GENDER STEREOTYPES VERSUS GENDER EQUALITY: A CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF SOME CHARACTERS IN SWAARTBOOI'S "UMANDISA" AND SAULE'S "IDINGA"

BY

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DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to the following people who are part of my life and who are supportive to my academic progression.

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DECLARATION

I declare that, GENDER STEREOTYPES VERSUS GENDER EQUALITY: A critical analysis of some characters in Swartbooi’s "uMandisa" and Saule’s "Idinga" is my own work, that all the sources used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references, and that this treatise was not previously submitted by me for a degree at another university.

N. A. MAJOLA

DATE
SUMMARY

The focus of this study will be on gender stereotypes versus gender equality in Swaartbooi’s novel “UMandisa” and in Saule’s novel “Idinga”.

CHAPTER ONE will be the introductory chapter where the aim of the study, methodology, motivation and definition of terms will be given, as well as the biographical outline of Ncedile Saule and that of V.N.M. Swaartbooi.

CHAPTER TWO will focus on developing the theoretical framework of the study. Theories are used to advocate a change of approach in the teaching and reading of literature. The theory to be employed in this study will be based on aspects of the female gender and feminism.

CHAPTER THREE will explore the issues of gender stereotypes as portrayed in Swaartbooi’s “UMANDISA”

CHAPTER FOUR will focus on gender equality as portrayed in “IDINGA” by Saule and “UMANDISA” by Swaartbooi. The two novels raised the question of equality between women and men.

CHAPTER FIVE will serve as the concluding chapter where the evaluation of the study will be made.
CHAPTER 1

1.1 INTRODUCTION

The focus of this study will be on gender stereotypes versus gender equality in Swaartbooi’s novel *uMandisa* and in Saule’s novel *Idinga*. It is noted that male domination and male preference is very common in African society and as such are found in some isiXhosa literary genres. In these pieces of art, women are sometimes regarded as “honorary children”. They are not regarded as “whole” beings; they are viewed as unfinished, physically mutilated and emotionally dependent. On the other hand men are “designed” to be dominating. It is observed by the researcher that the seeds of inequality are a focal point for gender stereotypes in the selected texts because these seeds are said (by Papanek in Tinker, 1990) to be planted deep in the consciousness of women and men, often by other women who perceive their self interest to lie in the hands of men rather than other women. Gender stereotypes are a sign of gender inequality. It is said that these stereotypes are actually important in socializing women and men to accept inequality. In *uMandisa*, it is noticed that gender stereotypes play a role in socializing characters in the novel to accept inequality. It should also be noted that stereotypes do not necessarily reflect reality; rather they represent culturally shared beliefs about what particular individuals should be like.
It is in regard to gender stereotypes resulting in inequality, that I raise the issue of gender equality as reflected in the above mentioned texts. Gender equality comes from the feminist point of view or belief in sex equality combined with a commitment to eradicate sexist domination and to transform society (Humm, 1992). In researching the above texts, I will highlight the fact that inequality between the sexes (shown in the character concerned) is not the result of biological necessities but rather produced by the cultural construction of gender differences (Morris, 1993). Jones and Olson (1991) state that, it is society, not nature, that gives men the drive to dominate and keep women from achieving careers and power.

As expressed in the above mentioned texts **UMandisa** and **Idinga**, it is not an easy thing to put women in leading positions as it is culturally known that those positions are best suited for men. This issue is appropriately represented in Saule’s **Idinga**.

Aspects of gender and feminist theory will play a role in assisting this work in the area of analyzing aspects of gender stereotypes and gender equality in **UMandisa** and **Idinga**.
1.2 AIM OF STUDY

The researcher has explored some of the avenues that deal with gender stereotypes in the literature of indigenous languages. The approach of other researchers is mainly on gender stereotypes and gender inequality. This researcher sees that there is a need also to look at stereotypes not only in conjunction with inequality but with equality as well. This is to prove that isiXhosa authors consciously and sometimes unconsciously create characters in their work that reveal the issue of equality between men and women role players. This means that in one way or another these authors are moving away from the traditional belief which is culturally inclined that to say “woman” is to say “kitchen”.

1.3 METHODOLOGY

The method to be employed in this study will be based on utilizing both secondary and primary sources. Since Swaartbooi and Saule’s novels will be analysed within the framework of existing literary theory, important texts sourced from academic and public libraries have been consulted as important sources of critical information. The aspects of gender related issues to be looked at in UMandisa includes gender stereotypes, seeds of inequality, socialization for inequality, sexist division of labour, defiance of gender inequality and these will lead the researcher to look at aspects of
gender equality in the selected texts. Western evaluation criteria will be the basic tools in the evaluation of the writer’s novels but will be modified to suit isiXhosa culture and tradition, where necessary and appropriate.

1.4 MOTIVATION

In this research the researcher intends to motivate other Xhosa male authors to understand that women are no longer belonging to the world of powerlessness and submissiveness. This means that they are urged to make a change in their women character portrayal. They should have women characters who are taking leading roles in social, economical and political issues of their genres. It is also important that they must portray women characters that have equal status with male characters in their books. This research is to motivate other researchers as well to understand that it is not only women authors that raise the status of women character in their books but also male authors like Saule: (1995) who does that whether consciously or unconsciously. Researchers should focus their researches not only on gender inequality as though there are no artistic works in isiXhosa literature, which deal on gender equality.
1.12 DEFINITION OF TERMS

1.12.1 GENDER

According to Lizbeth Goodman in her book “Literature and Gender” (1996: vii), gender refers to ways of seeing and representing people and situations based on sex difference; gender is a social or cultural category, influenced by stereotypes about female and male behaviour that exist in our attitudes and beliefs.

Gender is a term which basically denotes sexual type male or female. It is a term which can exclude alternatives or additions. The term relates more specifically to the roles which women and men, boys and girls are socialized into, that is, their respective and different types of behaviour. In all, gender refers to the social stereotypes and expectations of the way in which both men and women should behave.

In the creation of feminist consciousness by Gerda Lerner (1993: 4), Lerner has shown how the metaphors of gender constructed the male as the norm and as the whole and powerful, the female as unfinished, visionary mutilated and emotionally dependent. She summarized the major assumptions about gender and patriarchal society as follows:
“Men and women are essentially different creatures not only in their biological equipments, but in their needs capacities and functions.”

Penelope Eckert and Sally McConnell-Ginet in their book, Language and Gender (2003: 10), conclude that:

“Gender is not something that we are born with, and not something we have, but something we do (West and Zimmerman 1987) something we perform.”

(Butler 1990)

1.5.2 FEMINISM

In “Literature and Gender” edited by Lizbeth Goodman (1996, X) feminism is explained as politics: a recognition of historical and cultural subordination of women (the only world wide majority to be treated as minority) and a resolve to do something about it. Feminism is an over emphasis about the modern movement for women’s liberation.

In “Feminist Literary Theory” edited by Mary Eagleton (1986: 212), Coward and Barrett: 1975 define feminism as an alignment of political interest, which some women writers may adopt and some may not. But Coward claims
further that feminism can never be a product of the identity of women’s experiences and interests.

1.5.3 GENDER STEREOTYPES

According to Berry J. W. and Segall M. H. in their book “Cross-cultural psychology” (1992: 59), gender stereotypes are widely shared beliefs within a society about what males and females are generally like as have been studied for decades in western societies. A common finding is that these stereotypes of males and females are very different from one another, with males usually viewed as dominant, independent, and adventurous and females as emotional, submissive, and weak. Only recently have studies examined whether distinctions are made in other cultures between male and female stereotypes and exactly what these beliefs are like.

1.5.4 STEREOTYPE

According to The World Book Dictionary (1992: 2053), stereotype is a figurative, a fixed form of expression, character, or image something stereotyped conventional type. Long John Silver, in Stevenson’s novel “Treasure island”, is for instance the stereotype of a pirate. Villains are often more stereotyped than ordinary people (Wall street Journal). With regards to the general condemnation of immigrants coming into South Africa from other
African countries, the worth of each immigrant should best be judged by personal qualities and skills, and not by group stereotypes.

1.5.5 WOMAN


Woman, lady or female member of the feminine sex. Woman is the general word for an adult member of the feminine sex, Examples are: a married woman, a woman of high ideals.

Lady applies particularly to a woman of refinement or high social position, an instance is: the manners of a lady. It is sometimes used to refer to any woman often in an inconsistent connotation like: the lady I hire to clean my apartment.

Female applies to a person of any age, baby or child as well as adult. It emphasizes the sex and is largely confined to science and statistics.
1.5.6 WOMAN OF THE WORLD

This is a woman who knows people and customs, and is tolerant of both.

1.5.7 PATRIARCHAL CONCEPTS

According to Lerner in her book, "Creation of feminist consciousness" (1993: 3) patriarchal concepts are built in all the mental constructs of civilization in such a way as to remain largely invisible. She also stated that patriarchy emerged as the dominant form of societal order which gradually institutionalizes the rights of man to control and appropriate the sexual and reproductive services of women. Out of this form of dominance develop other forms of dominance for example economies are controlled by men.

1.5.8 MARGINALISATION

To be in the margin is to be part of the whole but outside the main body. Carole Boyce Davies (1991) declares it is to live as others live on the edge. He states that we develop a particular way of seeing reality. We look from the outside and from the inside out. We focus our attention on the centre as well as in the margin.
1.5.9 SEX

According to Penelope Eckert and Sally McConnell-Ginet in their book “Language and Gender” (2003:10) sex is a biological categorization based primarily on reproductive potential, whereas gender is the social elaboration of biological sex. Gender builds on biological sex, it exaggerates biological difference and in indeed, it carries biological difference into domains in which it is completely irrelevant. There is no biological reason, for example, why women should mince and men should swagger, or why women should have red toenails and men should not. But while we think of sex as biological and gender as social, this distinction is not clear-cut People tend to think of gender as the result of nature hence social and while sex is simply given by biology. However, there is no obvious point at which sex leaves off and gender begins, partly because there is no single objective biological criterion for male or female sex.

Sex is based on a combination of anatomical, endocrinal factors for assignment. It is based very much on cultural beliefs about what actually makes someone male or female.
1.6 BIOGRAPHICAL OUTLINE OF NCEDILE SAULE

The renowned author, Ncedile Saule, masterfully weaves fate, love, hate, fear and faith together in this suspense-filled novel Ukhozi Olumaphiko “The Hero”.

He is a novelist, short story writer and also a Radio play-write. He wrote a radio play “Amaciko” in 1988. As a radio play-write, one of his plays “Unyana womntu” was broadcasted in King Williams Town’s radio station. The play “uLindithuba” was in a competition at Fort Hare in 1986 where it won accolades. The same play won an award the following year from the “South Africa Script Writers Association” in Johannesburg. He also wrote the novel “Idinga” in 1995.

1.7 BIOGRAPHICAL OUTLINE OF V. N. M. SWAARTBOOI

Born in 1907 and died in 1937. She was born at Ngqamakhwe, and became the second Xhosa woman writer. Her parents were Christians. She attended the Methodist school at Emgcwe (her father was the principal there). In 1924 she went to Mgwali Training School. She studied at Heald town School in Nxukhwebe, and received her junior teacher’s certificate in 1926. She was on the staff of Mgwali Girls Practicing School in 1929, teaching domestic
science. She was also active in church affairs and wrote one novel, “UMandisa” (1935).

1.8 CONCLUSION

In this chapter the general objective of this research study was put forward. Emphasis was laid on the focus of the work being a shift from dwelling on gender inequalities to that of gender equality. Terms related to this research have been duly defined as well as brief biographies of the authors of the books this work is centred on. In this chapter the Xhosa male, and other readers are encouraged to see to it that women are no longer belonging to the world of powerlessness and submissiveness, women are encouraged to take the leading roles in areas of social, economical and political spheres of things.
2.1 INTRODUCTION

In this chapter the definition of feminism and other related terms to feminism will be explained. Such definition of terms will take us more to the issues surrounding gender stereotypes and gender equality. The theory to be brought forth in this chapter will be based on aspects of gender and feminism. Women in Africa often find themselves primarily defined in terms of motherhood and their duty to the family, and by extension, to the nation. Hence the term “mother of the nation”.

Feminists question the long standing, domino’s male fallacentric ideologies, patriarchal attitudes and male interpretation in literature (Cuddon, 1992). Feminist attacks male notion of values in literature by offering critiques of male authors and representations of women in literature and also by privileging women. Delmar edited by Herramen and Stewart (1994) state that a feminist is someone who holds that, women suffer discrimination because of their sex; that they have specific needs which remain negated and unsatisfied, and the satisfaction of these needs will require a radical change in the social, economic and political order.
This study explores questions of marginality and canonicity as they relate to African women writers. It expresses that one can look at African women writers using notions of marginality, minoring, and effacement in order to locate these writers’ positions in the context of a variety of literary traditions. One has to move beyond these traditions, however, to view the specificity of African women’s writing by examining how these works decenter, oppose, and transform hierarchical or silencing arrangements.

According to Carde Boyce Davies in “Women studies vol. 14” (1991: 249 - 263), the oppositional status of the African woman writer in relation to literary canonicity provides the means for the articulation of a variety of theoretical formulations around issues of hegemonic ideologies and resistance. If we expand the terms of contemporary discussions of marginality, we can read this assertion as multiple marginality. Alternatively, if we allow a hierarchical arrangement, we can observe a persistent and multi-layered minoring or reductionist notion. Further, we can talk about a symbolic effacement. These three approaches capture the varying levels of marginalizing, distancing and erasures inherent in the African woman writer’s very existence. African women’s writing also resists, decenters, and transforms these categorizations, calling into question the very grounds on which they are constructed.
2.3 OTHER VIEWS OF FEMINISTS IN SOUTH AFRICA

The designation of minor status for women is best articulated by South African woman writer Ellen Kuzwayo in her autobiography “Call Me Woman” (1985). Indeed the South African situation, by its very polarization, allow us to see clearly - race and gender inequalities in glaring proportions and to come to some understanding of how literary minoring works. Apartheid names enforce dominance or subordinate patterns taken for granted. African women are designated as minors by law, yet in most societies women are effectively minors. In “Call Me a Woman,” Kuzwayo began her chapter titled “minors” with the statement that, in South Africa black women are minors even in relation to their own sons. To illustrate this, she explicitly unleashes her most painful experiences in a country of her birth, when her own son, who was then a teenager, and who she, as a single mother, was supporting, was ironically the only one with the authority to sign the forms permitting her to obtain a passport. Winnie Mandela in “Part of My Soul went with Him” is equally explicit: “a black woman must emerge… against the traditional background of a woman’s place being at home! Of course most cultures are like that. But with us… we are permanent minors by law” (1984: 84).

The works of these women reflect the awareness of their social statuses. Bessie Head titled her novel “A question of power” (1974) and proceeds to
examine the basis of power relations in religion, in society, and their respective effect on a lonely woman by the name Elizabeth, who was in Botswana on exile. In the English version of Nawal al Saadawi’s classic novel “Firdaus becomes woman at Point Zero” (1975): Firdaus experiences reductionist ideologies to a cipher at all levels of society. The connections need not be belaboured. The African woman writer is deliberately writing and representing a group long relegated to a deafening silence. The very act of self articulation dismantles her social construction as silent. “These women who have been branded as ‘minors’ by their country!... are the unsung heroines” Kuzwayo (1985:240-250) says significantly, and naming the many women who have excelled despite the odds is an important feature of her text.

2.4 WOMEN IN THE EYES OF MEN

Gender inequality or marginalization of women has also culminated as a result of politics and laws which men institutionalized or rather “promulgated” to maintain their dominance over women. Women suffered prejudice in all social institutions, including family, the workplace, educational institutions, the mass media and the society at large. Men had subordinated women in all social relations and as such the concept of feminist identity was shaped and distorted by patriarchal social relations. The oppression of women as a structure of inequality is deeply embedded in the language and culture of
every society. Simone de Beauvoir in her book “The Second Sex,” (1949) writes:

Humanity is male and man defines woman
not in herself but as relative to him, she is
not regarded as autonomous being...And she
is simply what man decrees, thus she is called
‘the sex’ by which is meant that she appears
essentially to the male as a sexual being. For
him she is sex absolute sex, no less. She is
defined and differentiated with reference to
man and he with reference to her, she is the
incidental, the inessential as opposed to
essential. He is the subject, he is the
Absolute - she is the other.

De Beauvoir (1989: 16)

De Beauvoir makes it clear in this passage that, far more than a franchise is
needed to reverse the oppression of women.

One of the feminist writers Viviane Forrester poses the question “What
often do not know how women carve, invent, decipher the world. The world
is seen through the eyes of others. The world only knows what men's eyes
see, and that is ‘a crippled world, mutilated, deprived of women’s vision. If men were interested in the women’s vision couldn’t they have complained about it? After all they would have to say, “we have communicated our images, our vision to you, you are withholding yours.” This blindness to women’s vision, which in fact prohibits any global vision of the world, any vision of the human species, has been fashioned by men for women’s mutual impoverishment.

Today how can men prevent women from unraveling unknown literary domains to them to liberate them from their redundant vision which is deeply deformed by this lack? The lack of women’s vision not only creates a vacuum but it perverts, alters, annuls every statement made by women. The images, the pictures, the frames, the movements, the rhythms, the abrupt new shots of which the women have been deprived, these are the prisoners of women’s vision, of a confined vision.

Women are going to seize (they are beginning to do so) what they should have acquired naturally at the same time as man did. Women will have to defend themselves against an accumulation of cliches of sacred routines which men delight in or reject, and which will frequently trap women. They will have to see, to look at themselves unaffectedly, with a natural gaze that is so difficult to maintain, they will have to dare to see not only their own fantasies, but also instead of an old catalogue, venture into fresh new
images of a weary world. Women are the secret to be discovered, they are the fissures, they are the source where no one has ever been.

Most writers feel that one of the contributory factors for women is not to gain access to education. These points not only to maliciously planned conspiracy by males to keep women out of education, but to a complex combination of material and ideological factors. The catalogue of material factors is long: inequality in education, lack of privacy the burdens of child bearing and rearing, domestic obligations amongst others, yet equally decisive are the restriction of family and social expectations. Society was governed by the man’s world, and it was there that the significant events, which shaped peoples’ lives, began.

Wollstonecraft (1982) likens the plight of women to ‘poor African slaves...’ subject to prejudices that brutalize them and concludes with the wish that women be welcomed to the community of reasonable men:

“Would men but generously snap our chain, and be content with rational fellowship instead of slavish obedience, they would find us more observant daughters, more
affectionate sister, more faithful wives,
more reasonable mothers - in a word, better
citizens.”

Wollstonecraft (1982: 263)

John Stuart Mills (1978) shares the same sentiment as Wollstonecraft, in his book “The Subjection of Women.” He argued that reason demands the extension of the abstract human rights of modern constitutions to women, and he also compares the oppression of women to slavery. All women are brought up from the very earliest years in the belief that their ideal of character is the very opposite to that of men; not self-will and governed by self-control, but submission and yielding to the control of other. This distinction not only cripples women, who are subsequently consigned to subordinate roles in all areas of public life, but it also frustrates the societal progress as a whole.

How can women's voice be heard if their vision cannot be seen? We have been under represented in both system of representation, those of languages both spoken and written, and of visual imagery. Laura Mulvey in her article “Feminist Film” (1979: 181) feels that the reason for women being marginalized in art or film making is mainly that, films made by women are predominantly about women whether by choice or another aspect of marginalization, in a social order that is patriarchal. Another very general
feature of historical societies was the division of labour between the sexes, with women increasingly confined to domestic work and child rearing, thereby creating a “woman’s world” that of household. The world constituted by men was the public world of politics and market place, which stood in authority over that of women.

The problem for women writers or artist lies not only in the production of writing; equal fraught area is its reception. Women have been linked with selflessness and altruism and men with a driving egotism that produces art. In an entirely circular way, art is male and men are natural creators of art. Thus if women do attempt to write they are seen simply as bringing to the major body of established male texts the ‘feminine’ qualities they are supposed to represent in life generally.

Women writers were acknowledged to possess sentiments, refinement, tact, observation, domestic expertise, high moral tone, and knowledge of female character, and though lack originality, intellectual training, abstract intelligence, humor, self control and knowledge of male character. Male writers had most of the desirable qualities: power, breadth, distinctness, clarity, learning, abstract intelligence, shrewdness, experience, humor, knowledge of everyone’s character, and open mindedness. Research reveals that “this practice of ascribing rigidly structured concept of male and
female style of writing is still alive and well in the twentieth century reviewing" “Feminist Literary Theory” (1986: 42).

2.5 RELATION OF WOMEN TO MALE LITERARY PRODUCTION

The woman’s contribution has been seen as that of the power behind the throne - the contribution of women as research assistants, secretaries, or supportive wives to the literary production of men. A perfunctory dedication ‘to my wife without whom this book would not have been possible’ is the most acknowledgment that wives of literary males can expect for the domestic labour that often has indeed, facilitated production of the book. At times the involvement goes beyond domestic labour or clerical work women often leave behind, in the form of letters or diaries or journals as an indication of their creativity.

The second relation of women to male literary production was that which views ‘women as sign’. Virginia Woolf in “A Room of One's Own” (1981: 57) has commented on the contradictory position of women in history charged with symbolic significance while materially deprived:

“Imaginatively she is of the highest importance, practically she is completely insignificant. She pervades poetry from cover to cover, she is all but absent to
history. She dominates the lives of kings and conquerors in fiction, in fact she was the slave of any boy whose parents forced a ring upon her finger. Some of the most inspired words, some of the most profound thoughts in literature fall from her lips, in real life she could hardly read, could hardly spell, and was the property of her husband.”

This contradiction within literary production show that women have difficulty in gaining access to production as writers, but as the characters, images, myths or symbol in writing in which they are richly present. The difference is between ‘women’ as active, productive, historical beings and ‘women’ as a sign construct created in culture. Women appear in the writing of men as the muse, the idealized inspiration for the male writers.

2.6 PATRIARCHAL NATURE OF LEGAL SYSTEM (S. A. PERSPECTIVE)

For many years and all over the world, many legal systems or laws have reflected the interests of men in society, to take few examples: women were not allowed to vote in presidential elections in most countries, they did not have representation in parliament (national assembly), they were denied
many political rights which were accorded to their male counterparts etc. Ngaire Naffine argues that the subordination of women in the law is endemic:

“The position that the law is imbued with the culture of men and therefore tends to entrench their position of dominance. The indictment is far more reaching law it is said, is conceived through the male eye, it represents the male perspective. It starts from a male experience and fails to recognize the female view.”

Naffine (1990: 7-8)

The law in South Africa has been one of the drive behind the stereotype that men are superior beings than women. The law has lagged behind towards societal development. This law no longer corresponds to the actual social and economic position of women. The law has become an obstacle to the progress of women, and therefore impinges on societal progression.

Women were denied or refused to practice as attorneys in South Africa, “Murray,” (1994: 639) R. P. B. Davis: the law of nature destines and qualifies the female sex for the bearing and nurture of children and for the custody of the world, all life-long callings of women, inconsistency with these radical and sacred duties of their sex, as is the profession of the law, are departures
from the order of nature, and when voluntary, treason against it (Davis, 1914: 384). Although the attitudes expressed by Davis in 1914 no longer enjoy support, the South African legal profession continues to be dominated by men, (O’Regan: 1999).

The effect of this systematic gender inequality is expressed by Joanne Fedler who describes her experience as a woman working in the South African legal system thus:

“Becoming a lawyer... is the process of becoming aware of power: power of language. And this is a heady space to be in, to be sure. But for me, it has been tempered by the knowledge that this profession of mine (can I call it my own?) admits me belatedly. I feel like a recruited member to a men only club that has recently revised its exclusinafy policy. I am allowed in, told the rules, tolerated, patronized. I must behave, think and speak like the boy or else I will be snickered at like a person who uses the wrong silver knife to butter her bread. In what voice does the women lawyer speak when she knows that the power of her
profession is a black robe under which she
still menstruate?”

Fedler, (1994: 73-75)

From this extract by Fedler it is clear that the system representation which are available within the Western culture are so irredeemably male, that a woman can only be heard if she adopts a male perspective, if she speaks as a man, or assumes a pseudonym identity.

In South Africa, the rights of all individuals including women are enshrined in the constitution (Act 180 of 1996 S. A). The S. A. constitution (1996), under the Bill of Rights state, under the heading “Equality”: No person shall be unfairly discriminated against, directly or indirectly, and, without derogating from the generality of this provision, on one or more of the following grounds in particular: race, gender, sex, ethnic or social origin, colour, sexual orientation, age, disability, religion, conscience belief, culture, or language. “The protection from discrimination on the explicit ground of sexual orientation and even gender, is relatively rare in the world's constitutions, and it was placed on the S. A. constitutional agenda after a concerted effort from women.
Prior to the drafting of the constitution of 1996 (Act 180, S. A.), the Women’s National Coalition was established in 1994 in order to undertake ‘a problem of self examination and research to expose fully the problems facing women both historically and in the present time, “S. A. Feminist Theory” (1990 – 1994: XVI). The production of this document was an achievement which hold great promise for South African women who are struggling to overcome historical division. But the draft is not a legal document and it could not be included in the constitution as it contained provision protecting a specific group of people (women). Material problems are still great, these are rife with ideological questions and the divisions between men and women still exist even in our new “democratic,” constitutional dispensation.

At schools, gender difference is also significant. As of yet, not even the agreements in principle about gender inequality have been carried through to policies for school curriculum, history syllabuses are now being radically revised, but literary and cultural matters seem to lag behind. There is a high drop out rate for girls that has been reported (ANC Women’s League 1993: 46-48) and the survey of various university in SA showed that considerably more women are enrolled for undergraduate studies (Badsha and Kotecha, 1994). Teachers, individual writers and performers are taking up the need to develop the children’s understanding of the question about women that faces this society, but so far theirs are isolated efforts.
2.7 CONCLUSION

In this chapter my aim has been to bring understanding regarding the multiple theoretical positions and the reality of African women’s writings and how they relate to these writings. For instance, the views of Ellen Kuzwayo and Bessie are based on their practical difficulties to live under partriarchal society. I also identified how African women’s challenge decenters or support all these various critical positions. Black women have been silent for too long. Theirs has been a deafening silence. They are now beginning to find their voice, they are claiming back, the right to speak for themselves, and not “others” doing it for them.
3.1 INTRODUCTION

The definition of gender stereotype will be explained, followed by the critical abstract analysis on gender issues through the eyes of Panelope Eckert and Sally McConnell-Ginet. The issues of gender stereotypes will be unleashed in the novel *uMandisa* by V. N. M. Swaartbooi (1934).

Characterization may also draw on the ideas and prejudices a reader may have about a certain group of people, and as is the case with stereotypes become part of the character presented in the novel. V.N.M. Swartbooi uses the idea of stereotyped women in *uMandisa*. Woman characters in her novel are stereotyped.

Stereotype is an attempt to define or evaluate people who differ from one’s own norms, somatically (that is according to physical features, masculine or feminine), culturally in terms of social institutions, on the basis of a system of beliefs and conceptions (gender, whether proven or unproven, real or imaginary).
3.2 WHAT THEMES ARE REVEALED AND MAY EMERGE AS IMPORTANT IN THE NOVEL UMANDISA AS THEY CAN REFLECT STEREOTYPICAL IDEOLOGIES

Many themes emerge which are important in relation to women’s work. Women must stay home and give birth instead of competition in men’s world. Connections between women and girls across cultures and generations, as well as motherhood are the conflicting issues between domestic responsibility or work outside the home whether it be creative or career oriented responsibilities.

In some African cultures, you find that when a newly married woman is first expected by the family to give birth so she can be recognized as a real woman. Members of the family especially the elders, will love a woman who gives birth. This can be seen as a stereotype because failure to do so, could be viewed as a curse upon the woman. The connection between women (that is MamCirha and her daughter in law is about giving birth). The connection seen is associated with motherhood. In their discussion from the on-set, an issue of giving birth and the naming of the baby had been raised.

In the book *uMandisa* by Swaartbooi (1975: 4) MamCirha states that:
“Umzukulwana wam ndifuna abe nguMandisa igama lakhe, mntwana wam. Kaloku kumnandi kakhulu kum, kuba ufumene intombi, kuba mna ndafumana amadoda odwa, watsho uMamCirha, ethetha nomolokazana wakhe.”

“I wish my grand daughter could be named Mandisa my child. I am so excited because I got a baby girl. I only have male children”, said MamCirha, speaking to her daughter in law.

Another important thing that clearly emerged from this novel is women’s work as being very stereotypical. MamNzothwa’s work in her homestead is associated with domestic work. This domestic work mentality is passed on from mothers to daughters. Such type of work must be carried on when the girl gets married. Even Mandisa when growing up as a child with the grandmother was raised to know how to do domestic work. During her leisure time she used to play with other girls using dolls. The doll is used symbolically, since the doll and the girl in a home have a parallel meaning, both being men’s depiction of women’s role. This performance attributed to the girls in the novel can be said to have been scripted or written by a male author. The life of an African girl is here symbolized as one intended to end up in womanhood and giving birth. A doll seems to set up the issue of
generations of women and the female gender in general, and the usage of
dolls symbolically represents the identity of femininity rather than
masculinity.

Mandisa used to play with other girls as a child building rondarvel houses
and cleaning the houses neatly. She also used to play mock marriage
performances. This reveals the domestic work nature of women rearing its
head in her early life. Even the female teacher of Mandisa is used to this
domestic work.

3.3 CRITICAL ANALYSIS ABSTRACTS ABOUT GENDER
(CONSTRUCTING, DECONSTRUCTING AND RECONSTRUCTING
THROUGH THE EYES OF PANELOPE ECKERT AND SALLY
MCCONNELL-GINET)

Panelope Eckert and Sally McConnell Ginet in the book titled “Language
and Gender” (2003: 9) reveal the fact that people are surrounded by gender
lore from the time they are very small. Aspects of gender are ever present in
conversation, humour and conflict. Gender is embedded so thoroughly in
pupils institution, people’s actions, people’s beliefs and people’s desires. To
many people gender seems natural. The world swarms with ideas about
gender and beliefs about gender seem to be obvious truth. This is the way
the patriarchal society is constructed. There is a need to step back and
examine gender from a new perspective or way of thinking. There must be a paradigm shift regarding the idea of gender. The idea of gender equality can replace those injustices and unequal treatment between males and females. This idea requires that we suspend what we are used to and what feels comfortable, and question some of our fundamental beliefs.

Gender is so central to the understanding of ourselves and of the world that it is difficult to pull back and examine it from a new perspective.

In the book *UMandisa* by V. N. M. Swaartbooi (1975: 10 & 11) issues of gender stereotypes are revealed:

“*UMandisa ebedlala ithuba elide neentwanazana zalapho, kube yinto emyoli.*

“*Tyhini! Hleli nje, mama, akwazi ukuba siza kuba nomtshato ngomso? “Ngumtshato wani, na, Mandi, lo ungomso, ndingakhange ndiwuve?”*

uMandisa, etsiba phandle selengxame
ngokungathile sekutshatiswa ngalooyi ntsimbi.

Nanko ebaleka egqotsile ukuya koonopopi
bakhe, kaloku wayekhelwe indlwana yabo
efekethiswa ngomnye wabaninawa bakayise.
Ibityatyekwa isindwe le ndlu, njengezindlu zonke.
Le nzwakazi yafundela apha kuyo ukusinda
nokutyabeka. Babhlala apha kuyo oonopopi
bakaMandisa. Ukutshona kwelanga yonke imihla,
uMandisa ebeya aye kubalalisa, ukuze yonke imihla
kusasa aye kukroba ukuba banjani na. Kaloku
nani niyazi ukuba le nto umntu yinto elala ephilile
kanti yovuka selibika ihlababa, nokuba yintloko
ebuhlungu.”

"Mandisa enjoys playing for a long time with
other girls. 'Mother are you aware that we are
going to have a marriage tomorrow?' “What wedding
Mandy, what wedding will be here tomorrow because I
never “heard” of any marriage?” 'I"ts a dolls wedding
mother. I thought I told you but it seem I didn’t. I told
grandma only'. “Oh! I heard sisi. You will get the bread
you're asking for”. Replied MamNzothwa. ‘Thank you mother’ said Mandisa quickly charging outside as if the wedding was happening at that very hour.”

There she ran towards her dolls; her father’s siblings spoilt her by erecting a small dolls’ house. That is where this young beauty learnt how to “ukusinda nokutyabeka.” To clean these mud houses. Everyday at sunset and sunrise Mandisa used to check how they are. You all know that a human being will go sleeping feeling well and yet she will wake up in minor headache.

The playing of dolls and mock marriages and cleaning of the house are all based on and allocated to a sexual division of labour and designed to indoctrinate/instill these gender defined roles. Household based education was informal, utilitarian and individualized and it was non-literate and offered in vernacular. Mothers educate daughters and their female servants.

As can be seen in the case of Mandisa it is Mandisa’s mother who teaches her about all duties that she is supposed to do in her childhood.
In the book “The Creation of feminist Consciousness” by Gerda Lerner (1993: 193) it is stated that Christine was bitter about having been denied a good education mostly at the insistence of her mother, she would rather have studied from books than playing with dolls. But as a young widow she was able to overcome the deficiencies in her education with great effort. She became a writer, a poet and a historian. This is similar to Mandisa’s situation because as a young girl she used to play with dolls. But the focus was more further than that. She studied further and become a professional teacher. This shows us that education gives women the ability to defend themselves and their sexuality and to find solace and sanctuary for women.

Mandisa studied further and became a professional teacher. In Swaartbooi *uMandisa* it is stated that:

“It was a co-incidence that the eldest family daughter of Bekaphi was teaching in the same school where Mandisa was teaching. She taught sub B learners while Mandisa taught sub A. The name of this daughter is Rietta Nomathemba Bekaphi, who studied at Nxukhwebe. Both Mandisa and Nomathemba gave time for school preparations.”

UMandisa (1975: 42)

From her childhood Mandisa, was indoctrinated to the issues of gender. During her play time she knew with what to play with and what character to play. Mandisa was empowered by female games and female activities. She belonged to a subordinate group and the condition of subordination is socially determined. She followed all steps that her mother took, fetching wood, fetching water from the river, and using cow dung. All these activities feature how women should behave in the patriarchal society. To other women, gender stereotyping seem natural, the patriarchal society swells with ideas about gender beliefs and gender conformity is regarded as the obvious truth.
According to Anne K. Mellor in the book “Romantism & Gender” (1993: 17) gender refers to socially constructed rules and functions allotted to individuals on the basis of perceived sexual difference. Sexuality itself is a social construction.

In the book *UMandisa* by V. N. M. Swaartbooi (1975: 12 & 13) the use of gender referring to socially constructed roles is evidenced.

For instance in page 12 and 13 it is written that:

“There are many things which Mandisa likes to play with. Like other children she liked playing with. She likes to play a game *icekwa* with other kids. The person left with the game *icekwa* were mocked by other kids. There were other games she liked to play (*ndize*) hide and seek, (*uggquphu*) skipping and (*nokupuca*) playing with small stones.”

This quotation shows that Mandisa is indoctrinated with the issues of gender. From her childhood Mandisa was indoctrinated with the issues of gender. She follows all steps that her mother does, fetching the wood, fetching the water from the river, using the cow dung. It is evident in *uMandisa* by Swartbooi:

“*Vuka, vuka, Mandisa. Uya kuya nini na esikolweni?*” wothuka *uMandisa ebuthongweni*, *weva unina xa atshoyo.*

“*Kutheni ukusuke ulale ungabi savuka? Andithandi, ndingafuni ukuba ufike sesingene isikolo.*
Kaloku mntwan’ am, kufuneka umke ukhe wandingqushis, wakha amanzi. Kuyalinywa kanjalonje kudala abalimi besemasimini, ”watsho uMamNzothwa.”

“Ungqushile uMandisa akuggiba ukuphunga, emana ekhwezela nomlilo ukuba ungacimi. uMamNzothwa waqokela wathi, “Ndakubuya, ndiya kukukhulula ukuba uye kukha amanzi, mna ndishiyeye ndiqqibezela ukungqusha ndimise imbiza eziko.”

“Wake up, Wake up, Mandisa. When are you going to school?”

Mandisa arose from sleep when she heard her mother. “Why are you sleeping for so long? I do not like neither do I want you to be late for school. Remember my child you must grind the mealies, and also fetch some water”.

“It is ploughing time and the people are already in the field.” MamNzothwa said. After having some tea Mandisa went to grind some mealies and to make fire. MamNzothwa concludes by saying, “When I come back, I will let you go and fetch some water, but I will stay behind to grind and cook the mealies.”

UMandisa (1975: 17)

Women were accustomed to raising their female children to learn and do the things they themselves learnt from their mothers, thereby continuing the vicious circle, just like MamNzothwa did with Mandisa

3.4 LIMITATIONS IN EDUCATION FOR GIRLS

Lerner in his book “The creation of feminist consciousness” (1993: 22) lends his idea as we survey the history of women’s education in Europe and later in the United States. We can make two generalizations: women are almost universally disadvantaged in education when compared with their brothers. Education is, for those few women who are able to obtain it, distinctly a class privilege. Historically, education has served a utilitarian purpose by training people in the specific skills needed by a given society. Such education was, for the millennial family based on a form of apprenticeship.
While resources and opportunities in family based education were allocated following sexual division of labour and were designed to fit boys and girls into their gender-defined roles, girls could often acquire skills and knowledge equal to that of their brothers.

The development of brewing, silk and textile making, embroidery and other such female trades as recognized crafts illustrate this point. Household based education was informal, utilitarian and individualized, it was non-literate and was offered in vernacular. Mothers educated daughters and female servants, fathers educated sons and male servants. It must also be remembered, that statistically, the number of people in any given population who were educated to the point of literacy remained very small until the 17th century.

These stereotypes are also shown when Nomvuyo was denied the opportunity to attend tertiary institution and that opportunity given to her brother Siphiwo to finish off his education.

For instance in the book *UMandisa* by V. N. M. Swaartbooi (1975: 21):

“Kanene uthe utitshala umHloli uya kufika nini Nomvuyo?” Kaloku uthe kushiyeke iiveki zimbini, 
afike ke yena kuleya yesithathu. Uyazi,
Nomvuyo, ubawo undithembise ukuba uya kundisa esinaleni, ukuba ndiphumelele.

Andisavuyi ngako. Kum ngathi kuxhelwe eXhukhwane.”


“The teacher said 'when is the Inspector coming?' “After two weeks” she replied.
“My father promised to send me to the College, if I pass. I will be happy for that”.

“My friend even if I pass I cannot go to the College next year, because Siphiwo is still at school. My father cannot send both of us to College. I must still repeat the same class - standard Six (Grade 8).”

“It is Siphiwo’s second year at College. He wrote a letter last week saying he passed, I hope he is going to finish next year”. ‘Which school are you going Mandisa, so I can also go the same year?’

Nomvuyo was unable to go to college because her brother was still in college. This demonstrates that although the father was willing to send her to college, the brother's education was deemed more important.
3.5 CONCLUSION

A distinction exists between sexes (male and female) which designates a biological reality and sexism which denotes the socially constructed stereotypes and expectations based on that reality. I have deliberated upon certain gender stereotypes as can be seen within the above presentation, of the images in different gender groups and in various forms. Stereotypical gender notions frequently intrude whether consciously or unconsciously. Female writers of marginalized gender groups have devised various strategies for reclaiming and affirming their own identity and position in the world. The way we think and feel about ourselves as human beings is often affected or even determined by sex difference in society.
CHAPTER 4

GENDER EQUALITY

4.1 INTRODUCTION

Women have been attempting, in various ways, to redress the imbalances in gender relations, to loosen the grip of gender stereotypes and to reclaim and put across a more authentic (real) voice. These attempts have taken a number of forms among women. For example, empowering women through education should be judged as a weapon to fight imbalances, promoting the social life of women, rediscovering the work of women writers who have been largely ignored by the male-dominated literary establishments.

4.2 ATTEMPT TO GIVE WOMEN A VOICE

The two novels Idinga by Saule and UMandisa by Swaartbooi are attempting to raise the question of equality between women and men. They border around the point of breaking the silence on women's marginalization. These writers are practical evidences of women who have sought to represent their words through their actions. Areas of specific or inherent women's experiences which have been traditionally avoided and
treated as taboos by male writers’ ideologies. The domestic realities, women’s language, challenging the authority of men and the idea of choosing what you want to be as a woman, are true manifestations of a changing woman’s world of women.

Mandisa now is adopting a new way of living, moving away from the chains of patriarchy into the boundaries of freedom. Mandisa now functions in the multi-cultural community which affects career choice, an example of the set affecting the choice is provided on page 33 in *uMandisa* by Swaartbooi. The new atmosphere is created when Mandisa enters college to study. This atmosphere influence her ways, when considering the theme of racial difference as represented in the novel. In the character Mandisa, different types of work including women’s work are revealed through her as the main role player on page 33.

On page 33, there is the evidence that a group of female students are engaged in social activities that concern women. Their work is selective, it involves only females.
For example in the book UMandisa by V. N. M. Swaartbooi it is stated that:


Sifundiswa iintlobo-ntlobo zezinto ezininzi, eziya kuba luncedo kuthi naxa siphumileyo esikolweni, sifundisa kwizikolo zangaphandle. Izifundo zethu yinkungu nelanga ukuba zininzi kwazo, kodwa sinxesha elaneleyo lokuzenza, nangona zininzi njalo.

Sifundiswa ukukhumsha, sibhale iincwadi ngesiNgesi. Asivunyelwa ukuba sithethe isiXhosa ngaphandle kwale mini yeCawa qha. Le nto ndiyifumana iluncedo olukhulu, ekubeni sisifumane msinya isiNgesi. Sifunda nezibalo, amabali abantu bakudala beenlanga ngeentlanga, amagorha azo awalwa ezimfazweni sifunda nangamazwe ngamazwe, kunye
nabantu bawo. Ezinye zezifundo zethu ezibalulekileyo ngumthungo nokupheka.
Sifundiswa ukupheka iintlobo-ntlobo zezidlo zetafile, ukuhlamba impahla, nokusebenza umsebenzi wendlu.

Sikwafundiswa imithetho yempilo, sifundiswe nezinto emasizenze ukuba abantu bahlangene nengozi, ezinje-ngokutsha, ukurhaxwa ngamanzi, nezinye, kwenzelwa ukuze slikwazi ukunceda abantu bohlanga lwethu, xa behlelwe zezi ngozi bekude kwinda wo enoGqirha."

“We are happy here at school. Our teachers are kind, the Blacks and White ones, and our Principals. Our principals and other teachers are coming from Scotland.”
They taught us many things, which are going to help us when we are out of school. We have many subjects but we have enough time to do them.

They taught us English, and how to read books in English. We are not allowed to talk Xhosa, we are allowed only on Sunday to talk Xhosa. This helps us to understand English quicker. We learn Mathematics and History. We also learn sewing and cooking. We are taught different types of meals, how to wash clothes and house work.

We are also taught health education like First Aid: when somebody is burnt and drowned, to help people when they are far from Doctors.”
It was also new to her to see teachers from Scotland. She was able to do the work she never did at home, which is administering first aid if somebody was either burnt or drowned. Mandisa was able to speak English unlike in the olden days when people who were allowed to be educated were males. Also subjects like history were allowed to be done by males.

4.3 THE STRUGGLE FOR EQUALITY IN THE MALE DOMINATED SOCIETY

As indicated by Gerda Lerner in her book “The Creation of feminist Consciousness” (1993: 15) “it was under patriarchal hegemony in thought, values, institutions and resources that women had to struggle to form their own feminist consciousness.” Feminist consciousness is the awareness for women that they belong to a subordinate group; that they had suffered wrongly as a group; that their condition of subordination is not natural, but societally determined; that they must join the other women to remedy these wrongs. Finally they must and can provide an alternate division of societal organization, in which women as well as men will enjoy autonomy and self determination.
Women’s resistance to patriarchal ideas and the development of feminist oppositional thoughts have been submerged for a very long period of time. The development of women’s consciousness took place in different stages and over hundreds of years covering several generations. For instance women of great talent were kept from realizing their talents fully by the constraints patriarchy imposed on them.

The disadvantaging of women in gaining access to education and in participating in educational establishment has been a consistent feature of patriarchal power in every generation of women in South Africa and elsewhere. Women have been disadvantaged educationally throughout the universe when compared with their male counterparts.

This novel *Idinga* by Ncedile Saule, (1995): is in a literary form which mostly reflects the individualistic and innovative re-orientation of women. Previous literary forms reflected the general tendency of patriarchal cultures keeping conformity with traditional practices. The literary traditionalism was first and fully challenged by feminists and feminist writers. Their aim was to subvert the patriarchal culture and put an end to the marginalization of women. They attempted to put women on centre stage.
Idinga by Ncedile Saule (1995: 23) highlights that women are taking leading roles, thereby subverting positions previously held by men. Nokhwezi is the leader of the Silimela house although other households are led by males. The voice of women is empowered through Nokhwezi. Women are able to speak out, and their voices are being recognized. The patriarchal fixity is subverted through Nokhwezi who demanded co-operation, respect and recognition in the Silimela home. Silimela’s house consisted of both males and female. The undermining status of women is rejected by Nokhwezi when Mlandeli tried to ignore Nokhwezi’s speech. All forms of oppression, restriction and marginalization are challenged and subverted by the power of women through the eyes of Nokhwezi who’s position of power in Silimela’s house is highlighted when she took Mlandeli’s book and put it under her feet. It was clear then that women are empowered and are given a voice.

Mary Eagleton in the “Feminist Literary Theory” 2nd Edition (1996: 1) and in the introduction entitled “Breaking the silence,” she highlighted that, women’s movement is a vital part of the global movement for the realization of full human life. Which in-turn has brought into being a forum for kindling and renewing, (in most instances for first time) the interest in the writings and of the writers within our sex. Linked with the old, resurrected classics on women, this movement in three years has accumulated a vast new mass of testimony, of renewed comprehensions as to what it is to be female. Inequities, restrictions, penalties, denials leechings have been painstakingly
and painfully documented. Damaging differences in circumstances and treatment of females from the treatment of males attests to the limitation and harms that which the females are voicing.

In Tillie Olsen’s essay published in 1972 which later became part of the volume entitled “silences” the issue of female voicelessness was always prevailing within the male dominated society thereby giving no power to women. Women thus, were kept voiceless. Olsen's essay examplifies the key interest of many feminist critiques of the time when the desire to re-discover the status of women was awakened. It provides a context that is supportive of contemporary women writers. The aim was not simply to fit women into the male dominated society, they also wanted to empower women to exercise their rights.

In the male dominated society we will find that women are given many restrictions. For instance they must show obedience (respect) to their husbands, have no freedom of choice, they cannot decide on their own, they must be decided for, they are not even liberated through freedom of speech and they cannot even take the leading role. You will find that the above mentioned issues reflect the constraints of gender in the patriarchal society. Women’s freedom is denied, women receive their freedom outside the patriarchal boundaries. School is the boundary where women exercise their power and their rights as women both individually and collectively.
Again in *Idinga* by Ncedile Saule (1995:35-37), it is revealed that Nokhwezi who was the Deputy Chief Prefect in the school had freedom of speech. There were no limitations in her speech. Nokhwezi who represents other women in the book, vehemently rejects the ideas that were forwarded by Macebo who showed contrary feelings towards Mlandeli. Nokhwezi proved to us that women have the right to speak, they have the right to oppose and that women are not passive in their roles. The silencing of women is subverted and women become powerful instead of powerless. The reductionism idea of women, is effaced (it is rubbed away).

For instance in the book *Idinga* by Ncedile Saule (1995: 35) the power of speech is shown as follows:

“Uyabona, mna andihambisani nento ethi umntu makazixolele iintshaba zakhe, kuba uya kuthi ngeli xesha uzixoleleyo zibe zikutshabalalisa. Uneentshaba na wena Macebo? “

“Andiyazi into yokuba uMlandeli lutshaba lwakho. Ndiyafanekisa ngokuqaphela nje into yokuba kungekho nto intle ukhe uyithethe ngaye. Nokuba selenconywa ngabanye usuka
uyigalele amanzi yonke loo nto umhlalele
ngentlamba. Njengokuba senzile siziprifekthi
nje, akakho ongayaziyo into yokuba uymlwa
uMlandeli. Njani usabuza akuboni ukuba
asisenasidima kubafundi ngenxa yakhe.”

“Ukuba kunokwenzeka into kum, nguwe
ongathatha esi sikhundla sam. Waphinda
wathula uNokhwezi wajonga ecaleni.”

“Uzama ukuthi uMlandeli ukususa esikhundleni
sakho? Imisebenzi yakhe isekeleze ukuba ndiwe
kwesi sihlalo. Utsho kuba ekudlisa udaka? Chief
ingathi kuza kufuneka usebenze ngamandla.
Unyanisile kuza kufuneka ndimsebenze ngamandla
kuba nawe lo selekutyhefile. Kulungile ukutyhefwa
ngezinto ezintle kunokutyhefwa ngenkohlakalo le
unayo.”
“Ukususela namhlanje uze ucace ukuba ukweliphi na icala. Akukho cala ndikulo nto nje ndifuna ucacelwe kukuba abantu abalingani, bakho abavelela abanye njengoMlandeli lo usivelela sonke kwesi sikolo.”

“Ufanele ukuthethelela kuba nguye lo ubangela ukuba uthwale intsinga kungoku nje. Wandivelisela indlela yokusebenzisana nabanye, le wena ungenayo, usuke ufune ukusenza oonyana bakho neentombi zakho.”

“Ndiyabona ukuba akundoyiki, oyena mntu umoyikayo ngulaa Mlandeli wakho.”


“I do not go with the saying that I must forgive my enemies”. “You have enemies Macebo? I did not know that Mlandeli is
your enemy. I noticed that there’s nothing good you say about him. As prefects there is no one who does not know that you fight Mlandeli.”

“Can't you see that we have no dignity because of him. If something happens to me it’s you who is going to take my position”. Nokhwezi was silent and looked towards the other side.”

“You say Mlandeli is removing you in your position. Chief, what you need to do is to work hard.”

“Yes I have to work him hard because he had already poisoned your mind. It's better to be poisoned with better things than be poisoned with cruelty.”

“Today you must decide who's side you are”. “I want you to understand that people are not the same. Mlandeli is clever than us
all in this school. Mlandeli has a better way to
work with other people which you do not have,
you treat us like we are your sons and daughters.”

“I see you are not afraid of me, the only person
you are afraid of is Mlandeli”.

In Idinga by Saule one can see that women are no more passive. They are
not indecisive, but able to challenge the authority of men through the
class Nokhwezi. They are able to put forward their ideas and the way
they see things. The voiceless becomes voiced, the powerless becomes
empowered. The marginalized becomes centred. Women are now
subverting the male dominated society.

This practice of patriarchy has long been criticised by other women
indirectly. For example MamCirha in the book entitled uMandisa by
Swaarbooi would rather than just speaking, be involved with practising what
she wishes for her sons. She raised them to know both gender-related
domestic chores. She is not stereotyped and taught her sons not to be
gender stereotyped. In patriarchy there is at least a change although it is not
so quickly seen by others.
Issues of gender equality are also revealed in the novel *UMandisa* by V. M. M. Swaartbooi. The sons of MamCirha can do any type of work at home, they can perform both male and female chores.

For example in the book *UMandisa* by V. N. M. Swaartbooi (1975: 7 & 8) it is stated that:

“*UMamCirha, umnikazimzi, lo ubenobubele obungazenzisiyo, kodwa bengelobhetye-bhetye lakuqeqesha. Umthetho wakhe ubusaziwa ngabendlu yakhe. Ubekwazi ukohlwaya abantwana bakhe xa kufuneka.*

*Ubenezindlu ezintandathu loo mizi, ibifulelwe ngengca (oorontawule).*

*Wawungeze utsho uwubona ngaphandle utyatyekwe kakahle, nangaphakathi uvetwe kakahle ngobunono, ukuba akukho mantombazana, nangelo xesha wayengekabi namolokazana uMamCirha, wawugcinwe kwangolu hlobo lo mzi.*

*Oonyana bakhe babeqala ngowasebuhlanti*
“MamCirha, the owner of the house although she was a very kind woman, was not weak in disciplining a child. Her laws were known by her in laws. She was able to punish her children physically where there was a need.

This homestead consists of three rondavals. You would not believe that, this rondavals were painted inside and outside as if there were daughters, although they were not. It was the work of their sons to clean the houses. At that time MamCirha did not have a daughter in law.

Her sons began the work from the kraal including the house work which was part of their
responsibility. They could work far better
than some girls. Even in the fields they could
do harvesting well.”

Gender equality was portrayed in the book uMandisa by Swaartbooi where MamCirha was able to discipline her sons and they were able to do domestic as well as male type of work. She was not stereotyped.

4.4 WOMEN’S WORDS MUST BE HEARD (WOMEN ARE NOT TALKING TO THE FOUR WALLS)

Annieclere in “Feminist Critique of Language: A Reader” by Deborah Cameron (1992: 74 & 75) stated that “We have to invent a woman’s world”. This invention must not be ‘from men, about woman’, in the way that men’s language speak ‘of women’. Any woman who wants to use a language that is specifically her own, cannot avoid this extraordinary, urgent task: we must re-invent the woman. In Idinga by Ncedile Saule, Nokhwezi the woman does not want to be left behind in speech. She wants her voice to be heard. She is no longer in tolerance with the idea of being obedient to men’s voice. Women’s thoughts and ideas must be heard. Nokhwezi is conscious of man’s voice as well as hers.
Annieclere’s words as a woman is emphasizes that the male dominated voices which are always at the forefront of decision making must be challenged by women. She goes on by saying: “whose voice is speaking these words? Whose voice has always spoken? Deafening tumult of important voices, and not one a woman’s voice”.

Historians, male writers, theorists and other thinkers, through their writings have reduced the status of women. In Idinga for instance, Nokhwezi is given equal footing with Macebo who is put as the head of the prefects while Nokhwezi is put under Macebo as the Deputy prefect. But what is positively surprising about Nokhwezi is the fact that she never leaves Macebo’s ideas unchallenged.

She did not only want Macebo’s voice to be heard, she also wanted hers to be heard and understood by Macebo. She did not trust his anymore. One voice for all as far as Nokhwezi is concerned was unacceptable.

4.5 GENDER INSIDE GENDER

Penelope Eckert and Sally McConnell-Ginet in their book “Language and Gender” (2003: 251) express that the oppositional (and often complementary) organization of gender categorization might seem to be challenged by category nesting. We don’t just have “female” versus “male”
or “woman” versus “man” as exhaustive polarizing categories, we can apply (almost) the same categorizing principle again. We can split both women and men into (more or less) “feminine” and (more or less) “masculine” people.

In the case of Idinga we see Mlandeli as less masculine in the situation which was ironically caused by him, when he refused to listen to Nokhwezi’s speech. Nokhwezi became more masculine than Mlandeli. She demanded more attention from him by taking his book forcefully. Mlandeli never responded back, instead he went silent. This evidence is on page 23.

Yet again in the book Idinga one would find that social moods were created during face to face conversational interactions between Macebo and Nokhwezi and the students, as well as between Mlandeli and Nokhwezi. The conversations were publicly made.

In Idinga by Ncedile Saule (1995: 23) Nokhwezi became more masculine than Mlandeli as follows:

“Into eyayilibhida eli qela lakhe yeyokuba lo
mfo wayengafane athethe ngaphandle
kokuba uyathethiswa,kwada kwathiwa unolunya.
Kwakuthiwa makayeke ukudlalisa, wavalawo akhe
The group was amazed by Mlandeli who does not like to talk but prefer people talk to him. They asked him not to play, he kept quiet and sat down, took out his book and read while listening. Nokhwezi took the book from Mlandeli, angry, she puts the book under her feet and continued talking as though nothing happened.

Nokhwezi shows women voice is empowered and women are able to speak out and be recognized by men which are demonstrated in her taking the book away from Mlandeli.
4.6 CONCLUSION

Even in *uMandisa* by Swaartbooi the liberation of women through education is witnessed. Education becomes one of the key issues in liberating women who are still enslaved by patriarchal ideologies. Educated women must give light to the world so that African people can liberate themselves from ignorance and from being ill-informed. Swaartbooi in highlighting the struggle for equality and liberation for women states:

“Ukuze ibuye i-Afrika eNtsundu, iya kuphuma imidakakazi yezwe layo, kunye nemidaka, siqale ke sithi, “Mayibuye i-Afrika!” qhuba, qhuba njalo, nzwakazi enkulu loo manyathelo akho esesinqwenela ukuhamba ngawo nathi.” “Zintombi ze-Africa qhubani eyenu indima ekuyibuyiseni nasekuyinyuseni i-Africa, eli lizwe lokuzalwa kwenu.” Xa siyenzileyo ke indima yethu ngabanye sithi “Nkosi sikelel’ i-Afrika, maluphakame uphondo lwayo!”

“So that black Africans can come back. Black women and men of Africa must come out so that we begin by saying “Africa must come back.” Proceed just like that
big lady. Those steps of yours we wish to follow.
“Daughters of Africa continue your
contributions in bringing and uplifting Africa the
continent of your birth.” If we have done these
contributions as individuals, not folding our arms, we
could say Nkosi sikeleli-Africa, God Bless Africa. Its
name must be uplifted.”

Swartbooi (1975: 48)

4.6.1 FACE TO FACE CONVERSATION

According to Penelope Eckert and Sally McConel-Ginet in their book
“Language and gender” (2003: 156) indications of social moves are not
made only in face to face conversational interactions. Mass media
exposures are important, and there is an increasing literary awareness on
gender issues raised in magazines, on television and in the movies.
Information technology and the increased commercialization of
“communication skills” also connect to gender in important ways. It is upon
such interactions that children enter their communities to practice, and that
adults lead much of their lives. Other kinds of linguistic practice often draw
on practices found in face to face encounters. For example, Mary Talbot
(1995) notes that some of the writings in girls’ magazines work successfully
by mimicking certain features of such conversational articles. For instance: act as an older sister or trusted friend in giving advice.

Mass media exposures are important regarding gender issues. For example on 09 May 2006 Lebohang Mashile who is a poet, a television presenter and a researcher for television programmes “Latt’ itude” did a television broadcast on Gender based violence.

How does she escape from that situation?
(The idea of being taken as a woman into forced marriages.)

There was a girl named Nozizwe telling her story of how she became a wife. She was kidnapped by unknown men, and forced into being the wife of an unknown man who she never knew nor loved. She escaped from that marriage and went to East London for a short while, to be with her father’s sister. She later left for Cape Town in search of a job. She also said she did not want to marry but wanted to study. The forced marriage damaged her psychologically. Lebohang Mashile the programme host concluded by saying “the spirit and soul of a woman in this land is not secure.”
Women are born free but after sometime they are controlled by the male dominated society. They are in chains when they are in boundaries of the patriarchal society. Once they are outside they are free from the chains of patriarchy.
CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSION

5.1 CHANGING PRACTICES AND CHANGING IDEOLOGIES

All we have to do is to look at the debates concerning women’s rights as well as feminists’, in these texts written by Swaartbooi and Saule. Women’s rights are constructed, maintained, elaborated upon and certain positive changes with regards to artistic demonstrations and crucial speeches are seen. Change does not happen in individual actions, but in the accumulation of actions throughout the social fabric of that which is portrayed. According to Mary Eagleton in the book entitled “Feminist Literary Theory” (1986: 87) under the sub-heading “Gender and genre” states that any discussion of gender and literary form is dominated by the need to explain women’s special relationships with the novel. She adds that most works in this area spring from the sociology of literature or cultural history. This discussion will examine the changes in class structure and in the position of women, and demonstrate the particular interest in the emergence of the leisured woman.

The novel *UMandisa* plays an important role in the development of women. Women’s freedom is limited, to focus mainly on domestic activities. Yet it
moves out of the boundaries of patriarchy, and turns its focus towards public life and affairs. It further develops negotiations with father/husband. The interests of women are revealed and can subvert the male dominated society. This novel *UMandisa* becomes a women centred novel. Women’s subversive appropriation of the patriarchal male voice has been viewed differently in relation to differing interests. In subverting the male dominated forms, better expressions are given concerning what women are and what they want.

Black women have been silenced and oppressed for too long, they are now beginning to find their voices and freedom. They are reclaiming amongst other things: making choices for themselves, and speaking for themselves. They are moving away from patriarchal borders. Borders are set up to define the places that are safe and unsafe and to distinguish men from women. A border is a dividing line, a narrow steep along the steep edge.

In this regard to V. N. M. Swaartbooi’s *UMandisa* (1975), another of those silent women’s text, offers an important inspiration about border-lessness. Much of the central action takes place at the Mgwali College in Dohne which is a border-less land, outside the boundaries of society where Mandisa is most free, most challenging and most articulate. This is the College of Education. Education is a weapon to free women from the chains of patriarchy. The village Gcuwa is the site of containment and tradition.
Questions of marginality and difference seem more appropriately prevailing within cultural contexts, whilst allowing space for specificity of African women’s creativity.

5.2 SOCIAL LOCUS OF CHANGE

As we put social changes at the centre of our analysis, we want to emphasize that change comes in a subtle way. Panelope Eckert and Sally McConnell-Ginet in “Language and Gender” (2003: 55) bring this idea about the social locus of change “Any historical moment, both the gender order and linguistic conventions exercise profound constraints on our thoughts and actions, predisposing us to follow patterns set down over generations and throughout our development. Change comes with the interruption of such patterns”.

It is through participation in a range of communities of practices that people participate in society, and forget a sense of their place and their possibilities in society. An important link between each individual’s experience and the larger social order is the structure of participation in communities of practice. Communities of practice emerge as groups of people respond to a mutual situation.
In *UMandisa* by V. N. M. Swaartbooi (1975: 12 & 13) a group of children began to play African games in the open field. Games such as *icekwa, ugguphu, undize nokupuca* are games usually played by African girls. In pages 33-37 community of practices prevails amongst groups of female students – trainee teacher’s band together in their college with the purpose studying. These groups of students came to engage in practice together because they have a shared interest in the College at the particular time. So communities of practices do not emerge randomly but are structured by the kinds of situations that present themselves in different basis of society. Categories like gender class emerge in clusters of experiences. Women are more likely than men to participate in secretarial pools, teaching pools, child care groups exercise classes and friendship groups.

### 5.3 WOMEN EMPOWERMENT

The right to Learn,

The right to Teach,

The right to Define.

Gerda Lerner in “The Creation of Feminist Consciousness” (1993: 91&92) stated that for centuries, women authorized themselves to think and write even through religion, custom and conventional wisdom, to inform themselves that, these were not pursuits suitable for a woman. Each woman
had to overcome her internalized sense of inferiority and empower herself to do what she was told was unseemly, improbable, if not impossible. Small wonder, then, that woman after thinking through, argue their way out of patriarchal confinement and constraints by asserting the intellectual equality of women. Granting men their special tasks and superior talents for leadership, courage and authority, women argue however that the capacity for reason and the intellectual potential of men and women were nevertheless the same. It follows logically therefore that the inequalities observed in society, the different rates of achievement, the different interest and activities of men and women were due to their sex-specific education.

5.4 MEN NEED TO ADAPT TO CHANGE

It will be in men’s best interests to foster the growth and equality of both sexes. Mandisa’s father as a representative of male dominated society has adapted to change regarding what was perceived as gender roles. He needed to ensure that women have the opportunity to be educated and to participate in the affairs of human kind. Without any hesitation he allowed Mandisa to attend tertiary level education. Mandisa’s father saw to it that women create and utilize as many opportunity as possible. They must take responsibility for fuller participation. As a teacher, Mandisa will render service to the community. She will move from patriarchal oppression to participate in public affairs. This is not particularly difficult for women like
Mandisa who have been given a tertiary level education and studying collectively with other women to fulfill the needs of women.

Feminist critiques have shown that women as a category, are marginalized, excluded or “othered” in the patriarchal discourse. There are other categories of exclusion such as working class, education and sports. For instance there are sports for women and sports for men. In African culture, women have mostly been traditionally marginalized.

The process of writing this research allowed me the chance to speak to a wide range of women about their lives. I have in this work highlighted the main issues affecting women: difficulty to be accepted freely in the African patriarchal society. Therefore, references in such African novels as umandisa and Idinga to individuals have been chosen by way of examples and not to give any particular importance and priority to them. This is specifically so since we are all based in Africa. I (on-behalf of all African women) hope however that, the information put forth through this research will serve as a useful resource material.


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**TEXTS**

