theory which will be used in advancing my arguments in my study because it is part of humanities, since it is about the human being within human culture.

To conclude, historical background of black criticism, gender inequality, cultural theory, womanism, psychoanalysis and feminism has been discussed and clearly explained. The relationship between the theories has been postulated.
CHAPTER THREE

THE EFFECT OF GENDER INEQUALITY

A change of the traditional role of men as well as the role of women in society and in the family is needed to achieve full equality between men and women. Women’s right to equality should be fully exercised in all spheres of life. All forms of discrimination against women should be abolished.

(Waheeda, 1998: 13)

3.1 INTRODUCTION

In this chapter the effect of gender inequality will be examined in some selected Xhosa drama. Is the effect of gender inequality socially derived or biologically determined? One of the chief aims of this chapter is to find out the reason why most traditional women are often excluded from participation and decision making in their homesteads; it is also to find out about why society always gives men high status as compared to women and what the effect of all this is on women.

According to Bauerlin (1997:63) gender can be used as a synonym for women. Scholars substitute gender for women as titles and summations, in part, to grant legitimacy to their field, to make their work sound less partisan and more serious. Because gender has a more neutral and objective sound than “woman” does, it escapes the politics and feminism and joins the social sciences as an intellectual inquiry free of bias.

Bauerlin (1997:62) further observes that this meaning of gender applies to relations between the sexes, and in doing so, provides a descriptive tool for historical study. This meaning fails to reveal why male / female relations are the way they are; it only reveals that they are social and that inquirers can recount the course of their socialization. This
implies that gender not only underscores the constructiveness of male / female distinctions, it also opens an area of investigation that differentiates sexual practice from the social roles assigned to women and men.

I agree with Wisdom’s (1987:48) remarks as quoted by Kwatsha (2002:22) that:

Women can never directly exercise the power invested in the position of father because they do not have a penis, and this biological fact has in Freud, important psychic consequences for feminine subjectivity.

In this chapter more attention will be focused on male dominance over women. By male dominance I am referring to women enduring chronic abuse at the hands of their husbands, to women’s oppression; to beliefs, attitudes and acts that exclude women in general from experiences and activities that enhance their growth and development and their access to positions of power. The focus will also be on whether gender identity is established by the possession of certain genitals or chromosomes or is it a form of misogyny which maintains that women are fond of talking incessantly, nagging, gossiping and being concerned with appearance which is part of their daily lives? I also wish to express the notion that the life of a woman revolves around a circle of domesticity, thus a woman is unable to become a complete person. Lastly I would like to express the idea that the pursuit of moral and legal equality is an essential means for overcoming discrimination against women.

3.2.1 CULTURAL INHIBITIONS CAUSING CONSTRAINTS ON WOMEN

In Mntingane’s drama Inene nasi isibhozo Masukude, a widow approaches her brother’s husbands to discuss her plans for the family. She wants her only son, Vuma, to get married before her stepson, the older Themba Although Themba has left his home Masukude knows that he might come back, for in the African context, a person’s name (in this case Themba = hope) predetermines his main character and the development of
plot. This knowledge drives Masukude to persuade Vuma to get married before Themba does.

Themba, her stepson, returns. Masukude is very angry when Themba returns home, and she vows that Themba will not get married before Vuma does. Masukude is concerned about the few cattle left by her deceased husband. She is filled with jealousy and does not want Themba to use them for his *lobola* (dowry). But Lolo is, by custom, unable to make a decision on the matter. He arranges a meeting of all the male members of the family.

The discussion between Masukude and Lolo is as follows:

**UMasukude:** Ndifuna ke u Vuma azeke (*kuyathuleka*)

**ULolo:** Mh, hayi ndiyakuva. (*kuyaphinda* *kuyathuleka*) phofu, kutheni kuza kuqala u Vuma ekho nje u Themba?

**UMasukude:** UThemba uyafika, asimazi nokuba uza kuhlala na.

**ULolo:** Unyanisile, kodwa masikhe sikhangele iinjongo zabo bobabini kuqala.

**UMasukude:** Sikhangele iinjongo kanjani na?

**ULolo:** Sijonge izinto abazicingayo.

**UMasukude:** Ngeli xa nisakhangel’ iingcinga, mna ndiza kuncediswa ngubani?

**ULolo:** Loo nto ayinakuthatha xesha.

**UMasukude:** Ukub’ uThemba ufun’ukuzeka?

**ULolo:** Kuya kuba kulgile kaloku.

**UMasukude:** O, ufunu kuqale u Themba?

**ULolo:** Kuqala omdala kakade.

**UMasukude:** UVuma aze azithathe phi yena iinkomo zokulobola?

**ULolo:** Beziya kuvelaphi ku Themba?
UMasukude: (ubambelela emadolweni) Tyhini! Tyhini! 
Bhuti, ezi nkomo ufuna ziphelele ku 
Themba? (efutha) inene, nasi isibhozo!
Akunakuze kuzekelwe itsiph’elaggiba 
ishumi leminyaka eKapa, ekh’u Vuma 
unntu obelima egcine nezi nkomo.
(uyanqumama efutha ngumsindo) kanti lo 
mntwana uthi makabe sisicaka sika Themba, 
bhuti? Ngubani yen’u Themba? Itsipha!
Int’engazang’ithumele mali! Inani 
yon ’isentiemdaka!

(Mntingane, 1965:21)

UMasukude: I want, then, Vuma to marry (is quiet)
ULolo: Mh, No, I hear you (Quiet again) but why is 
it Vuma first, whilst Themba is there?
UMasukude: Themba has just arrived, we don’t know 
whether he is going to stay.
ULolo: That’s true, but let’s look both at their 
intentions first.
UMasukude: How do we looking at intentions?
ULolo: We consider what they think.
UMasukude: When you are considering thoughts, who is 
going to help me?
ULolo: That would not be long.
UMasukude: What if Themba wants to marry?
ULolo: That would be all right.
UMasukude: Oh! Then you want Themba first?
ULolo: It’s the eldest who is supposed to marry first.
UMasukude: Then, where will Vuma get cows to pay 
lobola?
ULolo: Where would Themba get them?
UMasukude: (*Holding her knees*) By God! Brother in law! You want all these cows to be Themba’s? (*fuming*) Indeed, I swear! There will never be a marriage arrangement for a loafer who spent ten years in Cape Town, when there is Vuma, a person who was ploughing and herding these cattle. (*She stops fuming with anger*) This child, you say he must be Themba’s servant, brother in law? Who is Themba? A loafer! A thing that never sent money! What about a single cent!

Masukude, in the above mentioned extract, uses vulgar language. This implies that gender inequality affects her. A traditional custom which maintains that an elder son should get married before the younger is exactly what is frustrating her. In Masukude’s opinion, custom is nothing but a tyrant hidden in every home. It becomes clear from this extract that women are denied by law and custom the basic freedom to organize their life as they choose. Cultural inhibitions lock or prevent women from acting in a way that is comfortable for them.

It is also evident from Masukude’s arguments that if women could have moral and legal equality, they could easily overcome discrimination against them, and create the conditions necessary for them to achieve personal fulfillment. Gender inequality prevents women from achieving personal fulfillment.

What is also noticeable in Masukude’s behaviour is that she has a problem; she is filled with jealousy and does not want Themba to use the cattle for his *lobola* (dowry).
According to Xhosa traditional custom, when a man dies his eldest son usually inherits his social position as household head. He also inherits land rights, cattle and material possessions. Even after the death of her husband, a woman still belongs to the patrilineal family which had paid her bride wealth. She was party of man’s wealth, and society was organized to press her into accepting that role.

Women’s access to cattle is based on the fulfillment of their obligations as wives and mothers. A woman’s cattle can be used to provide bride wealth for her sons. In fact a woman has no effective personal claim to her cattle because she has to hold them in trust for her sons. Masukude seems to be ignoring all this in the above mentioned extract. In this sense she is violating the traditional norms, values and customs.

The fact is that Lolo is, by custom, unable to make a decision on the matter, so he decides to arrange a meeting of all the male members of the family. The introductory remarks of the meeting are presented as follows:


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**ULolo:** Sihlangene ngomcimbi wekhaya.

**UMfolo:** Ngaba imicimbi yomzi apha siyixoxa kunye nabafazi?

**ULolo:** Asiyilungisi nabafazi.

**UMfolo:** Lo ke umfazi uza kwaneka umcimbi womzi emadodeni, uza kusanekela ngabuni?

**ULolo:** Kaloku njengomnikazi mzi.

**UMfolo:** Wethu, mus’ukundiyilozela. Asinguwe na iliso lalo mzi akububha umkhuluwa wakho?

(Mtingane, 1965: 24 – 25)

**ULolo:** *(Standing up)* Uncle, my elder brothers, I’m sorry to make you leave your posts. There’s nothing serious for which I called you out; please relax. This is what I can say: here is an issue that my elder brother’s wife and I discussed. But we realized from the start that we cannot handle it on our own, hence we decided to assemble you here. In short, I am going to ask her to inform this gathering why we are here today.

**UMfolo:** Well, without interrupting, whilst you are still on the floor, is this a serious case or just a domestic squabble in this house today?

**ULolo:** We are meeting over a family matter.

**UMfolo:** Do we normally discuss family issues with women?

**ULolo:** We don’t settle them in the presence of women.

**UMfolo:** On which grounds is this particular woman going to address us?

**ULolo:** Mind you, she is the home owner.
UMfolo: Man, don’t bumble. Aren’t you the caretaker in this home after the death of your elder brother?

In this extract Lolo is blamed by the male members of the family for discussing family issues with a woman. This extract contains a double implication. Firstly it conveys that in the African context, a person’s position in the family is largely determined his position as kinship relations are traced through the male line. Woman cannot manage home affairs. There has to be a man appointed to run the affairs. Thus Lolo has been appointed to be the right hand of Masukude after the death of Njinge his elder brother. Secondly, it conveys that Lolo as the right hand of Masukude has to conform to certain cultural rules or regulations. For order to be maintained, a certain degree of predictability in behaviour patterns is needed. Deviations from accepted rules in the society are checked by sanctions, and the enforcement of sanctions is the work of special male members of the family.

The above mentioned extract illustrates the social problems facing those placed in authority, in each and every homestead. Gender inequality creates barriers that are formed by patriarchy and such barriers hinder women’s development.

The rejection of a possible invitation extended to Masukude to join and address the meeting proves that the traditional sex roles assumed that men are considered superior. Sex role socialization has affected women by encouraging domination by men and submission by women. Patriarchy has manipulated women in such a way that they can be looked down upon and be seen as people with no future so that they can feel inferior in life. In the social order women suffer discrimination because of their sex. According to our traditional culture women are excluded from direct participation and decision making in their homesteads. This affects women in the sense that it limits their ownership of and centrality in their households. Men have all the power and they maintain it by a systematic repression of women.
UMazwazwa: Unyanisile umkhuluwa lo. Usisi unokubizwa sithi xa kukh’ into esifuna ukuyiqonda.

UMfolo: (Ekhomba uLolo) Khangela ndiyakunyolangoku. Xa axoxayo ke amadoda, aphikisana de anyolane. Uthi ke wena uMasukude makanyolane nooyisezala, kanye nabakhuluwa bakhe, apha? Yhini! Bafondini! Ngoobani aba baza kubhenguzelwa ngeelokhwe?

(KuMasukude) Masukude, thatha i-emele uyokukha amanzi, upheke, sakukubiza xa sikufuna.

(Mtingane, 1965: 24 – 25)

UMazwazwa: My elder brother is telling the truth. My sister in law may be called when there’s something that we need to be clarified.

UMfolo: (pointing at Lolo) Look I’m waving a finger at you now. When men engage in serious talk, the exchange even leads to the waving of fingers. Are you saying Masukude must wave fingers at her fathers in law, and her brothers in law here? Oh gentlemen! Who would tolerate women flashing their dresses among us? (to Masukude) Masukude, take a bucket and fetch water and cook, we shall call you when we need you.
According to Mfolo’s arguments, when it comes to biological differences between men and women a sexual division of labour is the most efficient way of organizing society. Women are excluded from discussing family issues, especially in serious cases: they can only be involved in domestic squabbles. Since women are seen as closer to nature they are always regarded as inferior to men. The dependance of women on men produces unequal power. From its beginnings, patriarchy was based upon man’s obedience to a superior power over man which also legitimized man’s dominion over both women and nature. The unjust cultural practices inhibitions, laws and customs that traditionally sustained masculine domination marked women with a stigma of inferiority.

Ruthven (1984: 34) contends that sexist ideology is the ideology of male dominance, which operates by repressing what is repressible, and displacing what is not, thus producing false resolutions of manifest contradictions in our society. One such contradiction is the gap between the idea of sexual equality in the work force, and the reality of sexual inequality. The indisputable fact of inequality can be either suppressed by the ideology of equal opportunity inherited from meritocratic theories of education, or displaced by the ideology of domestic fulfillment (“a women’s place is in the kitchen”).

It becomes clear from the above mentioned extract that the power of men to define themselves is the most pervasive power in our traditional society. The exclusion of Masukude from the meeting shows that she is the victim of patriarchy, of the unequal distribution of power in the society but the women who are the victims of social problems live their lives as individuals, not as social issues. Their problems are represented only in terms of the social order and its inherent injustices. Her exclusion from the meeting shows that inequalities between men and women exploit women. Patriarchal oppressive customs block the development of women, it creates barriers that hinder their development.

In Mkonto’s drama, *Emgxobhozweni*, Vakele tells Noankile, his wife, about the visitors who were coming from Nondyola to ask for a girl. He tells her that he decided to call Jingxela, Mfotshoyi and Khwelimfene to come and listen to them. He tells her that the
hand of his daughter, Nomonde, is being sought by the Ngxabi family. Noankile becomes angry. The fact that she has not been invited is exactly what worries her. The following extract highlights this:

Noankile:  
(Wothukile) Oo! Ke! Ngoku! Batheni!
Ngubani loo mfana? Kwathini nam
ningandibizi? Khona bawazi njani lo mzi
ezihlalela nje loo Nomonde?

Vakele:  
(Ebujala) Likhaya likaNomonde.
Ndinguyise. Umntu wokuqala
nowokugibela ukusabela nokumamela
ingxaki yakhe. Andithi kaloku wena
wabonakalisa kwakusasa ukuba
akungonina, ngoko ubungena kwaziswa.
Uthumele ke umlomo kanina, uGogo,
ndayivuyela loo nto. Ngaphezu koko lo
mcimbi ngowasebuhlanti kuba ngumcimbi
wobulawu. Wena ke weza ngokhuko.

(Mkonto, 1993: 97)

Noankile:  
(shocked) Oh! Then, what do they say? Who is that young man? Then why didn’t you call me? How do they know about this homestead? Nomonde is staying alone all by herself.

UVakele:  
(Looking disappointed) This is Nomonde’s home. I am her father. The first and the last person to listen to her problem. Didn’t you show earlier that you are not her mother, so
you were not supposed to be informed. Gogo informed me on behalf of her mother, and I was so happy about that. This affair is a customary affair for it concerns marriage. You came here through the reed mat.

It can be deduced from the above mentioned arguments that Noankile is ill-treated by Vakele. He refuses to recognize her freedom for self-definition, for effective recognition of her humanity as a person and the freedom to exercise her personhood. It becomes clear from Vakele’s response that women are always excluded from decision making when it comes to lobola issues and there is no compromise at all.

According to Kaschok (1992: 51) from its beginnings, patriarchy was based on man’s obedience to a superior divine will. Submission to God’s power over man also legitimized man’s dominion over both women and nature. It is evident from Vakele’s response that limitation and sorrow are unavoidable for women when it comes to decision making at their homesteads.

Murphy (1994: 47) states that from the beginning of Western culture the separate creation of woman and her profound involvement with the reproduction of human life virtually excluded her from those higher intellectual operations that were thought to define human nature more fully. The predominance of reason was assured by constructing the positive elements of thought with lesser qualities symbolically associated with women. Kwatsha (2002: 27) points out clearly that in the society that we live in, men do not live according to their real selves; they often undermine the attempts made by women as if they are afraid of being overpowered or that the status given to them by society will be taken away as soon as a woman shows the ability to perform tasks as well as (or better than) a man can do.

Kwatsha (2002: 29) further contends that Freud’s ideas of feminine psychology prove that woman’s role in life is to stay at home, be passive in relation to man, bear and raise
children. Freud’s view about women goes hand in hand with what traditional African society expects from its women. African women know what they want to achieve, but it is difficult to put their needs into practice because the picture of womanhood given to her by society prevents her from finding within herself ways of recognising what it is that she wants.

In Mtingane’s drama, **Inene nasi isibhozo**, the family meeting takes a decision that it is Themba who is going to marry first by virtue of being the elder son. Masukude is called and she is told about the decision of the meeting. She seems to be worried about this decision. She convinces herself that Themba will marry over her dead body:

“*Uya kutshata ndifile.*”

(Mtingane, 1965:32)

“He will get married over my dead body.”

It is clear from Masukude’s response that frustration can cause feelings of hostility and aggression not only towards a goal, but also, as displaced aggression, towards some other person or object. It may manifest itself physiologically related to the agitated state of the organism. It may have psychological effects that would prevent realistic perception on effective problem solving activity. It may result in a state of anxiety that would have a generally undesirable effect on cognitive processes (Alexander, 1975: 75).

To illustrate the above mentioned arguments on the effect of frustration, Masukude goes to Noayini, her best friend. She asks her to assist her in preventing Themba’s marriage:

**UNoayini:** Kahle kaloku akufuneki sihleli sihamba kunye. Thatha le mpahla ibe ngakuwe.

**UMasukude:** Unyanisile yizise apha.

**UNoayini:** *(Erhola iqhina) Akunavalo kodwa ngoku?*
**UMasukude:** *(Elithatha)* *Mfazi, ndiqine ngaphezu kwelit ye lenyengane.*

**UNoayini:** *Lifihle ke kweyona ndawo uyiqondayo.*

(Mtingane, 1965: 44 – 45)

**UNoayini:** Wait, we must not always be walking together. Take these goods and keep them with you.

**UMasukude:** That’s true, bring them here.

**UNoayini:** *(Taking out poison wrapped in a cloth)* Aren’t you afraid now?

**UMasukude:** *(Taking it)* Woman, I am harder than a solid rock.

**UNoayini:** Hide it then in the most secret place you know.

Noayini gives her the poison. The next incident is the death of Themba, poisoned by Masukude. She kills her son, Vuma by mistake. She also kills Lolo with an axe. All these calamities are ascribed to the violation of society’s law or the breach of traditional custom by Masukude.

Gender inequality may easily affect women. Due to gender inequality, women may become frustrated and their frustration may easily lead to inappropriate behaviour and worse. Private wrongs are avenged by private individuals and any of their friends they can get to help them to help attack, to defend or offend. From Masukude’s vengeance arises a system of almost organized vengeance. Thus the frustrations caused by gender inequality may result in a conflict which may lead to a number of deaths. Perhaps Masukude should have been given a chance to express her views and allowed to fulfill her dream. Thus the author says:

*(Mtingane, 1996: 70)*

UMfolo: *(Soliloquising)* How I wish I had not forced her. I believed I was trying to calm down this woman, whereas she also believed I was stubborn. Mzizi is in complete shock after hearing of Themba’s death. He would be shocked to death if he were to hear that the bride had committed suicide, and that Masukude, Lolo and Vuma were also dead. I had not counted on these consequences.

In connection with the above mentioned extract there appears to be a transposition of an older scheme of feelings and attitudes. Mfolo is in a state of regret but does not appear to acknowledge that women should be placed on equal footing with men.
3.2.2 FORCED MARITAL RELATIONSHIPS

All parties shall accord to women equality with men before the law, and shall accord to women in civil matters, a legal capacity identical to that of men and the same opportunities to exercise that capacity. They shall accord to men and women the same rights with regard to the law relating to the choice of partners, to the movement and domicile.

(Waheeda, 1998: 29)

According to Murphy (1994: 45) when a woman lacks the independent capacity to assert her own positive truths and values, she is unable to contribute her insights and experiences to the various fields of human knowledge. This inhibition also affects relations between the sexes. When denied opportunities for higher forms of self expression, women may, out of frustration, attack the modes of understanding upheld by men. Masculine claims of cognitive objectivity are then dismissed as spurious modes of knowledge.

Brooker (1999: 105) believes that gender inequality reinforces authority over women. It also perpetuates the norm of male heterosexuality as the model of natural sexual identity. This is what is called compulsory heterosexuality according to Western societies. The hierarchical binary opposition of male / female reinforces patriarchy and sexual privilege to the disadvantage of women.

In Qangule’s Amaza, Namhla is told that she is going to marry Duma or Lunga in order to retain the name of her dead husband, whether she likes it or not:

Qebeyi: Namhla Bhelekazi, sikubizela into eqhelekileyo. AmaCirha anqwenela ukuvusa umyeni wakho ngomnye wonyana.
Namhla: *Uxolo ndiyayala loo nto.*

Mphurhu: *Isiko lisiko, akuthandiswa wena.*

(Qangule, 1988: 61)

Qebeyi: Namhla Bhelekazi, we have summoned you for a common practice. The Cirha wish to resurrect your husband by marrying you to one of their sons.

Namhla: Sorry I am not going to do that.

Mpurhu: This is custom, and may not be opposed.

Even after the death of her husband a woman still belonged to the patrilineal family which had paid her bride wealth. Since a woman is regarded as part of man’s wealth society is organized to force her into accepting that role. In patriarchal society after the marriage is legitimatized, much of married life centres on the family. In the re-marriage custom called wife inheritance, when a man dies, his heir (usually his next of kin) is expected to marry the widow. The rationale for this custom is that since the marriage involved the group of the man who died, a member of that group should replace him.

Henn, (1984: 289) also argues that a widow had important incentives to accept the inheritor as her new husband. If she did so, she continued to enjoy the social acceptance and land rights her former marriage had provided. If she refused, she had to leave her husband’s village, an option which put her sons in danger of losing their rights to the land she had farmed. Furthermore, if her children were beyond the age of seven, a departing widow could not take them with her, the children belonged to the father’s lineage.

The Jewish custom as expressed in the Bible alludes to a widow’s inheritance as stated in Genesis chapter 38 verse 8 which reads as follows:
“UYuda wathi kuOnan, yiya kumfazi womkhuluwa wakho, umngene, umvelisele imbewu umkhuluwa wakho.”

“Then Judah said to Onan, lie with your brother’s wife and fulfill your duty to her as a brother in law to produce offspring for your brother.”

In Mmango’s drama, **UDike noCikizwa**, Nojoyini who is Sando’s wife is also dominated by her husband. Gender inequality has an effect on her. For example she is denied the effective recognition of her full humanity as a person, and the freedom to exercise that personhood in every sphere of her life. Mmango in this drama tends to treat women as “the other”, “the second sex”, something less than a full human being. The manner in which Sando ill-treats his wife shows that African women have always experienced barriers to the assertion of their individuality and freedom. For example, Sando is forcing his daughter to marry Mjongwa whom she does not love. Nojoyini is protesting to no avail:

**Nojoyini:**  *Le nto ndayimangala kwamhlamnene kuyise.*  
*Wasuka waligwele ngumsindo, wathi akanakuva ngomntwana emzini wakhe.*  
(Mmango, 1991: 6)

From the onset I have asked her father about this. He was furious, claiming that he cannot listen to a child in his own home.

From Nojoyini’s protest it becomes evident that gender inequality denotes the attributes culturally ascribed to women and men. Moi, (1985: 213) contends that if women, in particular, are seen as occupying a marginal position within the symbolic order, then it constructs them as the limit or borderline of that order. From a phallicentric point of
view, women will then come to represent the necessary frontier between man and chaos. Women, seen as the limit of the symbolic order, will share in the disconcerting properties of all frontiers, they will neither be inside nor outside.

What transpires in the above mentioned extract is that the development of masculine conception of thought and action will always be accompanied by the articulation of gender distinctions that reinforce male dominance over women. By protesting, Nojoyini is trying to demand her personal independence in order to overcome her oppression in her homestead.

Nomatiletile is also protesting. She tells Sando that he cannot force Cikizwa to marry a man whom she does not love. She reminds him about Cikizwa’s rights. Sando tells Nomatiletile that she is wasting her time. He says:

\[
\text{Uzidla amaxesha, mna andisoze ndive ngomntwana apha emzini wam.}
\]

(Mmango, 1991: 7)

You are wasting your time, I don’t listen to a child in my house.

Sando’s response tends to forget that all people have the right to self determination. Nomatiletile’s advice shows that by virtue of that right she can freely determine her political status and freely pursue her social and cultural development. Nomatiletile has been arbitrarily deprived of her right. It could also be deduced from Sando’s ignorance of the Declaration of Human Rights (see preamble to this section) that he thinks that men are naturally superior to women in essence and in all areas affecting the modern day organization of societal structures. This ideology prolongs the attitudes of negative discrimination against women. Sando should have listened to Nomatiletile’s advice, but
because he believed that the place of a woman is in the kitchen he seems not to be prepared to compromise.

Ogundipe (1989: 28) states that:

The African woman has six mountains on her back: one is oppression, the second one is from traditional structures, the third is her backwardness, the fourth one is man, the fifth is her color and her race, and the sixth is herself.

My own personal feeling about all this is that it is up to women to combat their social disabilities, to fight for their own fundamental and democratic rights, without waiting for the happy day when men will willingly share power and privilege with them in a patriarchal society: a day that may never come.

Marriage sometimes can be a source of frustration, despair and hostility for women. For example in Tamsanqa’ drama, Buzani kubawo, Thobeka and Gugulethu are forced by their parents to marry. On the wedding day, Gugulethu argues against a forced marriage. When he is eventually asked to repeat the marriage vows by the officiating priest he keeps a dramatic silence. Gugulethu disappears from his home after the wedding day and he goes to Mthatha to look for work. He spends twelve years in Mthatha without going home. During Gugulethu’s absence, Thobeka bears three children. Because Gugulethu does not come home, his father sends Thobeka and the children to be with Gugulethu in Mthatha. Thobeka goes to Umthatha to see her husband. Gugulethu is shocked by this visit and asks Thobeka about the children and Thobeka fails to answer. She postpones the answer for the evening:

Gugulethu: Tyhini ngoobani aba?
Thobeka: Sithi.
Gugulethu: Thobeka.
Thobeka: Bhuti.
Gugulethu: Uyaphi?
Thobeka: Ndize kuwe.
Gugulethu: Uze kum uyandazi?
Ndingubani? Ndiyini kuwe?
(Tamsanqa, 1995: 83)

Gugulethu: And who are these?
Thobeka: It’s us.
Gugulethu: Thobeka!
Thobeka: My brother.
Gugulethu: Where are you going to?
Thobeka: I have come to you.
Gugulethu: You have come to me?
Do you know me? Who am I?
What relation am I to you?

Thobeka has had three children during Gugulethu’s absence. Thobeka’s way of thinking and behaviour is unusual. She is not supposed to go to Gugulethu in uMthatha, knowing fully well that Gugulethu does not love her. She is not supposed to go to Gugulethu with children begotten by another man. Thobeka’s response in referring to Gugulethu as “bhuti” (brother) gives an image of Xhosa woman tightly fettered by unreasonable cultural norms regarding the choice of a marriage partner. Her action in not refusing when her father in law, Zwilakhe, sent her to go to Gugulethu with three children begotten by another man shows that parental power is so strong that who ever tries to resist it has to face the wrath of public sanction. It depicts Thobeka as a typical example of a Xhosa woman who accepts social norms and parental authority as the Biblical truth which every girl or woman should obey without question even if, in the process, she loses her identity.

The mere fact that Thobeka is referring to Gugulethu as “bhuti” (brother) shows that there is no husband and wife relationship between them. Gugulethu’s last question to Thobeka shows that Gugulethu does not accept her as his wife. It is for this reason that
he had refused to sign the marriage register on the wedding day. His immovable silence in front of the priest on the wedding day shows that he does not accept her as his wife. Whenever Gugulethu is required to express his opinion about Thobeka and his marriage, his response is “Buzani kubawo”, “Ask my father.”

The last question which Gugulethu asks Thobeka shows that Gugulethu represents the African community which endorses modern values. Thobeka represents the African community which romanticizes pre-colonial culture. The exchange of words in the above extract prepares the ground for the violence which is going to follow.

Gugulethu leaves them and when he comes back in the evening he decides to murder all of them, that is Thobeka and the children. He goes to the police to be arrested for murder. We can say upon reading this, that women endure chronic abuse – even death - at the hands of their husbands due to traditional attitudes about family life.

Blackman (1989: 49) contends that battered women remained in abuse relationships because they have learned to be helpless, have learned that they are unable to control or prevent their husband’s violent outbursts. In spite of this belief, these women still maintain a sense of responsibility for provoking the assaults against them.

Nkumane (2002: 34) has this to say in connection with Thobeka’s behaviour:

Women, especially illiterate women, take societal and cultural practice so intensely that they think it is the way it should be. This implies that illiterate women act according to the oppressive societal expectations of women. For example Thobeka should have refused when Zwilakhe sent her to Gugulethu with children begotten from another man. Thobeka has provoked her husband, therefore she maintained a sense of responsibility for provoking the murder against herself.
As can be observed from the above mentioned extract, Gugulethu sees both Thobeka and his father as symbols of injustice. They are both the embodiment of the gross unfairness of the Xhosa custom to which he has been subjected, hence his brutal murder of Thobeka and her children. Zwilakhe had once said to his son, Gugulethu that he must marry and he did not have to be spoon-fed. Zwilakhe forces him to marry Thobeka whom he does not love. This implies that Zwilakhe is ill-treating Gugulethu, he is unfair to him. Zwilakhe’s behaviour changes the relationship between himself and his son. Zwilakhe’s action is calculated to thwart Gugulethu’s efforts to marry a girl of his own choice. To make things worse it is Zwilakhe and his brothers who go to Mcothama’s place to pay out lobola and to decide on a wording day without Gugulethu’s approval.

3.3 DECEIT

Women are seen by men and depicted by male authors as deceitful. The following are some of the conceptions held by such misogynists: deceit is the act or process of deceiving or misleading by concealing the truth. This attitude by a woman is not at all surprising, considering that women internalize a subservient role from childhood. A woman is really a strange creature, and a woman is endowed with a brain that works very strangely. For example a woman may easily appear to be sorry, while she is extremely happy in her heart.

A woman is untrustworthy when it comes to love and marriage. A woman has an identity that is contingent on someone else, eg I am his wife, in other words, I exist because I have a relationship to someone else, who is real. Deceit in women is characterized by rationalization. In the mechanism of rationalization one tries to placate the superego by cooking up a good excuse or a good reason. In ordinary speech, the individual tries to bluff either herself or others. In most cases deceit is caused by jealous. Some deceitful tendencies are caused by other people. Deceit is destructive and can destroy society. Given such beliefs, let us examine some of the manifestations of them in the dramas.
3.3.1 POSITIVE DECEIT IN RESPECT OF JEALOUSY

In Mkonto’s drama, *Inzonzobila*, Zinzo is always complaining about the manner in which preachers, especially Dlangisa, deliver their sermons at funerals and also in church. He maintains that preachers tendency to preach about people’s ideologies instead of preaching about the word of God. MamNtakwenda, who is Zinzo’s wife, seems not to be pleased with her husband’s attitude towards Dlangisa when he says:

*Abashumayeli bathetha beziphikisa, xa bemi eqongeni*

*bathetha le, bakusithela bavuke nelinye.*

(Mkonto, 1995: 3)

Preachers are contradicting themselves when they are standing on the platform they say this, and after leaving the platform they say the opposite.

Zinzo tends to forget that some sermons are not rigorously planned, since the turn and direction of a particular message should depend upon the “leading of the holy spirit”. With this spontaneity at his disposal the preacher is free to direct the mood of the audience and to respond to this verbally. Improvisation is evident. For example many preachers highlight the points they are making by means of digressions. These serve to bring the sermon to life, to make it relevant to the experience of the congregation.

The fact about MamNtakwenda is that she is Dlangisa’s former girlfriend. She bore him a son called Bhongo. Dlangisa ill-treated MamNtakwenda and their love affair came to an end. Although MamNtakwenda is now married to Zinzo, Dlangisa wants her back, despite being married to NomaTshawe. It is for this reason that MamNtakwenda seems not to find fault with Dlangisa’s preaching. MamNtakwenda is deceitful in the sense that in her heart she knows the real bone of contention is in herself because she is torn between her husband, Zinzo and her former boyfriend, Dlangisa. Zinzo, who cannot see the depths of his wife’s heart, does not know that MamNtakwenda is Dlangisa’s ex girlfriend, nor that Bhongo is Dlangisa’s son. Zinzo only knows that she was made
pregnant by a man who vanished long ago. MamNtakwenda has been hiding the truth for a long time. For the past 24 years with her husband she has been pretending Bhongo is Zinzo’s son. She wants to tell her husband about this issue, but she is afraid, she feels guilty and she is crying whenever she thinks about it. She believes that her husband is suspicious about this. Thus she says:

*Mandimxelele na bethu ngale nyewe?*

(Mkonto, 1993: 25)

Must I tell him about this issue?

MamNtakwenda’s action in the extract shows that she is deceitful. She suffers from internal conflict. MamNtakwenda knows that she has been Dlangisa’s former girlfriend. She bore him a son called Bhongo. Zinzo does not know that MamNtakwenda is Dlangisa’s ex girlfriend nor that Bhongo is Dlangisa’s son. The extract shows that MamNtakwenda is not a free woman. What is noticeable in the extract is a woman’s dependence on man.

According to Parker (1994: 61) there is nothing more unstable than woman, “a shop full of fraudulence”. The life of a woman revolves around a circle of jealousy. Jealousy is intolerant of disloyalty, it is resentful of rivalry in love or affection.

The depiction of MamNtakwenda’s behaviour in hiding the truth from her husband is not at all surprising because a woman is said to be untrustworthy when it comes to love and marriage. She manifests all the attributes normally associated with bad women: jealousy and treachery. She is hiding her abhorrence for male domination. Gender inequality may easily lead to frustration and tension in women.

In the drama the author may catch a character in a period of transition, when she is not yet ready to act. Many characters fail because the author forces a character into action a
character is not ready to take, action a character will not be ready to take for an hour, or a year, or twenty years, (Egri, 1960: 78).

In MamNtakwenda’s action the researcher also notices the signs of degeneration in woman who is otherwise traditionally expected to be loyal, dignified and exemplary. She is portrayed as a social deviant.

In Mtywaku’s drama, *lincwadi ezave zibhaliwe*, Nontsha becomes jealous of Rose. Together they studied at Blythswood Training College. Rose was her best friend. Nontsha once suggested that Rose should be her brother’s sweetheart but to no avail. After Rose has given birth to Dolly, Nontsha decides to spoil the relationship between Rose and her husband Xolani by writing letters to her brother pretending they had been written by Rose. Thus she says:

\[
Ndabhala ileta ngesandla sam esifana nesakho ndizibhalela ubhuti ziyimbalelwano ephakathi kwakho nobhuti ngezibulo lwakho noForks, zibonisa ukuba enyanisweni umntwananoForks, zibonisa ukuba enyanisweni umntwana ngokabhuti. Ze zo leta ezi zisuke zamenza indindi umntanomntakwethu. Elokuphetha ndicela uxolo.
\]

(Mtywaku, 1990: 66)

I wrote letters myself using similar hand writing to yours. I wrote them to my brother, and these letters seemed to be the correspondence between yourself and my brother in connection with your first born by Forks showing that truly speaking the child belonged to my brother. It is these letters which have confused my brother’s child. Lastly I am apologizing.
Nontsha is portrayed as a custodian of traditional beliefs: when it comes to women’s behaviour, spreading cheap gossip is in line with the cultural practices in which women participate. It is a taboo for an African woman to go out of her way overtly to encourage love or affection between her friend and her brother but it is a common practice for a woman to persuade another woman to fall in love with her brother. Therefore this attitude by a woman is not at all surprising.

If an African woman fails to persuade another woman who is her close friend to fall in love with her brother she may bear a grudge against her, and her only revenge is to spread gossip about her. Thus it is shown that all women’s talk is silly gossip. Women can ventilate their frustration by blackmailing others or by spreading cheap gossip about other women. Nontsha’s action in the above mentioned extract vilifies women as representing Satan, evilness, darkness and chaos and encourages the view of women as whores of Babylon.

3.3.2 SELFISH DECEIT IN RESPECT OF JEALOUSY

In Mkonto’s drama, Emgxobhozweni, Noankile also becomes jealous of Nomonde who is the daughter of Vakele her husband by his first wife. So Noankile is Nomonde’s stepmother. The fact that Nomonde is running a supermarket and is also engaged is exactly what worries Noankile. She writes a letter to her husband giving him a stringent warning, advising him that he must put his wife in a higher position; he must let her run the supermarket; he must let her drive a Mercedes so that the community will give her a lot of respect. If the community respects his wife, it will vote for him and he will stand a good chance of being elected as the next mayor of Alice. She writes another letter to Nomonde speaking badly about Nomonde’s engagement. Noankile’s first letter reads as follows:
Most famous businessman! Then you want to be the Mayor of Alice! That will suit you, but for one thing you are quite stupid. Why do you place your wife in the background – it should not be like that. She is the Mayoress so try to find hers such a position here in your household. We are looking at you and see that you are taming her, but you want supporters – we must see her managing big businesses and driving a Mercedes. That’s how it is done. We don’t know whether you are fascinated by those assailants who intend to marry your girlfriend, we have heard that too, we have heard them too boasting of marrying twins. They claim they will be rich. That’s your business, we don’t feature anywhere, but take care of your wife if you want to win.

(Mkonto, 1995: 113 – 114)
What has happened is that Noankile, as a step mother, is jealous of Nomonde who is Vakele’s daughter by his first wife. She is worried because she is running a small shop while Nomonde is managing the supermarket. She wants to manage the supermarket. She feels that she has been overshadowed by her husband. When it comes to personality factors some women have grown up with a strong need to be dominant, and they seem determined to get their own way regardless of whether or not they deserve it. Women are more likely to use indirect methods whenever they feel that their presence is not respected by their husbands. Noankile is trying to earn a legitimate voice in her family affairs.

Noankile’s actions show that jealousy may result in psychological effects that may prevent realistic perception or effective problem solving activity. Her actions reinforce the perception that it is practically impossible for peacefulness and woman to lodge under single roof. Bal (1985: 35) states that when a character appears what she is not, this identity is a lie. Noankile lies deliberately because she is experiencing tension between the goals of anatomy and the values of connection and commitment. She feels that she is denied a feeling of independence as a wife in her household. By writing this letter she is refusing to be thought of as a second sex. In her view, to be a woman must be something in itself.

Noankile’s second letter reads as follows:

*Ntombazanandini, imfundo le uyinikwe nguyihlo nonyoko ngathi uyifanisa nehagu efakwe umsesane wegolide.*
*Baphelile abafana abanezinto kweli Dike ulibele ngamaqiqisholo ezilambi? Sidengendini.*

(Mkonto, 1995: 125 – 126)

You girl, you treat the education afforded you by your father and mother like a pig decorated with a golden ring.
Aren’t there rich men in Alice that you waste your time
with poor illiterates, you fool.

Noankile is trying to spoil the relationship between Nomonde and her future husband. She wants to prevent Nomonde’s marriage. She pretends to be advising her rationally. In the mechanism of rationalization one tries to placate the Super Ego by bringing forward a good excuse, or a good reason. In ordinary speech, the individual tries to bluff herself or himself. In the mechanism of rationalization one must also satisfy one’s super ego that there is a good reason for this attitude. Very often, of course, the individual convinces nobody but himself or herself, and other people who have similar prejudices, (Ferron, 1976: 8).

Noankile is portrayed as a deceitful woman who is suffering from jealousy. The kind of people we are as individuals emerges from the wide diversity of cultural practices in which we participate. To add to this a character’s growth may start from resistance to a stronger resistance instead of from hate to forgiveness, (Egri, 1960: 61).

3.4 WORK PATTERNS OF WOMEN

Male dominance over women is clearly portrayed in Ngani’s drama, Umkhonto kaTshiwo. In this drama the author shows us that women characters are denied an opportunity to express their feelings. A woman is regarded as a minor and she is forced to take a back seat in the decision making at her homestead. Ngani shows that in our African tradition patterns of authority are never vested in women. The housewife role is exclusively allocated to women, housework is unpaid, privatized and isolated. Ngani also shows that the role of housewife is a dead-end job with no chance of promotion. For example, Nozenza and Nozizwe are spending a sleepless night due to Nonkosi’s illness:

UNozenza:  Nonkosi! Nonkosi! Uhleli?
UNonkosi:  Ndisahleli, Dadobawo.
UNozenza:  Kutheni, waphufumilela phezulu?
UNonkosi: Zimpumlo zimfixene Dadobawo.
UNozenza: Joj’ umhlonyane ungyekei.
UNonkosi: Kudala ndiyenza leyo ma. Nani
cimani isibane esi, ubuthongo abehli.
UNozenza: Isibane sakhe sacinywa kugulwa?
Kudala sikuxelela nje iinjongo, yini
ngoku Tshawekazi, Tshawekazi
ntomb’esomi.
UNonkosi: Ndifun’ ubuthongo Dadobawo.
Ncedani ngesibane.
UNozenza: (Esebeza) Amngxamele eGwadana
umntanom’ mntakwethu.
(Ephakamisa) Uva ndawoni
ebuhlungu tana?
UNonkosi: (Enkenenkene) Andiva ndawo
Dadobawo, kodwa ncedani
ngesibane.
UNozenza: Nozizwe, mhlawumbi ubuthongo
bomnceda. Kakade intando yomguli
mayenziwe. Yithi fatshaphatsha
emnyango kuqala ngelaa yeza lakhe
likaMpondombini wandule wenze
ngokusikholwa kwakhe sohlala noko
sikuloo ntsunguzi.
UNonkosi: Iyeza! Yhu, iyeza! Kwowu kambe
liyandizotha nma elo yeza.
UNozizwe: (Esukuma) Lelona kanye ntombi
yam. Ngakumbi sakucinywa isibane.
Ukuba ziyangena ezirhaqezayo,
mazingene ngobunani bazo.

(Ngani, 1972: 4 – 5)
UNozenza: Nonkosi! Nonkosi! Are you all right?
UNonkosi: I am fine Aunt.
UNozenza: Why breathe so heavily?
UNonkosi: It’s a blocked nose Aunt.
UNozenza: Keep smelling the herb vapour.
UNonkosi: I’ve been doing that ma. You must also blow out the lamp; I cannot fall asleep.
UNozenza: Has a lamp ever been blown out during an illness? We have told you the purpose all along, why do you ask now, Tshawekazi beautiful girl??
UNonkosi: I want to fall asleep Aunt. The lamp, please.
UNozenza: (Whispering) The witches are waiting for my niece at Gwadana. (aloud) where do you feel the pain baby?
UNonkosi: (Tearful) Nowhere do I feel anything Aunt, but please the lamp.
UNozenza: Nozizwe, perhaps sleep will help. Indeed let the will of the sick prevail. Spray the door first. Use her medicine from Mpondombini. Thereafter do as she wishes, we will have to live in that darkness.
UNonkosi: Medicine! Oh medicine! Oh that medicine is so awful.
UNozizwe: (Standing up) It is so perfect my girl especially in the dark. If the evil
ones come in, they are welcome.. as many as they like.

This shows that Xhosa speaking people are superstitious. They believe in traditional herbs and also in witchdoctors who use traditional herbs to heal a sick person. Both Nozenza and Nozizwe are not prepared to accept that Nonkosi is suffering from a common disease called *umbathalala*. Both Nozenza and Nozizwe have a problem with Nonkosi’s ill health. They ascribe her sickness to human instrumentality that, is to some person who has bewitched her, to a person who is a source of evil. Thus Nozenza believes that the witches are waiting for her at Gwadana. (Gwadana, according to Xhosa superstitions, is a forest of the witches).

The mere fact that both Nozenza and Nozizwe are spending a sleepless night due to Nonkosi’s illness shows that wives are sincere about their “housewifely” syndrome. Child care, which remains primarily the responsibility of wives, affects their use of time. Wives have many household responsibilities including child - rearing responsibilities.

In Ngani’s drama a woman is supposed to fit in everywhere, she is everything. For example in Tshiwo’s kingdom, Dubulegeqa wants to conduct an “Imvumisa” but he is unable to conduct it without being assisted by women. In order to conduct it he needs women’s support, and he seems to be unable to identify the witches without being assisted by women. On the arrival of women he decides to start conducting an “Imvumisa”. In order to conduct it he needs women’s support, and he seems to be unable to identify the witches without women’s support:

**Umfazana:**  

**UDubulegeqa:**  

(Ngani, 1959: 20)

**UDubulegeqa:**  
You women are not giving me the power. Why are you so surprised? Do you want me to lose track of the cause of illness?. You must also relax you gentlemen.

**Umfazana:**  
*(Leading in song pretending to be strong)*  
Back home children are crying. Families are disintegrating. The witchdoctor suspects foul-play. Hark! The witchdoctor is suspicious and they are disappearing. Oh! My companion is gossiping about me.

**UDubulegeqa:**  
Stop this one crying children. You continue to remind me of crying children. Do you think you will not be suspected if you are a witch? Cry or not I am going
to find the suspects. Stop that one, I’m referring to you. That is not our night meal, try this one….

The verb “bayalila” “they are crying” foreshadows the destruction of the love between the woman and her child. It can be interpreted as a prayer innocently sung by “umdzleza” (a woman with a small baby) to prepare for her death. If she knew that her days are numbered she would not sing. She does not realize that the one of the implications of the song is that people enjoy whatever they may be doing without realizing when they join in beautiful rhyming songs or choruses. In this song for example “Umdleza” (a woman with a small baby) seems to be excited and yet it becomes clear at the end of “imvumisa” that her days are numbered. She is the first victim to be pointed out as a witch together with her family by Dubulegeqa. If one may consider the manner in which Dubulegeqa identifies witches, one may easily concludes by saying that to associate witchcraft with women is just a deeply rooted prejudice against innocent women.

The manner in which Dubulegeqa is conducting an “imvumisa” is hallmarked by the victimization of women. Women here become the victims of being associated with witchcraft. At the end of “imvumisa” they are accused of being witches. Thus the author says:

\[ Xa\ ngoku\ nabafazi\ behewela\ iimfene\ okwamadoda?\ \ Nithi izinto\ ezi\ zisingise\ phi\ madoda? \]

(Ngani, 1959: 30)

Just imagine women riding baboons imitating men!
Fellows where is everything heading to?

What transpires in both extracts is that the accusation and the punishment of the unfortunate women is not a punitive stage involving the ancestors. They should not be involved in the punishment because the witchdoctor is not authentic. He is exploiting the
superstition of the people. There is no absolute proof that they, the “witches”, did cause the sickness. Therefore the ancestors cannot be held responsible for their punishment.

Dubulegeqa tends to victimize women for bewitching people. This tendency always results in a society which is chaotic, a society which is living in a miasma of tribal disorder, a society which is dominated by healers and diviners who use their power in the service of evil.

Dubulegeqa typifies a villainous personality. Women and men are dying in big numbers because of witchcraft, they are periodically sent to be executed in Mngaza’s forest. Women in this drama are oppressed by superstition and male beliefs about them and their personhood is denied opportunities for self expression, for self determination, for equal gender opportunities which can place them on an equal footing with men.

In Mcani’s drama, **Uhambo lwenkululeko**, Nomonde feels that nurses are working under poor conditions at the hospitals. For example, there are no medicines and there are no doctors at the clinics. Her feelings show that she is involving herself in the struggle, she is trying to correct laws and practices which are frustrating nurses at the hospitals and clinics.

Murphy (1994: 5) believes that if women had not made such demands for personal independence, they could never have overcome their oppression. Brooker (1999: 94) also states that the women’s liberation movement participated in a dynamic moment of profound social and cultural change. Murphy (1994: 58) remarks that men and women must struggle to determine for themselves the outer boundaries of the quest for self determination. The power of men to define themselves is the most pervasive power in the world. This power can be connected only when it is matched by a comparable capacity of women to fully express their own experience and gain positive and equal influence upon the course of human events.
The conversation between Makhwetshube and Nokulunga about the release of political prisoners creates a lot of tension in the drama, and it also reveals differences of opinion between Makhwetshube, Nokulunga and Nompembelelo. Makhwetshube feels that the government has committed a blunder by releasing political prisoners. She feels that the conflict is going to start afresh. On the other hand, Nokulunga feels that their release is going to cause a civil war in South Africa:

_Inye ngoku into eza kusuka yenzeke yimfazwe yobukhaya._

_(Mcani, 1998: 1)_

One thing that is going to happen is the civil war.

Nompembelelo feels that their release should be viewed as a channel to the attainment of freedom, the government had to release them because it felt their power.

What is shown in the drama is the involvement of women in the far reaching changes that have occurred in black society during the apartheid regime. Women here have directly involved themselves in the struggle through their conversation.

Payne (1997: 217) observes that gender is a term denoting the attributes culturally ascribed to women and men. The differences of opinion between these women disputes the notion that the place of women is in the kitchen. This view also falsifies Murphy’s (1994: 59) argument which maintains that because women relate to others with much passion, emotion, and intuition they are presumably incapable of either logical reasoning, or sustained thought. A lot of reasoning is noticeable in their conversation. One also notices that the author has managed to develop beyond traditional forms of gender identity on the basis of insights into the uniqueness of women’s experience (Beuhabies, 1987: 13).

Makhwetshube shows unhappiness about the release of political prisoners because it reminds her about her own son who died in jail:
Wakhe wayiva into yokuba umntu angavunyelwa nokuba amathambo la omfi angcwatywe.

(Mcani, 1998: 1)

Have you ever heard of such a thing a person has been denied permission to bury the bones of the corpse?

Makhwetshube’s response here shows that she is aware that she has been deprived of her human rights by the government of the apartheid regime.

Guerin (1999: 197) has the following to say concerning women’s silences:

Tillie Olsen believes that women’s silences result from circumstances of being born into wrong class, race or sex, being denied education, and becoming numbed by economic struggle, muzzled by censorship.

3.5 SOCIALIZING EXPERIENCES OF WOMEN

Women are fond of socializing, and socializing experiences of women are always associated with gossip. Women are eschewed by male society for this type of behavior. It is said that women are always in the mood for gossip. However, gossipping can be regarded as the only way of exchanging ideas about their concerns in life. Chatting to one another in this way has some therapeutic value for women. Often women believe men when they say “all women’s talk is silly gossip.” In reality, women listen to each others’ feelings, exchange information and assuage each others’ isolation and loneliness. Women can ventilate their frustration while laughing with each other about their problems. It is said that women talk incessantly and are fond of nagging. This behaviour
by women would not be at all surprising, considering that women internalize a subservient role from childhood.

In Mbulawa’s drama, Mamfene, the stability or equilibrium that formerly prevailed is disturbed by the arrival of the letter telling of pastor Jezula’s transfer. Both Matilda and Jiphi are conspiring against pastor Kheswa. They are spreading cheap gossip, saying that pastor Jezula has been expelled by Mongameli:

(Wagxothwayo. Upethwe kakubi nguMongameli, uthi udlia imali yeCawa.

(Mbulawa, 1994: 17)

He is expelled already. He is ill-treated by Mongameli who claims that he is mishandling church funds.

Matilda also spreads cheap gossip about pastor Kheswa by telling the members of the community that they must take care of pastor Kheswa because the Europeans are going to use him to help them in decreasing their livestock:

(Abamhlophe baza kungena ngaye xa befuna ukunciphisa ezi mpahlana zenu.

(Mbulawa, 1994: 20)

Europeans are going to use him when they want to decrease your livestock.

It becomes clear from the above mentioned extracts that women are seen as fond of spreading cheap gossip about other people. Bentley, (1964: 74) observes that women most often betray with words. According to Freud as quoted by Bentley (1964: 75) in societies talk may be either positive or negative: that is, because of what people say or
because of what they fail to say. Everyone talks too much or too little. Some people talk alternately too much and too little. Some cannot stop talking, others cannot begin.

In Mkonto’s drama, *Emgxobhozweni*, both Hombakazi and Nomonde are nagging about Grace’s attire. Women are always seen as adopting a hostile attitude against other women. The following extract highlights this:

*Hombakazi:*  
Ndamnqanda ndamcebisa, ndancama,  
suka wee ggwithi ngokunxiba le mirhutyu-rhutyu  
ndiyicaphukelayo. Uthi wakumjonga abe  
ngathi umtya wakhe awufikanga eparafinini.  
Kukho le imnyama irhuqayo, ililwasu-lwasu  
elimhluba wonke umzimba wakhe. Uthi  
akuyinxiba leyo athi thwanga ngokupheleleyo.  

*Nomonde:*  
Ubani? Uthi kukho ongathi cha kulaa Nomatse?  
Yhu! Yhu! Hu!, ndingaba ndizikhupha  
isidima. Wandixelela ezinkonqeni mhla wafika  
ukuba uze kuVakele yena kulo mzi. Wandithunga  
umlomo ngokuthi owakhe uVakele akaphungi,  
abantu ze bazenzele ngokwabo ikofu yeentongo.  
Ndavuka ngokwam ndenzela iindwendwe ikofu,  
wabe yena elele dwaa.  

(Mkonto, 1995: 17 – 18)

*Hombakazi:* I stopped and advised her to no avail, but she continued wearing indecent clothes. When you look at her, she seems as if she is mentally disturbed. She wears a long, black dress, a pathetic one which makes her look naked. When she wears that one she acts as if she were mad.

*Nomonde:*  
Who? Do you think there is anyone who can
say no to that bitch? Phew! Phew! Phew! I will be demeaning myself. She told me directly the day she arrived that she has come to Vakele here in this homestead. She disappointed me when she said Vakele doesn’t drink coffee. People must make themselves morning coffee. I woke up myself and made coffee for the guests. She was fast asleep.

When women are socializing they are seen to be good at finding faults in other women. Although women have traditionally been seen as either saints or devils, nagging in women is not socially deviant. By nagging women are performing a normal duty which has been assigned to them by traditional society. Gossip always happens in a fixed archetypal context in Xhosa literature. Convenient contexts are among others, when women go to fetch water, or firewood, or when they are busy washing clothes, or hoeing in the fields or when they are chatting with each other. The obvious fact about Hombakazi in the above mentioned extract is that she hates Grace. It is for this reason that she adopts a hostile attitude towards her attire in a conspiracy with Nomonde.

In Mntingane’s drama, **Inene nasi isibhozo**, Mazulu and MaDlamini are also gossiping about Masukude. Noayini, who is a close friend of Masukude, overhears them while they are busy gossiping about Masukude. Masukude confronts them:

*UMasukude:* Zidengazanandini! *Ngubani lo nimhleba ethafeni?*

*UMazulu:* Akukho mntu ukhe wakuhleba.

*UMasukude:* Thula wena, andithethi nawe. *MaDlamini ngubani lo uhamba usithi ligeza?*
UMaDlamini: Akukho mntu ndikhe ndathi ligeza.
UMasukude: O, uyakhanyela? (Uyambetha ngokhuni.
UMaDlamini uyalubamba. Bayajjisana ngalo.)
(Mtingane, 1965: 4 -5)

UMasukude: You little fools! Who are you backbiting in the veld?
UMazulu: Nobody backbit you.
UMasukude: Shut up you! I was not speaking to you.
MaDlamini who do you go about saying is a fool?
UMaDlamini: I didn’t say anybody is a fool.
UMasukude: Oh! You deny it? (beating her with a stick.
MaDlamini gets hold of it. They are struggling over it.)

Masukude’s attitude in the above mentioned extract is not at all surprising, what she does is not contrary to traditional norms because it is common practice for women to fight against each other about gossip. Some women will go out of their way openly to gossip about other women. Private wrongs are avenged by private individuals and any of their friends whom they can get to help them. From Masukude’s vengeance we find a system of almost organized vengeance.

In Mtywaku’s drama, linwadi ezaye zibhaliwe, Nosenti and Nomaka are also gossiping about the teacher, Makhanda:

UNosenti: Yiphi? Inxila eliya?
UNomaka: (Esothuka) Yiyiphi na leyo Zizi?
UNosenti: Uxela yiphi wena?
UNomaka: Le ifika kulo nyaka. Bathe yeyakwabani kanene?
UNosenti: Utsho laa mntwana wakwaMakhanda eDikeni?
UNomaka: Unyanisile, bathe ngutitsha Makhanda.

(Mtywaku, 1990: 15)

UNosenti: Which one? The drunkard?
UNomaka: (astonished) Which one is that Zizi?
UNosenti: Which one are you talking about?
UNomaka: The one who has just arrived this year what surname did they say he has?
UNosenti: You mean that child of the Makhanda’s from Alice?
UNomaka: You have got it right. They said he is Makhanda, the teacher.
UNosenti: Don’t tell me about that one, Rhadebe, Mthobeli nearly cried when he heard that he is here. He knows him from Alice. He says he drank and crawled on his knees. I need not mention the school’s closure. He says that one day he found himself in King William’s Town when he was helping others to board the train with their luggage from Alice.

Women can ventilate their frustration by blackmailing others, by spreading cheap gossip about other people. Society predetermines what role women must play. Every woman learns these gender – linked roles from infancy and they are reinforced as she goes through the various stages of her life. Women are in fact brought up to be treacherous.
In Mbulawa’s drama, **Mamfene**, Jiphi also confesses that she has been betraying pastor Kheswa and his wife:

\[ Jiphi: \text{Andimsulwa kuyo yonke le nto ibisenzeka apha.} \]

(Mbulawa, 1994: 128)

I am not innocent of all that has been happening here.

Noqinile, after ill-treating her father in – law, also goes down on her knees and confesses:

\[ Noqinile: \text{Izigqibo zam ndinoJezula uyazazi zonke.} \]

\[ \text{Ndixolele.} \]

(Mbulawa, 1994: 135)

Noqinile: You know it’s what Jezula and I decided.

Both Jiphi and Noqinile are disclosing their conditions, psychological truth is revealed, and self-discovery is attained. There is no woman who ever lived who could remain the same through a series of conflicts, which affected her way of life.

### 3.6 CONCLUSION

Chapter three has shown that gender not only underscores the constructiveness of male – female distinctions. It rather opens an area of extensive examination that differentiates sexual practice from the sexual roles assigned to women and men. The points raised indicate that there is a perception that women can never directly exercise the power invested in the position of father because they are not males. The power of men to define themselves is the most pervasive power in our traditional culture. Inequality between men and women is both socially and biologically determined.
It has been mentioned that from its beginnings, patriarchy was based upon man’s obedience to a superior divine will. Submission to God’s power over man also legitimized man’s dominion over both women and nature. It has been explained in this chapter that the life of a woman revolved around a circle of domesticity, and it was only within that sphere that she was allotted her opportunities for happiness. Unable to become a complete person, the woman eventually rebelled against the narrowness of her status and claimed for herself the same rights to self-realization as those that have been asserted by men. If women had not made such demands for personal independence, they could never have overcome their oppression. It has been noted that a baby daughter is the extension of the father, providing him with whatever he cannot provide himself getting extra cattle/wealth. A daughter in a patriarchal society, cannot live outside the world of the fathers. She cannot resolve the Antigone complex as long as the world of adulthood is a man’s world, as long as she is the extension of her father or some other man, as long as she is constantly subject to definition by even strange men in public. A son can and does escape from the early world of the mother to a world of men.

Chapter three has shown that examples of hurtful criticism, of women criticizing women for being masculine (pushy), as well as being feminine (talking incessantly, nagging, gossiping, being concerned with appearance) is a form of misogyny that is a part of daily life. Women must make themselves pleasing to men.

It has been shown that women are characterized by a fear of success and it is difficult for a woman to leave a room for an appointment when a woman lacks independent capacity. It is difficult for her to assert her own positive truths and values, she is unable to contribute her insights and experiences to the various fields of human knowledge. This inhibition also affects relations between the sexes. When denied opportunities for higher forms of self expression, women may, out of frustration attack the modes of understanding upheld by men.

In a traditionally recognized form of marriage only adults could initiate and effectively carry out all the negotiations necessary for a valid marriage satisfactory to both sides.
Choice of the girl was most important, since she had to be incorporated in their family. Girls could not be entrusted with the choice of a husband. Parents had to seek out a bride for their son. They could make heavy demands in the form of a dowry or “lobola” cattle.

A society is organized along patriarchal lines. The perception of inequality begins at home. Whatever respect is conferred upon a woman as mother and homemaker does not compensate for the personal frustration implicit in the domestic experience.
CHAPTER FOUR

FROM SUBMISSIVE TO RADICAL RESISTANCE TOWARDS SOME CULTURAL ASPECTS

4.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter examines how the playwrights use the influence of culture on women characters in the selected Xhosa dramas. Cultural theory, discourse analysis and psychoanalytic theory will be used. Cultural theory has been chosen because it deals with cultural conflict. Psychoanalysis investigates the psychological effect on women characters. Since culture is the common possession of a body of people who share the same traditions in social terms it is related to psychoanalysis which examines the psychological motivation of human behaviour.

Discourse analysis cannot be excluded in analyzing culture because an analysis of discourse reveals the relations of power in society and shows the way people communicate with each other and create knowledge.

The examination of culture is of great significance because it yields specific evidence about the whole organization of society in which we live. Without knowing the culture we cannot really claim to know the society. Cultural theory aims at keeping the traditional customs, norms and values alive as they are passed from generation to another generation. In other words, traditional customs, norms, values and taboos are responsible for the growth of the society.

The theories mentioned above will be used jointly as an instrument for analyzing the influence of culture in these dramas. They will be used together to suggest a change in the way we analyse literature and to express their importance in the study of literature.
It is vital to remember that culture is not static, it changes, it is dynamic, to show that culture is both adaptive and persistent. It is adaptive because it is able to change, and it is persistent because it will never change without cause.

4.2 WOMEN WHO ARE SUBMISSIVE

In Tamsanqa’s drama, *Buzani kubawo*, Thobeka belongs to the set of women who are always submissive towards cultural aspects. She is a typical example of Xhosa women who are tightly fettered by unreasonable cultural norms regarding the choice of a marriage partner. She is a typical Xhosa girl who accepts social norms and parental control as the Biblical truth which every girl or woman should obey without question even if, in the process, she loses her identity.

Thobeka is overly submissive; she tends to entertain the superstitious belief that by suffering now she can be better off later. She seems to think that she is destined to suffer in life. According to Baumeister (1991: 43) this idea has strong resonances in religious doctrines that God will comfort the afflicted, or that the next life will compensate people for what they have endured or suffered in this life.

Thobeka is forced by her parents to marry Gugulethu whom she does not love. On the wedding day Gugulethu keeps a dramatic silence when he is eventually asked to repeat the marriage vows by the officiating priest. On the day after the marriage, Gugulethu leaves his home to go to Mthatha to look for work. He stays in Mthatha for twelve years without going home, but Thobeka stays at her homestead with Zwilakhe who is Gugulethu’s father. In this period Thobeka bears three children. Thobeka goes to Mthatha to see her husband. That evening Thobeka and her children are murdered by Gugulethu.

Thobeka’s way of thinking and behaviour shows that she is submissive. How could she go to Gugulethu in Mthatha, knowing fully well that Gugulethu does not love her? How
could she go to Gugulethu with children begotten by another man? Obedience and submission to her father – in-law can only explain such behaviour.

In Mkonto’s Inzonzobila, Mamntakwenda is Dlangisa’s former girlfriend; she bore him a son called Bhongo. Dlangisa ill-treats Nomafa (Mamntakwenda) and this results in the end of their love affair. Mamntakwenda marries Zinzo. Dlangisa wants to take Zinzo’s wife. Though Zinzo is not aware of the actual source of conflict, he does react to Dlangisa’s attacks. Dlangisa insults Zinzo, but Mamntakwenda seems not to find fault with Dlangisa’s preaching. She supports Dlangisa. However, Mamntakwenda is not prepared to leave Zinzo for Dlangisa.

Mamntakwenda has been hiding the truth for the past twenty four years whilst married to her husband. She wants to tell her husband about this issue, but she is afraid. She feels guilty, and she is always crying whenever she thinks about this issue. She admits that she is not going to reveal the secret. The author depicts Mamntakwenda as untrustworthy when it comes to love and marriage:

To put yourself in a situation is bad particularly when you have got yourself into the situation. Shall I tell him about this affair? Shall I disclose my heart? Won’t these problems of mine kill him? For a long time I have borne this pathetic situation. Its twenty four years. For years he has been struggling this oppression. Should I open his eyes, won’t he be blind forever? My eyes are full of salty tears because of these secret affairs. This desolation of Bhongo’s father is unbearable. Especially for me, the instigator of them which is me (she cries). Is there still any chance to confess? Am I not late to confess? There is still time for a person with a guilty conscience. There is still a chance for a person with love and Christianity. I love Qadi so much. I can’t murder him alive with my bare hands. He is part of my soul. Good witchcraft is to save a soul. I’ll bury the secret in my heart. Mine bones will hide it till I die.

What transpires in the above extract is that Mamntakwenda is avoiding deliberate self-harm. Her goal is to escape by deciding that she is not going to reveal the secret to her husband. She prefers not to reveal the secret rather than harm herself. She chooses to suffer as a means toward achieving some attractive desirable goal of staying peacefully with her husband. She is characterized as having self defeating intentions. She wants to avoid unpleasant outcomes as she feels that her image of self is at stake. Mamntakwenda is suffering from painful awareness of self. She is avoiding endangering her well being. This shows a lack of courage in a typically submissive woman. She has never been encouraged to reveal her emotions.
In Mmango’s *UDike noCikizwa*, Nomazala is depicted as submissive. For example, her brother Sando who is a custodian of traditional custom forces his daughter Cikizwa to marry Mjongwa whom she does not love. Cikizwa protests but Nomazala supports her brother:

**UNomazala:** *Lilonke ke utheth’ ukuthi uzimisele ukuyilahla le nyhweba yenzelwa ngubhuti, ekwendisela emzini obhadlileyo kwaNgqike? Yiyiphi intombi enganakuzigobha amacala xa isendela konje umzi ukuba mhle nokufudumala? Yiyiphi intombi engenakutsho ukuba ithe gcobho xaisendela konjena ukuphila nokomelela umfana? Kunjalo nje lo mntwana uwukhuthalele umsebenzi awawufundelayo, ungumlimi wenene.*

(Mmango, 1991: 9)

**UNomazala:** Then you mean to forfeit the honour done to you by my brother in marrying you to the honourable Ngqike family? Which girl cannot be proud of marrying such a beautiful and wealthy family? Which girl cannot stay at ease in luxury when marrying such a healthy, strong young man? Moreover, this young man is dedicated to the profession he has studied for. He is a true agricultural officer.

What is shown in the above extract is the total commitment to parental control in the choice of a life partner. This seems to be the main ideal for Nomazala. When adult children have problems, many parents will not stay out of their arguments. It is clear from
Nomazala’s arguments that it is stereotypical of all mothers to want to see their daughters married at any cost. The obvious reason for Nomazala for submitting to traditional customs here is that she is after money and cattle. Cultural capital reinforces the kinds of relative advantage in society. Nomazala tends to forget that culture is adaptive because it is able to change. She forgets that love comes first when it comes to marriage. Lastly the extract also shows that literature represents the new feelings, the new meanings and the new values about life.

In Mtywaku’s *incwadi ezaye zibhaliwe*, Nontsha’s behaviour changes from radical resistance to submissive toward the reigning culture. She reveals the secret that the letters are written by her. She tells Mzamo that Rose, who is Dolly’s mother, used to be her close friend while they were still studying together at Blythswood College. She once suggested that Rose and her brother (who is Mzamo’s father) should be lovers but to no avail. After Rose has given birth to Dolly she decides to write these letters pretending they are written by Rose in order to spoil their love affair and then she admits to doing this:

*Ndabhala iileta ngesandla sam esifana nesakho ndizibhalela ubhuti ziyimbalelwano ephakathi kwakho nobhuti ngezibulo lwakho noForks zibonisa ukuba enyanisweni umntanawana ngokabhuti. Zezo leta ezi zisuke zamenza indindi umntanomntakwethu. Elokuphetha ndicala uxolo.*

(Mtywaku, 1990: 66)

I wrote the letters myself imitating your handwriting. I wrote them to my brother, and these letters pretended to be correspondence between yourself and my brother in connection with your first born by Forks showing that, truly speaking, the child belonged to my brother. It’s those letters which have confused my brother’s child. At last I am apologizing.
What has happened in the above extract is that Nontsha discloses her condition. In this sense psychological truth is revealed, and self-discovery is attained. The obvious fact about Nontsha’s behaviour here is that guilt makes people feel bad, and it makes them want to stop feeling guilty, and even makes them want to do something positive to offset what they did that made them feel guilty, (Baumeister, 1991: 40). Nontsha after having protested against cultural norms by suggesting that her brother should be Rose’s lover (a radical departure) then apologises as above – thus returning to cultural norms.

A man is prohibited to have sexual relations with his sister. Brothers and sisters come to be viewed as impossible sex partners, who arouse no conscious sex desire at all. We learn to feel shame, guilt and embarrassment when our sex drive causes us to break some of these norms. The implication of all this is that when one culture eliminates what is considered not human, it identifies itself according to its own definition, as human. Cultural identification in this context takes on ultimate power. According to Brooker (1999: 56) the rules which largely contain sexual activity within the family prevent the probable disruptive effects on social order that would result if the sex drive were allowed free play. The content of Nontsha’s letters implies that culture helps us to define who we are, it enables us to work out what links us with others.

4.3 WOMEN WHO ARE CUSTODIANS OF SOCIAL VALUES

In Qangule’s drama, *Amaza*, Mandaba who is Namhla’s mother-in-law, is worried about the manner in which Namhla is behaving. Namhla’s pregnancy while she is still mourning for her husband is exactly what is frustrating her. MaDlamini, who is Namhla’s mother, is worried about Namhla’s bad habit of drinking excessively. She is worried about Namhla’s refusal to marry Duma or Lunga. Both Mandaba and Madlamini feel that Namhla is disgracing them. They try to correct Namhla’s bad behaviour to no avail.

Namhla’s defiance of all taboos that ought to be revered by married women shows that she is a social deviant. Mandaba and Madlamini are typical examples of idealized
African women who go all out to run their households and to introduce Namhla to true womanhood which is characterized by hospitality and generosity. In this context, the woman’s place is seen to be in the home where she is expected to exercise these virtues. Older women are expected to guide younger women into responsible womanhood. As mothers, both Mandaba and Madlamini are performing normal duties assigned to them in traditional society. Both Madlamini and Mandaba are submissive toward some cultural aspects. For example as illiterate women, they take societal and cultural practice so intensely that they think that is the way it should be. They differ from women who believe in non-indigenous values, like Namhla, who feel that they can act in way that is comfortable for them, not according to the oppressive societal expectations of women.

According to Kwatsha (2002: 56,) after the mourning process the woman should remarry. Remarriage was encouraged by custom and folk proverbs. But since widows inherit their husband’s property, there was a considerable restriction placed on who they could marry. The primary interest was in retaining the land in the family and so male elders retain the custom by forcing the widow to remarry within the family. Mandaba and Madlamini force Namhla to follow such a patriarchal custom. This implies that they are submitting to such cultural practices. Namhla challenges these and does not want to submit.

Such women are not yet radical in challenging cultural norms pertaining to the transfer of missionaries rather they are suffering from losing face. Losing face is extremely aversive, and people will go to great lengths to prevent or remedy a loss of face. They will accept substantial costs to accomplish this end, costs large enough to make the response seem irrational and even self defeating. People really will cut off their noses to save their faces (Baumeister, 1991: 51). It is for this reason that women like Matilda do self defeating things in order to avoid a negative view of themselves.
4.4 WOMEN PASSING ON CULTURAL PRACTICES TO THEIR DAUGHTERS AND SONS:

Women are human beings with a triple role to perform in their lives. They perform the task of maintaining discipline in their households; they teach their daughters to keep traditional cultural practices and about how to be good mothers and about how to be good fathers; they mould children’s characters.

In Tamsanqa’s drama Buzani kubawo, Manyawuza is worried about the action taken by her daughter, Nomampondomise who drives away the cattle that are paid as lobola by Mcunukelwa. She does this because Gugulethu has promised to marry her.

Manyawuza: Bekunekho ndlela yimbi
ungazikhupha ngayo kunale le uvela nayo?

Nomampondomise: Andiboni yimbi.

Manyawuza: Uthetha ukuba akuyazi indlela ezikhutshwa ngayo iinkomo?

Nomampondomise: Hayi andiyazi.

Manyawuza: Akuza ukuba iinkomo zikhutshwa ngezinye? Xa umfana ungamfuniyo, yitsho kulo umthandayo akhuphe ezi nkomo.

Tamsanqa, (1995: 49)

Manyawuza: Is there no other way in which you can drive them away than this one?

Nomampondomise: I see no other way.

Manyawuza: Do you want to tell me that you know nothing about how to keep out cattle?

Nomampondomise: No I don’t know.
Manyawuza: Don’t you know that cattle are driven by other cattle. If you don’t love this young man tell the one whom do you love to drive these cattle.

According to Brown-Guillary (1996) as quoted by Kwatsha (2002: 53), the very least a mother who has produced a daughter can do is to make the girl fit enough to obtain a healthy bride price. Women who have many daughters console and congratulate themselves in terms of the expensive bride prices these daughters might bring. It becomes clear from the above mentioned extract that women perform normal duties assigned to them in traditional society. Thus every girl is conscientised right from early girlhood that her destiny is marriage.

A girl’s life is one long preparation for the useful role she is expected to play in society. When she is betrothed to a man, the man’s relations expect her to conform to certain traditions and norms of the family. This implies that once a girl becomes engaged her mother takes an interest in how she sits, speaks, laughs, acts and reacts to situations.

Mtuze (1990: 31) has this to say:

Older women are expected to guide younger women into responsible womanhood. The emphasis is on caring for others by establishing homes that will give succour and solace to all those who need help. In this way the process of socialization is carried from girlhood to womanhood and to senior womanhood. Every girl is conscientised right from early girlhood that her destiny is marriage. She soon has to learn that she cannot pass a certain age without becoming someone’s girlfriend and subsequently his wife.
The above mentioned extract shows that people, in order to live normal lives in reasonable peace must behave in prescribed ways which are acquired during the period of socialization. Culture comprises the way of behaving, it is the way we do things. The mere fact that Manyawuza tells her daughter that cattle are kept out by other cattle shows that as there are many and varied environments, there are also many and varied cultures. Ayisi (1992: 2).

In Mkonto’s drama *Emgxobhozweni*, Hombakazi is worried when she finds her daughter talking to herself after entering the house. She feels that her daughter is frustrated because she can’t get married. She feels that her daughter is too old enough not to be engaged. Nowam tells her son, Thembekile, that he is a grown up adult, therefore he deserves a wife.

Hombakazi’s action and Nowam’s action here show that most commonly in African tradition, old women like to enforce the rules of their patriarchal society upon their daughters and sons. In this manner they are practicing what was practiced towards them by the older women when they were young. They feel that they have the duty to pass on cultural practices from generation to generation. Older women in the society take part in the male socio-cultural advantage to display their power over the powerless young women or girls. In this manner culture according to Ayisi (1992: 2) becomes the ways, mores and beliefs transmitted from generation to generation, it may be generally shared by some population or a group of people in other words, it should represent the collective conscience of a group of people. So mothers are entrusted with the responsibility not only to bear children but also to bring them up to become, in the case of girls, future mothers.

In Mmango’s drama *UDike noCikizwa*, Nomazala also confronts Cikizwa for refusing Mjongwa’s marriage offer. Nomazala tells Cikizwa about her stupidity, she tells her that her father is building a future for her and that Mjongwa’s family is rich. It is evident from Nomazala’s advice that culture can have an active shaping influence upon ideas, attitudes and experience. The obvious fact about Nomazala here is that she is greedy:
Nomazala: Yiyiphi intombi engenakuzigobha
amacala xa isendela konje umzi ukuba
mhle nokufudumala?
(Mmango, 1991: 9)

Which girl cannot be proud of marrying into such a beautiful and wealthy family?

It could be deduced from the above mentioned extract that Nomazala values nothing except the bride-price. Nomazala is dominated by unreasonable cultural norms regarding the choice of a marriage partner. In her view, parental power is so strong that whoever tries to resist it has to face the wrath of public sanction. She is persuading Cikizwa to accept social norms and parental control as the Biblical truth which every girl or woman should obey without question even if, in the process, she loses her identity. To her love means nothing - what counts is the bride-price in the form of a dowry (lobola).

4.5 AFRICAN TRADITIONS WHICH RELEGATE WOMEN TO INFERIOR STAGE STATUS

In Mkonto’s drama Emgxobhozweni, Vakele tells no-Ankile about the visitors who have come from Nondyola to ask for his daughter, Nomonde. He tells her that he called Jingxela, Mfotshoyi and Khwelimfene to come and listen to them. He tells her that his daughter is engaged, she has been asked for by Ngxabi’s home.

No-Ankile is furious. The fact that she has been not invited is exactly what is frustrating her. She feels that her personhood is not felt by her husband. She feels that she should have been invited. Vakele’s response in this regard is that there was no need to invite her as he cannot discuss the marriage issue with his wife:
No-ankile:  
Ke ngoku! Batheni? Ngubani loo mfana? Kwathini ke ningandibizi?
Tyhini Bantu, ilizwe libi, ungathi uhléli nendoda uzicingela ukuba utshatile kanti ungunopopi nje othwaliswe iqhiya.

Vakele:  
Mkonto, (1993: 97)

No-ankile:  
Then, what do they say? Who is that Young man? Then why didn’t you call me? Oh! People! The world is bad, you can stay with a man thinking that you are married whilst in fact you are a doll decorated with a frill.

Vakele:  
This is Nomonde’s home I am her father. The first and the last person to listen to her problem. This affair is a customary affair for it concerns marriage. You came here through the reed mat.

It is clear from the above mentioned extract, that the life of a woman revolves around a circle of domesticity, and it is only within that sphere that a woman was allotted her opportunities for happiness. The obvious fact about No-Ankile’s protest is that she is unable to become a complete person in her household. It is for this reason that she is rebelling against the narrowness of her status and claiming for herself the same rights to self realization as those that have been asserted by men. What is also noticeable from
No-Ankile’s protest is that as women have advanced in the acquisition of an independent existence, women have begun to experience a tension between the goals of autonomy and the values of connection and commitment. No-Ankile is claiming the full status of an individual without losing her identity as a woman.

Vakele’s response shows that patriarchy is based upon man’s obedience to a superior divine will. It also shows that black women are affected by the social construction of sexual identity, and they are affected by African traditions which relegate women to inferior status.

Mtingane in his drama *Inene nasi isibhozo* is also demonstrating the same view that women should be excluded from the marriage issue:

**UMfolo:** Kuhle, ndingakuxholi, usemile njalo, ngaba lityala eli okanye sihlange, ngomcimbi wekhaya, apha kulo mzi namhlanje?

**ULolo:** Sihlanene ngomcimbi wekhaya.

**UMfolo:** Ngaba imicimbi yomzi apha siyixoxa kunye nabafazi?

**ULolo:** Asiyilungisi nabafazi.

**UMfolo:** Lo ke umfazi uza kwaneka umcimbi womzi emadodeni, uza kusanekela ngabuni?

**ULolo:** Kaloku njengomnikazimzi

**UMfolo:** Wethu, mus’ undiyilozena. Asinguwe na iliso lalo mzi akubhubha umkhuluwa wakho?

**UMazwazwa:** Unyanisile umkhuluwa lo. Usisi unokubizwa sithi xa kuh’ into esifuna ukuyiqonda.

**UMfolo:** (Ekhomba uLolo) khangele ndiyakunyola ngoku. Xa axoxayo ke amadoda, aphikisana de anyolane. Uthi ke wena uMasukude makanyolane noyisezala kunye nabakhuluwa

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bakhe apha? Tyhini, bafondini! Ngooban’ aba baza kubhenguzelwa ngeelokhwe? (kuMasukude)
Masukude, thatha i-emele uyokukha amanzi, upheke, sakukubiza xa sikufuna.
Mtingane, (1965: 24)

UMfolo: Well, without interrupting, whilst you are still on the floor, is this about a sermon or just a domestic squabble in this house today?
ULolo: We are meeting over a family matter.
UMfolo: Do we settle them in the presence of women?
ULolo: Mind you, she is the home owner.
UMfolo: Man, don’t bumble! Aren’t you the caretaker in this home after the death of your elder brother?
UMazwazwa: My elder brother is telling the truth.
My sister-in-law may be called when there’s something that we need to clarify.
UMfolo: (pointing at Lolo) Look I’m waving a finger at you now. When men engage in serious talk, the exchange even leads to the waving of fingers. Are you saying Masukude must wave fingers at her fathers-in-law, and brothers-in-law, gentlemen! Who would tolerate women flashing their dresses among us? (to Masukude) Masukude, take a bucket and go fetch water and cook, we shall call you when we need you.

In Xhosa culture, a man is characterized by attributes which give him all the authority and superiority. For example if a wife is arguing with her husband she is expected to
withdraw as soon as her husband looks at her angrily and she will be told that the woman was condemned even in the Bible therefore he will not be dictated to by her. A father’s word is final; a mother never speaks up against her husband and, just like children, she has to obey her husband’s instructions.

What is shown clearly in the above extract is that women hardly hold a higher status than children in their homesteads. Giddens (1990: 378), contends that it is not biology as such that ascribes women their status in society, but the way in which every culture defines and evaluates female biology. In every society, a higher value is placed on culture than on nature. Culture is the means by which man controls and regulates nature.

According to Xhosa culture there is a clear-cut hierarchy of authority. Man is in the position of highest authority. Xhosa culture consists of the “do’s” and “don’ts” of social life. It consists of the values the member of a given group hold, the norms they follow. Norms are rules which people are expected to observe. For example, in Xhosa culture, a man is permitted to have several wives, a woman is not allowed to have several husbands simultaneously. In Xhosa culture defiance of taboos that ought to be revered by married women is not allowed. There are cultural norms regarding the choice of a marriage partner. Parental power is so strong that whoever tries to resist it has to face the wrath of the ancestors. In Xhosa society the woman is the left hand of her husband, matters should therefore not be left to her completely because she is the weaker hand: the household will not prosper all the foundations that had been laid will crumble.

Women are seen as closer to nature than man and therefore as inferior to men. Men are not dominant over women as a result of superior physical strength, or any special intellectual powers but because, before the development of birth control, women were at the mercy of their biological constitution. Frequent pregnancy and continuous caring for infants, made them dependent on males.
4.6 THE INFLUENCE OF EUROPEAN CULTURE ON BLACK WOMEN

It has been impossible to neglect the influence of European culture, because Xhosa drama, like any other drama, has borrowed from European culture. (Sirayi, 1993: 24).

In Qangule’s drama, Amaza, Namhla who is Sidima’s wife is caught redhanded by her father busy dancing with Lizo in her room. Namhla’s father comments with regard to Namhla’s behaviour.

*Ndithi mandinazise MaBhele ukuba ndifike ingqeqe kaVaxa ijoja uNamhla xa bendivela kuzonwabela etywaleni.*

Qangule (1974: 7)

I felt I should summon you, men of the Bhele clan. I found Vaxa’s dog smelling Namhla on my return from drinking beer.

Namhla’s behaviour causes a lot of dissatisfaction in the community. According to our traditional culture when a woman loses her husband, she is supposed to mourn for nine months. (Kwatsha, 2002: 50). Namhla becomes pregnant before the period of mourning is expired. She is not ashamed of her action, she is proud of her love affair with Lizo. Thus she says:

*Angadlokova amaza, konke kobetha kudlule, asale uLizo eliwele lam lomphefumlo.*

Qangule (1988: 46)

Sea waves can be rolling, all will pass, and Lizo will remain my spiritual twin.
Namhla is told that amaCirha would like her to retain the name of her husband. She is given the option of marrying Duma or Lunga. She is told that her refusal will disturb the ancestors and she is not allowed to offend the ancestors. Namhla refuses to follow such a traditional custom. AmaCirha summons a meeting to discuss Namhla’s behaviour. The traditionalists feel that they must apologize to the ancestors for Namhla’s behaviour, she must be fetched from her homestead. On her arrival at home, sorghum beer should be brewed and a goat should be slaughtered, and an initiation ceremony (intonjane) should be carried out for her. Modernists maintain that Namhla is a Christian, she has been baptized, therefore the slaughtering of a goat and the brewing of sorghum beer are against the doctrines of the church.

The Traditionalists dispute the modernists’s viewpoint maintaining that polygamous marriage has its roots in the Bible. Thus the author says:

UYuda wathi kuAnam, yiya kumfazi womkhuluwa wakho umngene, umvelisele imbewu umkhuluwa wakho.

Qangule (1994: 71):

Then Judah said to Onam lie with your brother’s wife and fulfill your duty to her as a brother in-law to produce offspring for your brother.

The Traditionalists organize a feast to apologize to their ancestors; they are worshipping their ancestors. On the other hand Namhla is busy worshipping God, singing a hymn and praying. Namhla is not prepared to marry either Duma or Lunga. Her response in this regard is that her husband is Lizo:

Eyam indoda nguLizo Vaxa qha ke.

Qangule (1988: 57)

My own husband is Lizo Vaxa that is all.
It may be deduced from the above discussion that the Africans have assimilated the culture of the Europeans in going against custom to marry a man of choice. We notice a clash between a traditional culture and Western culture.

It also transpires from the above mentioned arguments that only women can theorise their oppression, because women’s roles in families vary according to culture and historical circumstances. Mandaba’s behaviour shows that one culture eliminates what is considered not human, it identifies itself according to its own definition as human, cultural identification in such a context takes over ultimate power (Payne, 1997:129).

In Mbulawa’s drama *Mamfene*, Noqinile supports her husband in toppling the church leaders. She wants to get rid of pastor Kheswa and his wife. She suggests that they should be killed with poison, using soda for this purpose. Jiphi will have to prepare food for them and add soda to it. Thobi eats poisonous food which has been put aside for killing Kheswa and Nobantu. Jezula blames his wife for being careless with the poisonous food:

*Ubutheni wena ukuze ubeke ithyefu esichengeni?*

Mbulawa (1994:90)

Why did you put poison so carelessly?

Noqinile and Jezula are attempting to fight and win the conflict. This signals a developing strength of will on their part. As people who are suffering a loss of face they feel obliged to look for revenge. Their action implies responsibility. Self blame adds another dimension to personal misfortune. They are disappointed with themselves.

In Mntingane’s drama *Inene nasi isibhozo*, Masukude is told about the decision taken by the family members that it is Themba who is going to marry first by virtue of being the older son. She is worried about this decision and she is not pleased with it. She goes to her best friend NoAyini, to get advice. Masukude is determined to prevent Themba’s
marriage. She convinces herself that Themba will marry over her dead body. NoAyini gives her poison. She also kills Vuma, but by mistake, for the poison that kills Vuma was intended for Lolo. Eventually Masukude hangs herself.

In Ngani’s drama Umkhonto kaTshiwo innocent women are victimized for witchcraft. There is no proof that they are bewitching people. The punishment of the innocent, unfortunate women characters is not a punitive stage involving the ancestors who are not responsible for the punishment because Dubulegeqa is not an authentic doctor. He is just exploiting the superstition of the people. The is no absolute proof that they, the” witches” did cause the sickness, therefore the ancestors cannot be held responsible for their punishment. The victimization of innocent women shows that culture is a whole way of life of a society, its beliefs, attitudes and temper as expressed in the traditionally defined forms, (Hawthorn, 1998:61).

In the case of Mntingane’s drama and Mbulawa’s drama it is evident that the sphere of culture embraces a wide range of activities. In these dramas there is absolute proof that these women are witches, they are killing people deliberately. The kind of people we are either as group or individually emerges from the wide diversity of cultural practices in which we participate. Culture helps us to define who we are (Payne, 1997: 126). Masukude and Noqinile’s actions show that some woman characters are seen as representing Satan, cruelty, witchcraft, darkness and chaos, as whores of Babylon: a misogynist’s viewpoint!.

4.7 CULTURAL CLASH OF TRADITIONAL AND MODERN IDEAS

The analysis of culture in this section is based on cultural clash of traditional and modern ideas. The following plays will be considered:

Buzani kubawo: Tamsanqa
Amaza : Qangule
UDike noCikizwa: Mmango
In this section the researcher wishes to examine the influence of culture on women characters. This section also deals with our traditional, patriarchal recognized form of marriage. I wish to express the idea that parents according to our traditional custom used to be the only adults who could initiate and effectively carry all the negotiations necessary for a valid marriage satisfactory to both families.

Parents had to seek out a bride for their son, a bridegroom for their daughter. They could make heavy demands in the form of a dowry (lobola cattle). Such restriction always gives rise to cultural clash of traditional and modern ideas.

Soga (1931: 227) as quoted by Sirayi (1993: 83) has this to say:

Being traditional does not mean being static. From time immemorial African marriage as a dynamic relationship between the parents and their children, for he says that it was customary in early times for the father of a marriageable daughter to look around for a suitable husband for her. If they found one they would send him an assegai. This was regarded as a proposal of marriage. If the young man was not interested, he would return the assegai, if he were interested he kept the assegai. Marriage was always negotiated, except in the case of “ukuthwala”.

The obvious fact about Magaba, in Tamsanqa’s drama Buzani kubawo, is that she leads and her husband Zwilakhe follows. For example Magaba attends a wedding at Mgoqo’s homestead. She sees Thobeka who is Mcothama’s daughter; she is impressed but Thobeka’s behaviour and her dignity. She decides that Thobeka could be a suitable wife for her son Gugulethu. On her arrival at her homestead in the evening both Magaba and her husband Zwilakhe are debating preparation and arrangements for Gugulethu’s marriage. Magaba suggests the name of Thobeka, which Zwilakhe also agrees to:
Zwilakhe: Ukutsho ke uthi makazeke?
Magaba: Bezilapho ezam ingcinga Rhadebe, andazi ke wena nokuba ubunolunye uluvo olwahlukileyo kolwam kusini na?
Zwilakhe: Hayi eneneni akukho nto ndingayichasayo nam kule nto, kuba ngenene mdala uGugulethu, uyintanga yokuba anganaye umfazi.

Zwilakhe: Do you suggest that he should get married?
Magaba: That is what I have been thinking Rhadebe. Do you have a different opinion?
Zwilakhe: In fact, I am not opposed to this idea, because it is true that Gugulethu is old enough to be married. He has reached the stage where he needs a wife.
Magaba: When do you think he should be informed? We should not delay. Let us attend to this matter immediately.

The above mentioned dialogue shows that Magaba is leading her husband and it expresses Magaba’s concern and parental love for her son. Magaba wants Gugulethu to marry Thobeka, an uneducated woman whom he does not love, forgetting that Gugulethu belongs to modern times and he is a college student. Therefore it is possible that Gugulethu will not accept their advice. Magaba is insensitive to her son’s needs:
Magaba: Mna ndifuna intombi kaMcothama.

Zwilakhe: Uza kuxelelwa ndim intombi amakaze
nayo kulo wakowethu umzi intombi eza
kundondla.

Magaba: Mna zinkosi andikhathali nokuba umntu
uchasa ade alale ngomqolo phantsi, ndifuna
intombi kaMcothama ize kurhuqa amajalimani
kule nkundla nokuba sekumnyam’entla.

Zwilakhe: Yena umfana uza kuzeka intombi kaMcothama.
Loo nto ndiza kuyimela.

Tamsanqa (1995: 23)

Magaba: As for me, I want Mcothama’s daughter.

Zwilakhe: He will be told by me who to marry in
this household and his bride must be a girl
who will be prepared to feed me.

Magaba: Personally I do not care what anyone says.
Regardless of opposition I want Mcothama’s
daughter to wear the bride’s attire in this family,
raining or not.

Zwilakhe: He is going to marry Mcothama’s daughter.
I am going to insist on that. I do not care
what anyone says. I have said that he is going
to marry the girl of my choice and he is going
to do so.

Sometimes women may be influential, they may easily persuade their husbands. Magaba’s action in leading on her husband falsifies the African belief that the man is the head of the family and his word is final. In the above mentioned extract, it is Magaba who dominates the debate about Gugulethu’s marriage. Magaba’s action here indicates that men may sometimes be subordinated to women. Magaba differs from the rural
woman who are often depicted as subordinate, dependent and passive. She is not living in mortal terror of her husband. This alone suggests that African women can still organize and confront the problems of gender inequality in their own cultures.

Magaba feels that marriage should be blessed by the parents. Parents should take the initiative in marriage arrangements as they are like Gods of the homestead:

*Oonyana neentombi zabantu ngezi mini bayabhutyuza abakwenzayo ngenxa yokuba kaloku kubanjwe amasiko asezintlangeni kwayekwa awasemakhaya. Kanti ke ngoko zazingekho ezi zinto zenzeka ngale mihla. La manyundululu okuqhawulwa kwemitshato, kuba kaloku umtshato ubuyinto ezukileyo, usikelelekile, kuba usekwe ngabazali ooThixo bomzi.*

Tamsanqa (1995: 9)

Presently youngsters are creating blunder after blunder because they tend to follow the cultures of other nations, ignoring their own culture. This tendency has resulted in high rate of divorce, something which was not common during the olden days as marriage used to be blessed and respected. Parents used to take the initiative in marriage arrangements like Gods of the homestead.

Magaba’s comments show that culture is the expression of the society’s aesthetic and moral values. Culture in the above mentioned extract becomes a measure of civilization, at its best, enhancing and enabling human existence. Magaba is blaming the youngsters for adopting the culture of other nation. Lee and Hua (1997: 64) contend that when we refuse a culture, we are refusing to be cured of our illness. It’s a mistake to think that cultural advantages can be simply moved from one culture into the other. Magaba convinces Nozipho about the value and the norms of the past. The above extract show
that literature means compositions that tell stories which link us with the cultural world of which we are part (Roberts, 1987: 2).

Gugulethu refuses to marry Thobeka in accordance with his mother’s suggestion. He embarks on a social protest which amounts to a silent protest. He employs emotive language to register his disapproval of the marriage being forced on him. His emotional outburst is followed by the death of his best friend, Mzamo. The death of Mzamo is the first misfortune. Magaba deserves the blame for this misfortune because she suggested the name of Thobeka, Zwilakhe cannot be blamed for this: it is Magaba who rejects an African custom as practiced by a particular community. Her notion of enforcing or persuading Zwilakhe to force Gugulethu to marry Thobeka, whom he does not love, should not be viewed as being in line with the customs of the community, which has the right to decide such matters. Magaba and her husband do more harm than good by trying to dominate other characters by preventing them from exercising their own judgement.

Gugulethu’s failure to marry Nomampondomise results in court case which is followed by the death of Nomampondomise. These incidents are meant to warn Magaba and her husband that misfortunes may befall their household. Magaba’s obstinacy leads to the death of Thobeka, the wife forced on Gugulethu by her. Due to Magaba’s obstinacy, Gugulethu brutally kills Thobeka and her children. Magaba commits suicide and Gugulethu receives the death sentence.

All the misfortunes in Tamsanqa’s drama may be attributed to the wrath of the ancestors, which descend upon Magaba, because she is the first person to defy the opinion of the male members of the family as endorsed by the ancestors, that marriage issues should be negotiated between prospective in-laws. What is decided by the community is blessed by the ancestors. The ancestors are considered part of the ongoing cycle of life and are directly concerned with the activities and fertility of the living Graham-White (1974: 43). Magaba’s death should be regarded as a purgative, she is cleansed in order to meet the unseen forces. It is important to note that Magaba repents before she dies.
Magaba’s actions from the beginning to the end of Tamsanqa’s drama show that families particularly those based on traditional ideologies and practices are tension-filled arenas: *loci* of struggle and domination between genders.

4.8. WOMEN WHO MANIPULATE THEIR HUSBANDS:

*AMA*Xhosa *akholelw* u*kuba umfazi lo usisandla* sasekholo endodeni yakhe, ekungafunekiy*o ke* u*kuba kuyekelwe kuye ngokugqibeleyo esisona* sandla sibuthathaka, kuba wosuka umzi ungahlumi kudilike nolo dongana beluse luqaliwe.*

(Mtuze, 1990: 62)

“The amaXhosa believe that the woman is the left hand of her husband, matters should therefore not be left to her completely as she is the weaker hand: the household would not prosper and the foundations that had been laid will crumble”.

In order to demonstrate this view, in this section the researcher is going to concentrate on the following women’s behaviours; No-ankile, Magaba, Masukude, Noqinile and Namhla.

In Mkonto’s drama *Emgxobhozweni*, No-Ankile wants to control her husband. Her husband is complaining about the shortage of money whenever she comes back in the evening after closing the shop. No-Ankile tells her husband that she suspects Vakele’s daughter, Nomonde of the shortage. Vakele is furious when his wife talks about his daughter. It is for this reason that No-Ankile decides that she is going to explore other avenues in order to manipulate her husband. The following extracts highlights all this:
**No-ankile:**

*Uthi mandivale mba amehlo am.*

*Ndibe ngathi andibonanga ndibona?*

*Buphi ke ubufazi apha kum xa ndinokwenza njalo?*

*Heyi! Le ndoda ngumthombonzulu!*

*Tyhini! Bafazi! Bendithi ndiyiggibile.*

*Ndimbonile ngoku apho akhoyo.*

*Kuza kufuneka ndibhinqele phezulu.*

*Uyazi ukuba ndiphantse ukulala.*

*Aliphandlwa kabini khona sekwatshiwo.*

*Ukusa akufiki kabini ukuvusa umntu.*

*Linye qha, amasi agcadiwe elangeni.*

*Indoda le ithi mna, nomzi ngowam.*

*Ndim kula mnyango, ndim entla.*

(Mkonto, 1993: 3 – 4)

**No-ankile:**

You say I must close my eyes and pretend

I saw nothing? Where would be my womanhood if I did that?

This man is a deep fountain!

Women! I thought I had finished him.

I have seen where he is.

I must pull up my socks.

I was almost asleep.

Twice bitten, twice shy, but

morning doesn’t come twice to awaken someone. This is the day: sour milk is made by

the sun. The husband is mine, the house is mine.

I am at the door, I am the inner most.
In Tamsanqa’s drama Buzani kubowo, Magaba also manipulates her husband. She leads her husband in the talk about the girl to be married by Gugulethu. Magaba and Zwilakhe are debating the preparation and arrangements for Gugulethu’s marriage. Magaba suggests the name of Thobeka, which Zwilakhe also agrees to. The following extract shows that Magaba’ word is final and nobody can oppose it:

Magaba: Mna zinkosi andikhathali nokuba umuntu uchasa ade alale ngomqolo phantsi, ndifuna intombi kaMcothama ize kurhuqa amajalimani kule nkundla nokuba sekumnyam’entla.


Magaba: Personally I do not care what anyone says. Regardless of opposition I want Mcothama’s daughter to wear the bride’s attire in this family, raining or not.

In Mtingane’s drama Inene Nasi isibhozo, Masukude is told by the members of her family that Themba is going to get married before Vuma does. Masukude is worried about this decision. She is determined to prevent Themba’s marriage:

Masukude: Uyakutshata ndifile.

Mtingane (1987: 3).

He will get married over my dead body.

In Mbulawa’s drama Mamfene, Noqinile also usurps her husband’s powers. She encourages her husband to mishandle the church funds. She also supports her husband in his intention to topple the church leadership. She persuades her husband to persuade the community to elect Nyophoza as a missionary. Noqinile’s manipulation of her husband is manifested by the following extract:
Noqinile:  Masicuntsule kule malana sinayo
yenkongozelo sense intwana yamambawu
phaya kwaNduna.

Mbulawa, (1994: 24)

Let us take a bit of money from the
small church collection and brew some
sorghum beer at Nduna’s homestead.

In Qangule’s drama, Amaza, Namhla also manipulates her husband. She is not ashamed
to insult her husband:

Namhla:  Ucikoza kangangokukaSathana!
Ndiyeke!  Suka kum!  Nja!  Nja!

Qangule, (1974: 21)

You speak just like Satan!
Let me alone! Get away from me!
Dog! Dog!

We notice that the attitude of women in all the above mentioned extracts is surprising,
considering that women internalize a subservient role from childhood: they are reacting
violently to the expectations of society. The overwhelming power of internalization is
articulately expressed by Rosaldo and Lamphere (1974: 1) as quoted by Mtuze (1990:
66).

We have become increasingly aware of sexual inequalities
in economic, social and political institutions and are
seeking ways to fight them. A first step in that direction
involves recognition that in learning to be women in our
society, we have accepted, and even internalized, what is too often a derogatory and constraining image of ourselves.

It is evident from the behaviour of the women mentioned from the above extracts that in many cases men can be manipulated by their wives. Of course, it is indeed right that a married couple should live in harmony and unity as people who love each other, advising each other on various issues affecting them, rather than the tendency by some heads of families to accept without question any advice by their wives even when such advice will clearly lead to destruction.

4.9 SOCIAL DEVIANCY

Matilda, in Mbulawa’s *Mamfene*, is portrayed as a prodigal mother as in Qangule’s drama. The legacy of Matilda’s deviant motherhood can be seen in Jezula’s bad behaviour. Jezula receives a transfer letter which orders him to transfer from Mamfene to Stofeltown. He is not prepared to relinquish his post and go to Stofeltown. Matilda supports him in toppling the church leaders for Jezula conspires against pastor Kheswa and Matilda does not protest against her son’s behaviour. She insists that Pastor Kheswa should be chased away:

*Makagxothwe.*


He must be chased away.

She helps Noqinile and Jiphi to remove pastor Kheswa’s furniture. Matilda assists Jezula in planning arson. Matilda is portrayed as a social deviant. Ayisi (1992: 4) contends that culture has acquired other meanings, besides those given to it by sociologists. Culture may have some emotive quality semantically. Thus we hear of people being described as cultured or uncultured. This refers to whether or not a person is socially adjusted or refined or civilized or is culturally deviant or a misfit. Matilda is frowned upon by Christians because of her so-called destructive activities.
Such women are not yet radical in challenging cultural norms pertaining to the transfer of missionaries rather they are suffering from losing face. Losing face is extremely aversive, and people will go to great lengths to prevent or remedy a loss of face. They will accept substantial costs to accomplish this end, costs large enough to make the response seem irrational and even self defeating. People really will cut off their noses to save their faces (Baumeister, 1991: 51). It is for this reason that women like Matilda do self defeating things in order to avoid a negative view of themselves.

4.10 THE BREACH OF TRADITIONAL CUSTOM BY MASUKUDE

This section is based on the breach of traditional custom. Mtingane’s drama, Inene nasi isibhozo, will be considered. There are the following beliefs: Umzi kaXhosa ngumzi wesithembu: culturally and traditionally polygamy is accepted, the intervention of the ancestors may easily lead to the punishment of the guilty character, misfortune befalls the wrong-doer, anything which disturbs the harmony has a cause and has to be accounted for, according to the Africans, death does not mean extinction, the death continue to live in a world into which death does not enter, Masukude has violated the laws of the supreme being and nation, therefore she deserves death.

Before discussing the breach of traditional custom by Masukude in Mtingane’s drama, let me state briefly that Masukude is a clan name, a clan name is given to all married women according to their clans, houses and next of kin. This practice is usually determined by region. In some regions the prefix “ma” is used and in some regions “no” is used (Sirayi 1993: 97). According to Soga (1931: 241) as quoted by (Sirayi, 1993: 97):

When a woman marries she is given a new name. The choice of a name for a married woman is comparatively a simple matter as there is a wide field and limitless subjects from which to make selection. Among the amaXhosa the
names of animate and inanimate objects and mere words coined for their sounds are taken advantage of.

Masukude is not the character’s original name, it is just a name she has got through marriage.

Njinge has lost his wife due to natural causes. He decides to marry a second wife called Masukude who gives birth to a son called Vuma. Masukude ill-treats Themba who is Njinge’s first son from his first wife to such an extent that Themba decides to leave home and go to Cape Town. He stays in Cape Town for seven years. This length of time assures Masukude that Themba will never come back again. Masukude persuades Vuma to get married before Themba returns. Masukude is very angry when Themba returns home, and she vows that Themba will not get married before Vuma does:

*Uya kutshata ndifile.*

(Mtingane, 1965: 32)

He will get married over my dead body.

Masukude’s vow results in a state of disorder among the members of the family. A meeting is summoned by Lolo to debate Masukude’s contention that Vuma must get married before Themba, his elder brother. Masukude’s suggestion is rejected by the Khwalo camp because such a course is alien to African culture.

The rejection of Masukude’s suggestion here implies that every culture contains a large number of guidelines which direct conduct in particular situations. Such guidelines are known as norms. A norm is specific guide to action, which defines acceptable and appropriate behaviour in particular situations (Haralambos, 1885: 5).

Masukude is told that a woman is always excluded when the community is deliberating matrimonial issues. She is chased away from the meeting by Mfolo. It is evident from
Mfolo’s action here that according to our traditional culture, women are subordinate to male authority, they are largely excluded from positions of power. Literature thus shows that it is vehicle for ideas, a reflection of social reality not the incarnation of some transcendental truth (Eagleton, 1983: 48)

Masukude is determined to prevent Themba’s marriage. She goes to No-Ayini who gives her some poison. The next incident is the death of Themba who is poisoned by Masukude.

The dominant stage of Mtingane’s drama is what may be called the punitive stage. This is the phase within the cyclic structure of the play which calls for the intervention of the ancestors in order to punish the guilty character who has brought about misfortune. Usually this misfortune is ascribed to the violation of society’s law or the breach of tradition. Hodgson (1985: 11) as quoted by Sirayi (1993: 109) claims that anything which disturbs the harmony has a cause and has to be accounted for.

Masukude tries to escape her punishment which the people of the village assume to be sent by the ancestors. In her attempt to escape the punishment, she kills her son Vuma, by mistake. She also kills Lolo with an axe. Vuyiswa also dies. The wrath of the ancestors caused Masukude to reap the consequences of her actions. Her death by suicide can be regarded as part of her punishment. Although punishment is essential, it does not mean that the ancestors derive pleasure from inflicting it. It is meant to transform the character of the wrong doer or to effect change.


It must be understood that the punitive phase of the plot is not a sadistic orgy where spirits derive pleasure from meeting out punishment. Perhaps something traumatic, such as severe punishment, is essential to effect character change or transformation.
According to African belief, death does not mean extinction. The dead continue to live in a world into which death does not enter. However, there is no direct communication between the dead and the living. The dead never forget the living. Although Masukude has violated the laws of the supreme being or nation, her death or punishment is interpreted, in the African context, as a cleansing. Her undesirable traits have been cleansed by death in order that she may be accepted into the world of the gods. After death, Masukude is returned home to her kith and kin, and she receives proper burial. This proper burial should be attributed to the influence of European culture. Reconciliation takes place. Both reformation and rehabilitation take place after death.

In concluding this section about the breach of traditional culture or custom my personal feeling is that some of our customs are beliefs which are passed on from generation to generation and they should be abolished. Especially if one may consider the fact that we are now living in the world of democracy. Relativity of culture must be acknowledged, but there still needs communication and negotiation between different cultures in order to achieve standards and social consensus. Serious regard needs to be given to variation, renewal and progress within our traditional cultures. Elderly people must be prepared to compromise, they must not be rigid, they must always consider that culture is dynamic. Any culture that does not fit into the normative system of a group must be abolished. It could be for this notion that Mtingane closes his play with the following message:

Amasiko enziwa mhla mnene, kule mihla athanda ukuxaka.

Mtingane, (1965: 66)

Customs which were formulated long ago, nowadays they tend to be problematic.
4.11 CONCLUSION

This chapter has shown that the concept “culture” is an elusive concept because it means different things to different people. It is that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, law and habits acquired by people as members of society, Ayisi (1992: 2). This implies that culture entails everything which contributes to the survival of people comprising both physical factors and sociological factors. It is the way of behaving, it is the way we do things.

However this chapter has also shown that since nature is itself a human abstraction, it too has a history, in which in turn means that it is part of culture. The concept “culture” is used to refer to individual style or character, a stage of artistic or intellectual development, to the expressive life and traditions of a social group, to a social historical moment or a broad epoch.

It has been shown in this chapter that the woman is seen as the left hand of her husband but in many cases men can be manipulated by their wives while giving them the impression that the men themselves initiated the desired action. Some women are oppressed by their husbands, but they are fighting for their rights. Women who desire change are demonized as bad women. Rural women are often depicted as subordinate, dependent and passive, living in mortal terror of their husbands.

The breach of traditional custom will always be depicted as giving rise to the wrath of the ancestors. The Blacks have assimilated the European culture.

One of the researcher’s findings in this chapter is that culture is always a collective phenomenon, because it is at least partly, shared with people who live or lived within the same environment which is where it was learned. It is the collective programming of the mind, which distinguishes the members of one group or category of people from another. The implication about all this is that the dominant life style of a society influences the degree to which particular cultural forms gain expression.
It is culture which helps us to define who we are which can enables us to work out what links us with others. The kind of people we are as a group and individually emerges from the wide diversity of cultural practices in which we participate. People describe their identity only by belonging to a particular state. The cultural identity of a group is always determined by their national identity.
CHAPTER 5
A CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF WOMEN’S SELF ASSERTION IN SELECTED XHOSA DRAMAS

5.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter critically analyses women’s self assertion in some Xhosa dramas. Let me first define the concept ‘self-assertion’. One cannot assume that any particular form of behaviour will fall under or outside the rubric of assertion: one needs a clearer understanding of the different values attached to the concept of assertion. This will help to make sense of the different reactions to “assertion” in women.

Assertion as a social construct has many and varied meanings. As constructed in the creative literature, assertion is defined as a communication style concerned with the expression of personal rights to protect oneself and maintain one’s equality, without aggression. It is a communication style concerned with the use of social power and influence, including aggression, to achieve one’s own ends. Wilson and Gallois, (1993: 156) further contend that a wide range of skills and behaviours, from the restrained expressions of personal rights to aggressive “get my way” behaviour, is therefore labelled as assertive.

The importance of self-expression in defining assertion is of great significance although differences are evident in the purpose for which self-expression is used. In the creative literature, assertive self expression is endorsed predominantly as an end in its own right. This implies that the main goal is the act of self-expression itself. In the popular literature however, assertive self expression is predominantly aimed at satisfying self interest and influencing others in accord with one’s own needs, (Wilson and Gallois, 1993: 156).

This chapter aims at showing that assertion may evoke for men a concern with power and self-interest and a lack of concern for others. The same term for women puts more emphasis on differences in social power.
In this chapter I wish to express the notion that socially appropriate behaviour is not merely the expression of personal rights, but rather the expression of rights accompanied by the active expression of obligations. Behaving appropriately, particularly in high threat situations, is a difficult task. In negative situations women may experience tension and difficulty between meeting their own needs and the needs of others. For both men and women, behaving appropriately should be perceived to be a function of three things: finding an appropriate balance between showing concern for self and others, between task achievement and relationship development and between direct and indirect styles of solving the conflict. (Wilson and Gallois, 1993: 156).

In discussing women’s self-assertion one cannot avoid defining the concept “self”. According to Baumeister, (1991: 1) the self is what we invoke, “I am a woman”. Self contains thoughts, feelings, intentions, personality, the key ingredients of personal fulfillment and the solutions to many of life’s problems.

Self can be understood as a physical entity overlaid with meaning. Self is endowed with needs and wants. Another major part of the self is quest for control. This implies that the self wants to believe itself to be in control of its environment, of its relationships with others, and of itself.

When real control fails, women develop illusions of control, they show pleasure in mastery. When women are deprived of control, they exhibit irritation, resentment, helplessness even illness and death. The self is closely linked to one’s emotional repertoire, pride, shame, guilt, anger, sadness, and many other emotions. The self is also linked to many standards. These include norms, values, expectations and goals. Women have idealized concepts of how they would like to be and they usually evaluate their activities by discrepancies between what they are and what they would like to be. Women also feel obligations and responsibilities, and if their actions violate these, they feel distress. (Baumeister, 1991: 2).
Women have recently come to place a higher emphasis on self than on marriage and family. To be a good wife, you had to be able to sustain a good marriage. Marriage is always evaluated on the basis of its contribution to women’s satisfaction. If the marriage is constraining, it is the wife’s right and even duty to get out of it. This implies that marriage should serve the self. The way women think of themselves is heavily dependent on their culture. Women do things in order to maintain a proper image of self for themselves. Women struggle to gain prestigious credentials.

5.2 WOMEN WHO WANT TO LIVE IN PRISON

In this section I want to express the idea that across distance and boundaries in history and society women have been placed on pedestals as goddesses, but imprisoned within domestic injustice. Custom has been nothing but a tyrant hidden in every home. In literature women have been owned used and worked as horses, even today (Ogundipe, 1989: 27).

In Tamsanqa’s drama, Buzani kubawo, Thobeka in her marriage appears to be fond of living in prison. In this drama, Thobeka becomes a victim of patriarchal practices. Patriarchy is a system of social structures and practices in which men dominate, oppress and exploit women.

Thobeka has been forced by her parents to marry Gugulethu whom she does not love. On the following day after the wedding Gugulethu left home to work in Mthatha. He does not come back home. He has spent twelve years there without going home. In this period Thobeka bears three children. Because Gugulethu does not come back home Gugulethu’s father Zwilakhe then sends Thobeka and the children to be with Gugulethu in Mthatha. That evening Gugulethu decides to murder all of them.
Thobeka’s way of thinking and behavior is unusual. Her thinking here shows that she is prepared to live in prison, to be the victim of patriarchal practices. Thobeka’s way of thinking is set in inflexible standards not of her choosing. She is unable to entertain new ideas or alternative ways of looking at things. She is dominated by rigid thinking.

Thobeka forgets that marriage is always evaluated on the basis of its contribution. For example if the marriage is constraining, it is the wife’s right and even duty to get out of it. Thobeka does not think that marriage should serve the self. There is no reason for Thobeka to choose suffering when she could escape or avoid it except that she is constrained by custom and is unable to assert herself.

Baumeister, (1991:12) has the following to say in connection with the above mentioned arguments:

To escape from the self is to free oneself of the struggle to maintain a certain image. It means to dodge the pressures, demands, obligations and other factors that plague the modern self and make life stressful. This may be an attempt to get rid of unhappy feelings, or it may be a rest break from the daily struggle, or it may be a first step toward creating an entirely new self.

Baumeister (1991: 14) further contends that people have escapist impulses simply because of stressful concerns in life. But the need to escape from oneself is not the same as the need to escape from problems, oppressive conditions or life stress in general.

In Mmango’s drama, **UDike noCikizwa**, Nomazala is also imprisoned by traditional customs, norms and values:
UNomazala: Lilonke ke utheth’ ukuthi
uzimisele ukuyilahla le nyhweba uyenzelwa
ngubhuti, ekwendisela emzini obhadlileyo
kwaNgqike? Yiyiphi intombi engenakuzigobha
amacala xa isendela konje umzi ukuba
mhle nokufudumala? Yiyiphi intombi engenakutsho
ukuba ithe gcobho xa isendela konjena
ukuphila nokomelala umfana? Kunjalo nje lo
mntwana uwukhuthalele umsebenzi
awawufundelayo ungumlimi wenene.

UCikizwa: Ubuhle nokufudumala komzi, ukuphila
nokomelela komfana asizona zinto
zinganditsalela ekwendeni. Eyona nto
luthando.

UNomazala: Yeha ke Bantu bakwaDlambula! Umdala
ungaka nje kanti usacinga ngezinto
zendlalo yobuntwana, uthando? Yhu tana!
Ungakhe uphinde uyithethe mntwini le nto
uya kuhlazeka uhlekwe ngaphezulu.
Ligqithile elo xesha lobumntwana kuwe ngoku.
(Mmango, 1991: 9 – 10)

UNomazala: Then you mean to forfeit the honour
done by my brother marrying you to the
honourable Ngqike family? Which girl would
be proud of marrying in to such a beautiful
and wealthy family? Which girl would not be
at ease in luxury when marrying such
a healthy, strong young man? And moreover, this
young man is dedicated to the profession he has studied for. He is a true agricultural officer.

UCikizwa: Handsomeness and wealth of a homestead or how healthy and strong a young man is those are not issues that can make me marry. It is love.

UNomazala: Oh! People of Dlambula. Old as you are yet you still think of childish games like love? Never tell anybody this. Moreover, you will be a disgrace and a laughing stock. You are too adult for childish games now.

What transpires in the above mentioned extract is that Cikizwa is in the typical female predicament of being forced to marry a man whom she does not love. Nomazala supports forced marriages. She sees nothing wrong with what her brother is doing. She believes that it is something common to force a child to marry a man whom she does not love. Nomazala values nothing more than bride-price (lobola). The image that arises in this drama is that of Xhosa women tightly fettered by unreasonable cultural norms regarding the choice of a marriage partner. Parental power is so strong that whoever tries to resist it has to face the wrath of public sanction. Cikizwa’s protest against forced marriages is symbolic of the frustration of thousands of Xhosa girls who found themselves in this predicament.

According to Baumeister (1991: 15) when society senses escape, it is quick to condemn. African society has a long tradition of being practical and realistic, and anything that takes a person away from reality tends to attract disapproval.
Another obvious fact about Nomazala is that she is not only imprisoned by traditional customs, norms and values but she also belongs to those people who entertain the superstitious belief that by suffering now they can be better off later. There are people who seem to think that they are destined to get a fixed quantity of suffering in life, so the choice is between suffering now and suffering later. An idea which has strong resonances in religious doctrines that God will comfort the afflicted, or that the next life will compensate people for what they have endured or suffered in this life. Nomazala is dominated by cultural norms, she does not think that love comes first when it comes to marriage.

In Mkonto’s drama, Inzonzobila, MamNtakwenda also belongs to those women who prefer to stay in prison in her household. MamNtakwenda is Dlangisa’s former girlfriend, she bore him a son called Bhongo. Dlangisa ill-treated Nomafa (MamNtakwenda) and this resulted in the end of their love affair. Zinzo and Dlangisa clash now and again. Zinzo is always complaining about the manner in which preachers deliver their sermons at funerals and in church, especially Dlangisa. Zinzo is always criticizing Dlangisa for his tendency to preach about people’s political ideologies instead of preaching about the word of God. He protests about Dlangisa’s bad habit of preaching about town councillors who are greedy:

\[
Abashumayeli bathetha beziphikisa, xa bemi egingeni
bathetha le, bakusithela bavuke nelinye.
\]

(Mkonto, 1995: 3)

Preachers are contradicting themselves when they are standing on the platform they say one thing, and after leaving the platform they say the opposite.

He seems to be saying that some sermons are not rigorously planned but the turn and direction of a particular message should depend upon the “leading of the holy spirit”.

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With this spontaneity at his disposal the preacher is free to direct the mood of the audience and to respond to this verbally. Improvisation is evident. For example many preachers highlight the points they are making by means of digressions. These serve to bring the sermon to life, to make it relevant to the experience of the congregation.

Dlangisa wants to take Zinzo’s wife. Though Zinzo is not aware of the actual source of conflict, he does react to Dlangisa’s attacks. Dlangisa insults Zinzo but MamNtakwenda seems not to find fault with Dlangisa’s preaching. She supports Dlangisa, but she will not leave Zinzo for Dlangisa. MamNtakwenda has been hiding the truth for the past twenty four years. She wants to tell her husband about Bhongo’s paternity, but she is afraid. She feels guilty and she is always crying whenever she thinks about this issue:

*MamNtakwenda:* Ukuzenza akufani nokwenziwa
mandimxelele na bethu ngale nyewe?
Mandiyiqhaqhe na intliziyo yam? Aziyi
kumbulala na kodwa ezi zisingaxi zam?
Kudala ndinyamezele lo mbono ulusizi
kuyiminyaka emashumi mabini
anesine. Kuyiminyaka esindasindeka kolo
xinzeleko. Ndakumvula amehlo
akayikuphanyaka naphakade na?
Awam amehlo wona amtyuwa yile minzunzu.
Le nzwinini kaSekaBhongo ayinyamezeleki
ngakumbi kumphembi wayo ondim
(kuthi waxa inyembezi) Liseko na
bethu ithuba lokubhokoxa? Akandishiyanga
na amaxesha okuzaneka? Ewe!
(Esula ngefaskothi) likho ithuba kumntu
ontliziyo inesazela likho ithuba kumntu
onothando nobuKrestu. Ndimuthand agqitha
uQadi, andingembulali afe ehleli ngezandla
zam. Lilungu lomxhelo wam. Obona bulungileyo ubugqwirha bobokulondoloza umphefumlo. 
Mandingcwabe ngaphaya kwamathambo esifuba. 
Mathambo am tywinani de ndokutshona. 

(Mkonto, 1995: 25)

MamNtakwenda: To put yourself in a bad situation is bad especially if you have caused it yourself. Shall I tell him about this affair? Shall I disclose my heart? Won’t these problems of mine kill him. Its long time that I have borne this pathetic situation. Its twenty four years or years he has been suffering under this oppression. Should I open his eyes? Shouldn’t he be blind for ever? My eyes are salty with tears because of these secret affairs. This desolation of Bhongo’s father is unbearable especially to its instigator which is me. (she cries). Is there still any chance to confess? Am I too late to confess? There is still time for a person with a guilty conscience. There is still a chance for a person with love and Christianity. I love Qadi so much. I can’t murder him alive with my bare hands. He is part of my soul. Good witchcraft is to save a soul. I’ll bury the secret in my heart. My bones will keep it till I die.

MamNtakwenda loves her husband despite the fact that she supports Dlangisa. But she will not leave Zinzo for Dlangisa. She is suffering from self – defeating behavior. Self defeating behavior results from a desire to avoid feeling bad about the self. In
MamNtakwenda’s case public perception is at issue. It is distressing to think that others are laughing at you or regarding you in some negative fashion. MamNtakwenda feels that her husband will seek revenge, even at a substantial material cost, if she reveals this secret. Thus she results to self defeating behaviours in order to avoid a negative view of her self.

It could be deduced from the above mentioned extract that MamNtakwenda is afraid of making a bad impression on her husband. She is not prepared to reveal the secret because she wants to avoid experiencing rejection, humiliation, ostracism and anxiety. By keeping quiet she is avoiding anything that might produce rejection or embarrassment.

To conclude, MamNtakwenda decides to keep the secret and this is the only strategy she thinks will bring her success in her marriage life. It is for this reason that she wants to stay in prison in her household. The above mentioned extract shows that sometimes self-expression is accompanied by obligation. It also shows that socially appropriate behaviour is not merely the expression of personal rights, but rather the expression of rights accompanied by the active expression of obligations. Socially appropriate behaviour also aims at not hurting the other person. It could be deducted from MamNtakwenda’s action in the above mentioned extract that behaving appropriately, particularly in high threat situations, is a difficult task. People are most likely to follow the rules for self-expression, while at the same time they endorsed the rules for avoiding conflict. This implies that in negative situations people may experience tension and difficulty between meeting their own needs and the needs of others. The polarization of rights and obligations further reinforces the perceived difficulty of combining the two behaviours and is a measure of the degree of tension between meeting one’s own and the other’s needs in conflict situations.
5.3  WOMEN WHO WANT TO LIVE IN PARADISE

This section aims at showing that women who believe in non-indigenous values know that they can act in a way that is comfortable for them and not according to the oppressive societal expectations of men. Patriarchy has been abused to put women down; it has manipulated women in such a way that they can be looked down upon and be seen as people with no future so that they can feel inferior in life. Women who challenge patriarchal practices, values customs and norms want to live in paradise in their households.

In Qangule’s drama, Amaza, Namhla aims at achieving the fundamentals of cordial marital relations, such as love, mutual respect, peace and harmony. She is determined to accomplish her goal. Several obstacles, however, obstruct her plans for marriage. There are the cultural constraints imposed on her by her parents. She holds European values which are in opposition to African values. The traditional values hold that marriage should be arranged by the community. Namhla, as a follower of European values, considers this African practice an obstacle to the attainment of her objective.

Thus the author says:

> Bendingazi ukuba singathintelwa zizidenge zamaqaba kwiinjongo zethu.

(Qangule, 1974: 6)

I did not know that we could be kept from our objectives by those ignorant fools.

What is said is that the practice of a parent’s choosing one’s marriage partner is not acceptable. Namhla is determined to free herself from the proposed partner. Namhla succeeds in achieving her objective in that she rids herself of Sidima.
Namhla is told that the Cirha wish to resurrect her husband by marrying her to one of their sons. Namhla refuses. She is proud of her love affair with Lizo:

\[ \text{Angadlokova amaza, konke kubetha kudlule, asale uLizo} \\
\text{eliwele lam lomphefumlo.} \]

(Qangule, 1974: 46)

Sea waves can be rolling, all will pass, and Lizo will remain my spiritual twin.

It could be deduced from the above mentioned extract that to escape from the self is to free oneself of the struggle to maintain a certain image. The most obvious reason for escaping from self awareness is because the situation is acutely unpleasant. Despite our desire to avoid loss of esteem, events can seem to conspire to threaten us. Each event thus seems to reveal something about the permanent features of the self.

Also women endorse rules for themselves which show their direct self expression. Women seek to satisfy a more complex and diverse range of goals in their interactions than do men, particularly in situations of higher threat (Wilson and Gullois, 1993: 175). The above quoted extract implies that women construct assertion in ways that are compatible with their goals, their sex roles and the rules which regulate the balance between attending to one’s own needs and those of other people.

In Mkonto’s drama, Emgxobhozweni, No-Ankile is also one of those women who want to live in paradise at her household. She believes that she can live a happy life if she can control her husband. The following extract highlights this:

(Mkonto, 1993: 3-4)

Noankile: You say I must close my eyes and pretend I saw nothing? Where would my womanhood be if I do that? This man is a deep fountain! Women! I thought I had finished him. I have seen where he is. I must pull up my socks. I have almost been asleep. Once bitten, twice shy. Morning doesn’t come twice to awaken someone. Today is the day, sour milk is created by the sun. The husband is mine, the house is mine. I am at that door, I am right inside.

What is noticeable in the above mentioned extract is that there is a strong emphasis on the expression of rights and feelings, as well as honest self-disclosure. Self centredness here is tempered by respect for the rights of others, as the concept of assertion plus obligation and assertion plus empathy show. No-Ankile is responsible for her own behaviour and she feels that she has the same right to express her view. She is concerned about her
personal rights in her household. She wants social acceptance of her rights as a wife. Thus she decides to adopt dominating behaviour in order to live in paradise in her household. She is prepared to stand up for her legitimate personal rights in her homestead.

Murphy (1994: 45) has this to say of relevance to the above extract:

When a woman lacks the independent capacity to assert her own positive truths and values, she is unable to contribute her insights and experiences to the various fields of human knowledge. This inhibition also affects relations between men and women. When denied opportunities for higher forms of self expression, women may out of frustration, attack the modes of understanding upheld by men. Masculine claims of cognitive objectivity are then dismissed as spurious modes of knowledge.

Noankile is determined to improve her social position and wants to satisfy her own self interest by influencing her husband in accordance with her own needs:

Most famous businessman! So you want to be the Mayor of Alice town! That may suit you, but for one thing you are quite stupid. Why do you place your wife in the background – it is not like that. She is the Mayoress so try to find her such a position here in your household. We are seeing that you are taming her, but you want supporters – we must see her managing big businesses and driving a Mercedes. That’s how it is done. We don’t know whether you are fascinated by those assailants who intend to marry your girlfriend, we have heard that too, we have heard them too that they are boasting about marrying twins. They claim they will be rich. That’s your situation, we don’t feature anywhere, but prepare for your wife if you want to win.

What is noticeable in the above mentioned extract is straight forward self-interest. NoAnkile has resorted to this self-interest but pretends to advise her husband. By doing all this she is bluffing her husband for the purpose of obtaining her legitimate personal rights in her household. She wants to usurp some power. Assertive behaviour shown in the above extract is increasingly concerned with the likelihood of producing a positive reaction from her husband which suits her goal of managing big businesses in her homestead. Assertive behaviour here aims at looking after her own interests. No-Ankile is using a self defence strategy at the expense of her husband.

NoAnkile’s action in writing this letter to her husband shows that responsibility extends the self and makes it vulnerable. Setbacks bring anger, frustration and sadness which provide energy for making changes such as trying harder or finding alternative strategies.
It is evident from the above mentioned extract that the self is associated with numerous standards and expectations. One measures oneself against others’ expectations, against moral principles, obligations, achievement levels and hierarchies, goals and ambitions. Falling short of these standards creates an unpleasant affective state (Baumeister, 1991: 70-17).

5.4 WOMEN WITH SELF DESTRUCTIVE BEHAVIOUR

In Mkonto’s drama, Inzonzobila, Nomatshawe who is Dlangisa’s wife, is one of those women with self destructive motives. Nomatshawe is a Christian but she has been staying with Dlangisa who is also a preacher knowing very well that her husband is making a living by selling dagga - something which is prohibited by law.

*Ndinga indlela esinde ngayo laa ntwana ibiyokulanda iluggage yethu.*

(Mkonto, 1995: 6)

I just think of the way the boy who had gone to fetch our luggage escaped.

Nomatshawe: *Noko kambe ngathi kwanele kuba sinemali eyaneleyo nasebhankini. Yeka ngoku ngalo msebenzi, uza kuzigulisa.*

(Mkonto 1995, 7)

At least it seems as if it’s enough because we have sufficient funds in the bank. You must stop this job now. You’ll ruin your health.
The above extracts have double implications: firstly it implies that Dlangisa is not faithful to his work; as a preacher he should not sell dagga, preachers are expected to be exemplary. Nomatshawe’s husband forgets that people come to church in the sincere hope of learning and experiencing great things from the preachers of their congregations. Secondly, it is clear from Nomatshawe’s words that to escape from the self is to free oneself of the struggle to maintain a certain image. It means to give up on the motivations that are the driving forces behind so much human behaviour namely the quests for esteem and control. It means to dodge the pressures, demands obligations responsibilities, and other factors that plague the modern self and make life stressful. This may be an attempt to get rid of unhappy feelings, or it may be a break from the daily struggle or it may be a first step toward creating an entirely new self (Baumeister, 1991: 12).

In Mkonto’s drama, 

**Emgxobhozweni**, Noankile is also belongs one of those women with self destructive motives. In this drama, Vakele after losing his first wife who died due to natural causes decides to marry a second wife, NoAnkile. NoAnkile, as a step mother, becomes jealous of Nomonde who is Vakele’s daughter from his first wife. NoAnkile does not want Nomonde to get married. She conspires against her by writing a letter to her pretending the letter is written by somebody who is warning Nomonde about her future husband. The letter reads as follows:

_Ntombazanandini, imfundo le uyi nikwe nguyihlo nonyoko
ngathi uyifanisa nehagu efakwe umsesane we golide.
Baphelile abafana abanezinto kwel i Di ke ulibe le
ngamaqisholo ezilambi? Sidengendini._

(Mkonto, 1995: 125 – 126)

You girl, you treat the education afforded you by your father and mother like a pig decorated with a golden ring.
Aren’t there rich men in this Alice that you waste your time with poor illiterates, you fool?

In Mtywaku’s drama, **Incwadi ezaye zibhaliwe**, Nontsha used to be the best friend of Rose who is Dolly’s mother. They were studying at Blythswood College. She once suggested Rose as a lover for her brother who is Mzamo’s father but to no avail. After Rose has given birth to Dolly Nontsha decides to write letters to her brother pretending they are written by Rose in order to spoil their love affair:

\[ Ndabhala iileta ngesandla sam esifana nesakho ndizibhalela ubhuti ziyimbalelwano ephakathi kwakho nobhuti ngezibulo lwakho noForks, zibonisa ukuba enyanisweni umntwana ngokabhuti. Zezo leta ezi zisuke zamenza indindi umntanomntakwethu. Elokuphetha ndicela uxolo. \]

(Mtywaku, 1990: 66)

I wrote the letters myself using handwriting similar to yours. I wrote them to my brother, and these letters seemed as if they were correspondence between yourself and my brother in connection with your first born by Forks showing that truly speaking the child belonged to my brother. It is these letters which have confused my brother’s child. At last I am apologizing.

What seems to be shown here is that women possess an innate instinctual mechanism that drives them toward destruction and harm. Both women are driven by self destructive motives. If people follow a certain course of action in order for others to experience pain or loss, we could assert that they have self destructive motives.
In both extracts NoAnkile and Nontsha are insisting on their own interests with no regard for others. Women’s self assertion in both extracts violates other women’s rights. Both women forget that rights must always be accompanied by consideration of the other person to be appropriate. Rights should also take the form of attending to the needs of others.

The obvious fact about Noankile and Nontsha is that they write these letters knowing that submissive behaviour appears to produce more positive social consequences. Their actions show that women balance their social involvement so as to satisfy as fully as possible their private interests. They know that women are easily able to increase their assertion when instructed to do so. Noankile and Nontsha assert their rights wrongly because women using such assertive behaviour may be perceived as behaving in a way that conflicts with the facts that they should be concerned with the welfare of others and the maintenance of their relationships.

Since negative assertion of rights is a role inconsistent with the view of women, women may incur greater social cost than men. This implies that there is a potential double jeopardy for women expressing negative assertive messages. Nontsha’s confession in the second extract shows that guilt makes people feel bad, and it makes them want to stop feeling guilty, and even makes them want to do something positive to offset what they did that made them feel guilty.

In Mbulawa’s drama, Mamfene, Nqinile is dominated by self destructive motives. Her deviant personality is manifested when she supports her husband in stealing the collection money:

*Masicuntsule kule malana sinayo yenkonkozelo senze intwana yamambawu phaya kwaNduna.*

(Mbulawa, 1994: 24)

Let us take a bit of money from the small church collection and brew some sorghum beer at Nduna’s homestead.
Noqinile is not prepared to allow her husband to relinquish his post and go to Stokfelton. She wants to persuade other members of the community to accept her view that Jezula has been treated unfairly by Mongameli. She does not want to lose face. Therefore she decides to adopt negative assertive behaviour. Losing face is extremely aversive, and women will go to great lengths to prevent or remedy a loss of face. They will accept substantial costs to accomplish this end, costs large enough to make the response irrational, and even self-defeating. Women really will cut off their noses to save their faces.

In Mbulawa’s drama, Mamfene, Noqinile is portrayed as potentially dangerous:

\[
\text{Ndicinga ukuba mna masilinge indlela mnyama, bathiwe}
\]
\[
\text{chwethe ngetyhefu, ze sibayeke thina bahlale sisazi ukuba}
\]
\[
\text{baza kunduluka ngabanye bezifela.}
\]

(Mbulawa, 1994: 46)

I think we better devise another plan, let us give them poisonous food and let them relax, knowing very well that they are going to die one by one.

The obvious fact about Noqinile is that she supports her husband in his intention of toppling the church leadership. She is dominated by self assertive negative behaviour and despair. Her goal is to stop whatever is causing the loss of face, she is trying to bring an embarrassing situation to an immediate close in order to avoid the unpleasant feeling of embarrassment. Noqinile feels that both pastor Kheswa and his wife are responsible for her loss of face, thus she is looking for revenge. Her irrational self destructive pursuit of revenge forces her to resort to poison in order to get rid of pastor Kheswa and his wife. The role of aversive self-awareness in Noqinile’s behaviour is quite obvious. Embarrassment is one prototype of a state of high self awareness combined with unpleasant emotion. Women will make whatever choices promise an immediate end to these unpleasant states, even if these choices carry significant costs to the lives of
innocent people. It is distressing to think that others are laughing at you. Thus Noqinile is determined to seek revenge, she is determined to do self defeating things in order to avoid a negative view of self. Women more often want to behave appropriately in social situations. When self image is threatened, women fear that they have nothing left to hold on to. The result may be panic and anxiety.

In Mtingane’s drama, **Inene nasi isibhozo**, Masukude is also a woman with self destructive emotions. Masukude, who is Themba’s stepmother, is responsible for Themba’s having left home. She is always in conflict with the members of her household. There had been harmony in Njinge’s household, there had been no conflict before:

\[
Kusekho \ uNjinge, \ besiyichitha \ imini \ sonwabile \ ekhay’ \ apha, \ simke \ kungabangakho \ kukrwentsa \ krwentsana, \ kodwa \ ngoku \ sibetha \ emva \ kwezindlu \ ngenxa \ yesimilo \ sakho \ osiphethe \ ngezandla. \\
\text{\textit{(Mtingane, 1965: 7)}}
\]

While Njinge was alive, we used to enjoy ourselves the whole day in this family. We lived without conflict between us, but today we distance ourselves from you because of your behaviour.

People feel emotions in response to events that are defined in terms of cultural and social values, expectations and options of developments in relation to the self. Masukude is not co-operative, she is selfish. She aims at self protection, not allowing herself to be pushed around by other members of her household. The self protective goal of not allowing yourself to be pushed around by others is likely to threaten others or to hurt their feelings. Women have additional goals relating to relationship development or obligation and self or arousal management, whereas the major additional goals for men focus on rights or self assertion (Wilson and Gallois, 1993: 100).
In Mtingane’s drama, *Inene nasi isibhozo*, Masukude is very angry when Themba returns home, and she vows that Themba will not get married before Vuma does. The members of her household debate Masukude’s contention that Vuma must get married before Themba, his elder brother. Her suggestion is rejected by the male members of her household because such a course is alien to African culture. Masukude goes to her friend, Noayini, who advises her to prevent Themba’s marriage by poisoning Themba:

**UNoayini:** Kodwa mna ndazi nto inye,
ilitye libekwe endleleni nje
ngowalibekayo, ulibekele ukuba
ze lisuswe ngumntu eliya kumkhuba.
Nawe ke susa iliyie endleleni, ukhangele
ukuba wophinda ukhubeke na.

**UMasukude:** Ndilisuse kanjani na wethu?

**UNoayini:** Uzenza umntwana ngabom.

**UMasukude:** Yho! Ingqondo yam ibimile.
Ndiyayiqonda ngoku le nto
uyithethayo.
(Mtingane, 1965:33)

**UNoayini:** One thing I know, a stone is put
on the road by the one who put it there.
He puts it there so it may be removed by one who is
hit by it. You too! Remove the stone from
the path and see if it will hit you again.

**UMasukude:** How do I remove it then, my friend?
**UNoayini:** You belittle yourself.
UMasukude: Oh! I was absent-minded, I realize now what you say.

It could be deduced from Masukude’s vow in the above argument that women feel emotions in response to events that are defined in terms of cultural and social values. Anger depends on complex evaluations of the situation against a fine tuned set of norms and expectations. The contrast between great expectations and poor outcomes may even lead to murder.

The above mentioned extract has a double implication. Firstly, it implies that there are major difference in the ways men and women view assertion. Women consider using inappropriate negative aggressive behaviour in high threat situations. Secondly, it implies that women feel that self assertion should be accompanied by obligation behaviour in situations involving perceived personal attack. Inappropriate behavior in the above mentioned extract is considered as the expression of personal rights and also as the expression of rights accompanied by the active expression of obligations. In negative situations women may experience tension and difficulty between meeting their own needs and the needs of others. It could be deduced from the above mentioned extract that women seek to escape from the self to find temporary relief from the stressful burden of maintaining an inflated image of self. For most women self awareness is highly evaluative. It is difficult for women to remain neutral when thinking about themselves. Because women are fighting for self assertion they display resistance under difficult conditions and they may resort to the use of direct methods like murder.

Masukude kills Themba with the poison she gets from Noayini. A medical doctor is called to conduct a post mortem. The doctor confirms that Themba has been killed by eating poisonous food. Masukude is told about the results of the post mortem. She feels guilty and she wants to prevent Lolo from spreading the doctor’s confirmation to Mfolo. Noayini advises her to get rid of Lolo by killing him with the very same poison which has killed Vuma:
Noayini: Masimfake eliya yeza besilifake kuThemba.

Masukude: Phi? Nini? Kanjani?

Noayini: Uyabona, amahashe akuni athanda

Ukutya phaya ngasekhaya. Mna ndiza kuhamba

ndiye kulibazisa inkwenkwe le iyokuwanqanda.

Lo gama ndihambileyo mna, wena kufuneka

ubenzele iti. Ngaloo ndlela ndiqinisekile

akanokufika kwaMfolo uya kuphelelwana endleleni.

Masukude: Kuya kutshiwa uviswe lishase.

(Mtingane, 1965: 57)

Noayini: Let us give him a dose of the medicine we
gave to Themba.

Masukude: Where? When? How?

Noayini: You see, your horses like grazing nearer

my home. I will go and delay the boy

who will fetch them. When I have left, make

them tea. That way I am sure he won’t

reach Mfolo. He will collapse on the way.

Masukude: It will be said he fell from the horse.

What is shown is that the kind of people we are as individuals emerges from the diversity of cultural practices in which we participate. Masukude and Noayini’s action of planning to kill Lolo with poison that has killed Themba shows that women are seen to maintain their self-assertion at whatever moral cost, particularly in situations of high threat. It could be deduced from the above mentioned extract that women appear to make a conscious decision not to assert their rights by direct confrontation, but instead they choose an indirect strategy which is more likely to be more successful for them. The assertive communication between Masukude and Noayini in the above extract pushes against the whole social system not only against recalcitrant individuals. Masukude kills
Vuma by mistake, for the poison that kills Vuma was intended for Lolo. Eventually Masukude hangs herself.

In Mbulawa’s drama, Mamfene, both Noqinile, Jiphi and Matilda assist pastor Jezula in toppling the church leadership. In order to chase away pastor Kheswa and his wife they decide to remove their furniture from the mission house. Their reasoning is based on the fact that pastor Kheswa is a foreigner and he is an informer:

\[
\text{Sidane gqitha sakuqonda ukuba sifikelwe ngumntamnani.}
\]

(Mbulawa, 1994: 79)

We were so disappointed to realize that an informer was among us.

Their cruel action is manifested in the following extract:

\[
\text{Kufuneka sikhuphe yonke impahla le yabo sithathe isitshixo sisise phaya kwaNduna.}
\]

(Mbulawa, 1994: 85)

We must remove their furniture and take the key to Nduna’s homestead

It is evident from the above extract that women who behave in a dominant manner are perceived as more masculine than men. Negative self assertion in women violates universal social rules. According to Wilson and Gallois (1993:35) unassertive behaviour may in fact reflect women’s sensitivity to the social impact of their behaviour. Noqinile, Jiphi and Matilda are behaving in a way which conflicts with the sex role prescriptions that they should be concerned with: the welfare of others and the maintenance of relationships.
In Mkonto’s drama, *Emgxobhozweni*, Noankile who is Vakele’s wife, is suffering from a loss of identity. She is jealous of Nomonde who is Vakele’s daughter from his first wife. She is denied the opportunity of managing big businesses by her husband. Both Nowam and Mandungwane advise Noankile to write a letter to her husband and pretend it has been written by somebody who is advising him about a good strategy he must use if he wants to win an election to be the Mayor of Alice. Vakele is shocked by this letter. Both Nowam and Mandungwane cheat Vakele by explaining to him the significance of this letter pretending they know nothing about it:

**Nowam:** *Eneneni Bhu’ Duko*  
*Sisilumkiso esi, ungothuki kakhulu,*  
*uyindoda, kwaye ndiva ukubetha*  
*kolwimi lwalo mbhali ukuba*  
*ulunyikiswa ngamanye amadoda.*  
*Elam lithi kuya kufuneka ukuba*  
*uziqwalasele ezi zinto*  
*zikhankanywayo apha, hleze*  
*wonakalelwe.*

**Mandungwane:** *Yits’ uphinde sisi.*  
*Eyona ndiyibonayo mna kuyo*  
*apha yile yemeko kaMaTshezi lo.*  
*Kaloku kule*  
*mihla lowo uzigqatsileyo kujongwe nendlela le*  
*ayiphethe ngayo inkosikazi leyo yakhe.*  
*Abanamehlo bade baphonononge nehambo*  
*yenkosikazi, isimo sayo, imeko yomsebenzi wayo,*  
*njalo-njalo.*  
*Asifuni kupathwa ngumama*  
*ongaqondakaliyo phandl’ apha.*  
*Ulapho umxolo wayo ukuba bendiwumamele kakhle.*

(Mkonto, 1995: 114)
Nowam: Indeed, Brother Duks this is a warning. Don’t be so shocked, you are a man! I hear from the writer that you are being warned by other men. I say you must consider these things which have been mentioned here, unless things go wrong for you.

Mandungwane: Say it again sister! What I see is the situation of Matshezi. These days, the ambitious one is watched even in the way he treats his own wife. Those with eyes even consider his wife’s ways, her behaviour, the nature of her work etc. We do not want to be governed by a woman suspected of infidelity. That is the gist of the matter if I understood it well.

Both Mandungwane and Nowam are in quest of esteem and control. By explaining the significance of this letter to Noankile’s husband they are trying to escape both pressures and obligations that make Noankile’s life stressful. Rotter (1972) as quoted by Wilson and Gallois (1993: 87) maintains that the potential for any behaviour is a function of the person’s expectations of rewards which may result from engaging in that behaviour and the value of these consequences for the person. Persons who have a high expectation that their aggressive behaviour will result in retaliation would be less aggressive than persons who do not expect retaliation.

The women’s self assertion in the above extract aims at satisfying self interest and influencing others in accord with their own needs. It is evident in this extract that
assertion may evoke for women a concern with self interest. Self in this extract contains feelings, thoughts and personality. It contains personal fulfillment and the solutions to many of life’s problems. Self in this extract is endowed with needs and wants. When real control fails, women develop illusions of control, they show pleasure in mastery. Mandungwane and Nowam want Noankile to have a good marriage. The women’s self assertion seems to show that marriage is always evaluated on the basis of its contribution to women’s satisfaction.

In Mmango’s drama, **uDike noCikizwa**, both Nojoyini and Nomatiletile also belong to those women who reinforce self assertion in a group. Both of them are protesting about Sando’s action in forcing his daughter Cikizwa to marry Mjongwa whom she does not love. They feel that Sando is ill-treating Cikizwa by denying her freedom for self definition, for effective recognition of her humanity as a person and the freedom to exercise her personhood. The following extract highlights this:

Nojoyini:  
*Le nto ndayimangala kwamhla mnene kayise. Wasuka waligwele ngumnsindo, wathi okanakuva ngomntwana emzini wakhe.*

(Mmango, 1991: 6)

From the onset I have asked her father about this. He was furious, claiming that he cannot listen to a child in his house.

Nomatiletile:  
*Lo Cikizwa asinguye Cikizwa wamaxiesha akudala, amaxiesha obumnyama, nguCikizwa wala maxesha okhanyo.*

This Cikizwa it’s not Cikizwa who belongs to the olden times, times of darkness, it’s
Cikizwa who belongs to the modern times.

Both Nomatiletile and Nojoyini are complaining about the manner in which Sando is ill-treating Cikizwa. They feel that her privileges are limited and her reasoning power has been eroded by traditional customs and taboos. She is denied opportunities for higher forms of self expression. This implies that women may out of frustration, attack the modes of understanding upheld by men. It is evident in both extracts that only women can theorise their oppression, because only women experience it.

In both extracts there is a strong emphasis on the expression of rights and feelings, as well as honest self disclosure. Such self centredness, however is tempered by respect for the rights of others, as the concepts of assertion plus obligation and assertion plus empathy show. Nomatiletile and Nojoyini have the right to express their views as assertive persons. In their protest they are trying to balance concern for self and concern for others.

Wilson and Gallois (1993: 39) believe that on the importance of self expression in defining assertion, a major difference centres on a mutual versus unilateral approach to self expression, especially where personal rights are concerned. Nomatiletile and Nojoyini in the above mentioned extracts are fighting for what they consider as the social appropriateness of behaviour. They are fighting Sando’s dominating behaviour.

CONCLUSION

In this chapter it has been shown that assertion as a social construct has many and varied meanings. Assertion is defined as a communication style concerned with the expression of personal rights to protect oneself and maintain one’s equality, without aggression. It is a communication style concerned with the use of social power and influence, including aggression, to achieve one’s own ends.
The self is what we invoke when we assert “I am a woman”. The self contains thoughts, feelings, intensions, personality, the key ingredients of personal fulfillment and the solutions to many of life’s problems.

When real control fails, women develop illusions of control, they may show pleasure in mastery. When women are deprived of control, they may exhibit irritation, resentment, helplessness even illness and death. Women feel obligations and responsibilities, and if their actions violate these, they feel distress.

Women have recently been seen to place a higher emphasis on self than on marriage and family. To be a good wife, you had to be able to sustain a good marriage. Marriage is evaluated on the basis of its contribution to women’s satisfaction. If the marriage is constraining, it is the wife’s right and even duty to get out of it. These women are maintaining that marriage should also serve the self.

To escape from the self is to free oneself of the struggle to maintain a certain image. People have escapist impulses because of stressful concerns in life. When society senses escape, it is quick to condemn. African society has a long tradition of being practical and realistic, and anything that takes a person away from reality tends to attract disapproval.

Self defeating behaviour results from a desire to avoid feeling bad about the self. It is distressing to think that others are laughing at you or regarding you in some negative fashion. Some women, as in these dramas, resort to self defeating behaviour in order to avoid a negative view of themselves.

Sometimes self expression should be accompanied by obligation. People are most likely to follow the rules for self expression, while at the same time they endorse the rules for avoiding conflict. In negative situations people may experience tension and difficulty between meeting their own needs and the needs of the others.
The self is associated with numerous standards and expectations. One measures one self against other’s expectations, against levels and hierarchies, goals and ambitions. Falling short of these standards creates unpleasant affective states. The most obvious reason for escaping from self awareness is because such awareness is acutely unpleasant. Events have power to make self awareness unpleasant because the self is generally considered to consist of stable properties. Set backs bring anger, frustration and sadness, which provide energy for making changes such as finding alternative strategies.

Sometimes women may be driven by self destructive motives. Rights should always be accompanied by consideration of the other person and should take the form of attending to the needs of others. When self image is threatened women fear that they have nothing left to hold on to. The result may be panic and anxiety and so women may consider inappropriate negative aggressive behaviour in high threat situations.
CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION

6.1 INTRODUCTION

The main objective in this chapter is to conclude the whole dissertation by presenting a chapter by chapter review. In this chapter a summary of findings and implications will be given. It concentrates on implications for assessment of present and past approach, for further study of the subject, for analysis, for solutions to practical and applied problems and also for analysis for what may happen in future.

The dissertation examines the portrayal of women in some Xhosa selected dramas. Following Bauerlein (1997: 63) it is argued that the study of women in literature forces a critical examination of the way women in literature have been portrayed in the past because of male domination. The study aims to establish what the progress is in the portrayal of women characters before and after the introduction of the new dispensation in South Africa.

6.2 CHAPTER ONE

Chapter one provides interested people in literature, students of literature and the researchers who are doing research in literature with a broader perspective about how to develop introductory perspectives. The research problem and aims are identified in chapter one. The definition of concepts in chapter one serves as the pillar of the whole study. The method of research as explained in chapter one is based on various theories such as black criticism, culture, womanism, African womanism, feminism and psychoanalysis. The researcher’s feeling in using various theories is that they have the added significance of aiding the researcher in avoiding data collection from persons other than the information provided in the texts and references. Bertolt Brecht as quoted by Makaryk (1993: 7) contends that:
A man with one theory is lost. He needs several of them, or lots. He should stuff them in his pockets like newspapers.

This is to me a wise path to follow because it provides a variety of theoretical approaches in the examination of the role of women in isiXhosa drama. The above mentioned theories have been used for the purpose of evincing and buttressing arguments in my study. I feel that we need to have a broader perspective about the theories of gender in literature when we are analyzing a literary text. A distinction has been made in chapter one between womanism and African womanism and other related feminist theories and also between African feminism and western feminism. Psychoanalytic criticism has been extensively used to support or supplement my arguments in my study. It is explained in chapter one that both observation and participation will be applied in my study for exposing barriers that block the development of women, and also for showing that the cultural belief that the father is the head of the family should be abolished because it is enslaving African women. All Xhosa dramas listed in chapter one illustrate the effects of gender inequality in the portrayal of women.

It is explained in chapter one that in selecting women characters found in these dramas attention will be paid to such matters relating to their roles: psychological effects, oppression, human rights as well as women activists, fate of rural women who are presented as subordinate dependent and passive, those who are supposed to live in mortal terror of their husbands, chronic abuse, traditional attitudes about family life, step motherhood and mothers in law.

The following characters are identified as leading proponents of the effects of gender inequality in this study. Magaba, Manyawuza, Thobeka in Buzani kubawo, Masukude and Noayini in Inene nasi isibhozo, MaDlamini, Namhla, Zodwa in Amaza; Noqinile in Mamfene, Nomatiletile, Nojoyini, Nomazala in UDike noCikizwa, Nontsha in lincwadi ezaye zibhaliwe, MamNtakwenda in Inzonzobila, Noankile, Hombakazi Mandungwane in Emgxobhozweni, MaKhwetshube in Uhambo lwenkululeko.
6.3 CHAPTER TWO

Chapter two aims at developing a theoretical framework which serves as the basis of my study. In this chapter black criticism is used in the analysis of the chosen books because it considers gender to be a fundamental category of analysis. It is shown in this chapter that black criticism is of great significance to my study because it explores black cultural difference. It derives principles of literary criticism from the black tradition itself. Since my study considers the whole imaginative tradition in African societies, black criticism is used as a suitable tool for analyzing the writings of the playwrights and also for the purpose of not missing the finer modulations which give the best in our traditional African literature. It is shown in this chapter that in black criticism, blackness becomes a subject position in relation to the cultural dominant.

Cultural theory is another theory used in this chapter for advancing my arguments in my study. The motive behind choosing cultural theory is based on the fact that chapter four of my study examines the influence of culture on women. The literature of a country must be situated in its cultural and historical context. Therefore culture has been used in my study to refer to intellectual and artistic practices which in their very forms and meanings, define human society as socially constructed rather than natural. We expect human beings to behave in prescribed ways if they want to live normal lives, in reasonable peace. Therefore cultural theory entails the way of behaving, it is the way we do things.

Another reason for alluding to cultural theory in my study is that it is concerned with the art, customs, taboos, values and norms of society. It consists of the ways, morals and beliefs transmitted from generation to generations. It may be generally shared by some population or a group of people. This implies that culture represents the collective conscience of a group of people. Cultural theory reveals the evils of forced marriage and woman’s determination to launch the strongest opposition to it. Some women involved in my study have been forced by their parents to marry husbands whom they do not love. These women represent the African community which endorses modern values. Their parents represent the African community that holds cultural traditional values. An
important reason for alluding to culture in my study is to show a clash between modern culture and traditional culture.

My study aims to show that Xhosa women are tightly fettered by unreasonable cultural norms regarding the choice of a marriage partner. Parental power is so strong that whoever tries to resist it has to face the wrath of the ancestors. Women who have been forced to marry husbands whom they do not love are opposing their marriages. By doing this they attempt to expose and denounce European values.

In chapter two, the theory of gender inequality has been chosen for the purpose of examining the effects of gender inequality on women. The reason for alluding to gender inequality is to show that patriarchy from its beginnings was based upon man’s obedience to a superior divine will. Submission to God’s power over man also legitimized man’s dominion over both women and nature. Another reason for referring to gender inequality in my study is to show that women’s violence and abuse of women are the effects of gender inequality on women. My recommendation in this respect is that women’s needs and goals should be taken into consideration because they are as valid as those of men. Therefore the subjugation of women in families should be abolished because it is exploitative. We should identify ways in which gender relations and women’s experiences in families can be transformed.

Womanism is also of great significance to my study. It has been argued out in chapter two that in spite of the many cultural assaults, and no matter how much culture tries to communicate to woman she is minor, she should take a back seat. A woman’s fulfillment of her roles as wife and mother gave her life a moral dimension. According to our cultural practices women are excluded from the advantages of self realization. Caught in the routine and drudgery of domestic life, the life of a woman revolved around the home, and it was within that sphere that she was allotted her opportunities for happiness. Unable to become a complete person, she eventually rebelled against the narrowness of her status and claimed for herself the same rights to self realization as those that have
been asserted by men. For women to be freed from domestic tyranny they need the full protection of the law and this include political rights.

The notion of patriarchy has been abused to put women down. It has manipulated women in such a way that they can be looked down upon and be seen as people with no future so that they can feel inferior in life. But above all, these women have recognized that they need to unite with men in order to fight or reject racism and imperialist subjugation. African women receive a multiple burden as compared to their male counterparts.

It has been shown in this chapter that womanism needs to seek genuine liberation of the African woman which involves probing culture, values, tradition and understand the real location of the woman.

Most traditional women, who are wives and mothers at the same time, are often excluded from direct participation and decision making in their households. The decision making falls under the jurisdiction of their husbands, the words of their husband are final and cannot be opposed. This affects women in the sense that it limits their ownership and control of their homesteads.

A destiny is created against women by men and a woman rebels against it, she insists upon fashioning a future of her own. As a free person, the woman resents the man’s position and his unfair access to opportunities for self-fulfillment that he has reserved for himself with world outside the home. Due to this destiny she becomes frustrated, she becomes powerless. Women experienced both physical and psychological oppression. The unjust laws, customs and practices that traditionally sustained masculine domination marked women with a stigma of inferiority.

African women are denied by traditional custom the basic freedom to organize their life as they choose. Women are bounded by a sociological notion of the sameness of their oppression. Their oppression continues even when she loses her husband even if she is not supposed to be treated oppressively.
In this chapter it is explained that feminism and womanism are related, they complement each other because they have related and similar ideas. Feminism focuses on equality between men and women. African feminism sees the struggle for equal rights between the sexes as more difficult than that of decolonization because it is the struggle between husband and wife, father and mother.

The relationship between all the theories mentioned in the chapter is postulated.

6.4 CHAPTER THREE

This study on the effects of gender inequality on women shows that gender not only underscores the constructiveness of male/female distinctions. It rather opens an area of extensive examination that differentiates sexual practice from the sexual roles assigned to women and men. The points raised in chapter three indicate that there is a perception that women can never directly exercise the power invested in the position of father because they do not have a penis. The power of men to define themselves is the most pervasive power in our traditional culture. Inequality between men and women is both socially and biologically determined.

It has been mentioned that from its beginnings, patriarchy was based upon man’s obedience to a superior divine will. Submission to God’s power over man legitimized man’s dominion over both women and nature.

The life of a woman revolved around a circle of domesticity, and it was only within that sphere that she was allotted her opportunities for happiness. Unable to become a complete person the woman eventually rebelled against the narrowness of her status and claimed for herself the same rights to self realization as those that have been asserted by men. If women had not made such demands for personal independence, they could never have overcome their oppression.

Interestingly, it is noted in this chapter that a baby daughter is the extension of the father, providing him with what ever he cannot provide himself with by getting extra cattle. A
daughter in a patriarchal society cannot live outside the world of the fathers. She cannot resolve the Antigone complex as long as the world of adulthood is a man’s world, as long she is constantly subject to definition by even strange men in public. A son can and does escape from the early world of the mother to a world of men.

The points raised in this chapter indicate that there is a perception that women are characterized by a fear of success. When a woman lacks the independent capacity to assert her own positive truths and values, she is unable to contribute her insights and experiences to the various fields of human knowledge. This inhibition also affects relations between the sexes. When denied opportunities for higher forms of self-expression, women may out of frustration attack the modes of understanding upheld by men.

In a traditionally recognized form of marriage only adults could initiate and effectively carry out all the negotiations necessary for a valid marriage satisfactory to both sides. The choice of the girl was more important to them since she had to be incorporated in their family. Girls could not be entrusted with the choice of a husband. Parents had to seek out a bride for their sons. They could make heavy demands in the form of a dowry or “lobola” cattle.

It is shown in this chapter that a society is organized along patriarchal lines. The perception of inequality begins at home. Whatever respect is conferred upon a woman as mother and homemaker does not compensate for the personal frustration implicit in the domestic experience.

It is also raised in this chapter that wives are sincere about their “house wifely” duties and child care. Child care, which remains primarily the responsibility of wives, affects their use of time. Women have been associated with witchcraft. Women’s silences result from the circumstances of being born into wrong class, race or sex, being denied education and becoming numbered by economic struggle, muzzled by censorship. The socializing experiences of women are always associated with gossip yet gossiping in
women when they get together can be regarded as the only way of exchanging ideas about their concerns in life. Chatting to one another in this way has some therapeutic value for women.

Women are perceived to betray with words and it is said that nagging offers women great pleasure. By nagging women are performing a normal duty which has been assigned to them in traditional society. Gossip in women always happens in a fixed archetypal context in Xhosa literature. Convenient contexts are among others when women go to fetch water, or firewood, or when they are busy washing clothes or hoeing in the fields or when they are chatting with each other.

6.5 CHAPTER FOUR

In chapter four I have established that societies have certain basic needs or requirements that must be met if they are to survive. In my discussion in chapter four it has been shown that in Tamsanqa’s *Buzani Kubawo*, Qangule’s *Amaza* and also in Mmango’s *uDike noCikizwa* characters represent the life of society, they represent African society in particular. In some dramas the theme is based on forced marriages. Magaba, Zwilakhe in Tamsanqa’s *Buzani Kubawo* Danile in Qangule’s *Amaza* Nomazala and Sando in Mmango’s *uDike noCikizwa* all attempt to expose and denounce European values. They represent the section of the African community that holds traditional values. Gugulethu in Tamsanqa’s *Buzani Kubawo*, Nojoyini and Nomatiletile in Mmango’s *uDike noCikizwa* and Namhla in Qangule’s *Amaza* represent the section of the African community that holds European values.

Authors in the dramas actually reconcile African culture with modern values. My own viewpoint is that authors tend to forget that culture is dynamic. My recommendation in chapter four is that any culture that does not fit into the normative system of a group must be abolished. Relativity of culture must be acknowledged, but there still needs communication and negotiation between different cultures in order to achieve standards and social consensus. Serious regard needs to be given to variation, renewal and progress within our traditional cultures. No culture should be imposed on another culture. No
culture should be mystified or romanticized. In the dramas neither the Traditionalists nor the Modernists succeed. We must rid ourselves of parental authority when it comes to marriage issue.

To add to this Sirayi (1993: 8) has the following to say:

Being traditional does not mean static. From time immemorial African marriage has been based on negotiation.

There is nothing wrong in borrowing from other cultures so as to promote cultural dynamism:

Amasiko enziwa mhla mnene, kule mhla athanda ukuxaka.
(Mtingane, 1965: 66)

Customs which were formulated long ago, nowadays they tend to be problematic.

However, this chapter also shows that since nature is itself a human obstruction, it too has a history, in which in turn means that it is part of culture. The concept “culture” is used to refer to individual style or character, a stage of artistic or intellectual development, to the expressive life and traditions of a social group, to a social historical moment or a broad epoch.

The points raised in this chapter indicate that there is a perception that in most cases men can be easily manipulated by their wives while giving them the impression that the men themselves initiated desired action. Some women are oppressed by their husbands, but they are fighting for their rights. Women who desire change are demonized as bad women. The rural women are often depicted as subordinate, dependent and passive. Some women are living in mortal terror of their husbands.
One of the researcher’s findings in this chapter is that culture is always a collective phenomenon, because it is at least partly, shared with people who live or lived within the same environment which is where it was learned. It is the collective programming of the mind, which distinguishes the members of one group or category of people from another. The implication of all this is that the dominant life style of a society influences the degree to which particular cultural forms gain expression. The breach of traditional custom will always give rise to the wrath of the ancestors. According to the Africans death does not mean extinction, the dead continue to live in a world into which death does not enter.

It is culture which helps us to define who we are as a group and individually emerges from the wide diversity of cultural practices in which we participate. People describe their identity only by belonging to a particular state. The cultural identity of a group is always determined by their national identity.

Women can theorise their oppression, because woman’s roles in families varied according to culture and historical circumstances. When one culture eliminates what is considered not human, it identifies itself according to its own definition as human, cultural identification in such a context takes an ultimate power, (Payne, 1997:129).

In an African traditional community women may be executed for witchcraft. African traditional community uses savage methods of punishment without proof that someone is guilty.
Chapter five shows that assertion as a social construct has many and varied meanings. Assertion is defined as a communication style concerned with the expression of personal rights to protect oneself and maintain one’s equality, without aggression.

The self is what we invoke when we say “I am a woman.” The self contains thoughts, feelings, intensions, personality, the key ingredients of personal fulfillment and the solutions to many of life’s problems.

When real control fails, women develop illusions of control, they show pleasure in mastery. When women are deprived of control, they exhibit irritation, resentment, helplessness even illness and death. Women feel obligations and responsibilities, and if their actions violate these, they feel distress.

Women have recently been seen to place a higher emphasis on self than on marriage and family. To be good wife, you had to be able to sustain a good marriage.

Marriage is evaluated on the basis of its contribution to women’s satisfaction. If the marriage is constraining, it is the wife’s right and even duty to get out of it. Marriage should serve the self.

To escape from the self is to free oneself of the struggle to maintain a certain image. People have escapist impulses because of stressful concerns in life. When society senses escape, it is quick to condemn. African society has a long tradition of being practical and realistic, and anything that takes a person away from reality tends to attract disapproval.

Self defeating behaviour results from a desire to avoid feeling bad about the self. It is distressing to think that others are laughing at you or regarding you in some negative fashion. Women resorted to self defeating in order to avoid a negative view of themselves.
Sometimes self expression should be accompanied by obligation behaviour. Women are more likely to follow the rules for self expression, while at the same time they endorse the rules for avoiding conflict. In negative situations women may experience tension and difficulty between meeting their own needs and the needs of the others.

The most obvious reason for escaping from self-awareness is because such awareness is acutely unpleasant. Events have power to make self awareness unpleasant because the self is generally considered to consist of stable properties. Each event reveals something about the permanent features of the self.

To women set backs bring anger, frustration and sadness, which provide energy for making changes such as finding alternative strategies. The self to women is associated with numerous standards and expectations. Women have great expectations. One measures oneself against other’s expectations, against levels and hierarchies, goals and ambitions. Women are ambitious. Falling short of these standards creates unpleasant affective states.

Sometimes women may be driven by self destructive motives. Rights must always be accompanied by consideration of the other person to be appropriate. Rights should take the form of attending to the needs of others.

Women are easily able to increase their assertion when instructed to do so. When self image is threatened women fear that they have nothing left to hold on. The result may be panic and anxiety. Women consider misappropriate negative aggressive behaviour in high threat situations.
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