

A critical appraisal of Saule's portrayal of women as *Amadelakufa* (resilient)

By

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Declaration

I, Rendani Molubo hereby declare that this dissertation is my own work. All the sources cited and referenced have been properly acknowledged. I attest that this work has not been submitted previously at any higher education institution for degree purposes. It is being submitted for a Master of Arts Degree at Rhodes University, in South Africa.

.....

Rendani Molubo

.....

Date

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Glory be to God for this opportunity, the constant reassurance of His presence in my life, assistance, motivation, love and upliftment. *Qamata!*

I would also like to thank my ancestors; *Vhaluvhu, Vho-Maitakole, Ndzi Ndou dza Thavhaya!* Not forgetting, *ooBhukwana, ooMbarha, ooMtshobo, amaMpondomise amahle* and *abaTaung, ooMpofolo, ooMdaweni!*

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Ndiyabulela! Ndo livhuwa. Thank you!!

Dedication

This work is dedicated to all the women in South Africa and the African continent at large, who died fighting for the emancipation of women from all forms of female abuse, oppression and discrimination. It is dedicated to all resilient women, who refuse to conform to patriarchal stereotypes and who dare to inspire and empower others with their daring characters.

Abstract

This study seeks to explore how Professor Ncedile Saule's works *Vuleka Mhlaba* (2006), *Inkululeko Isentabeni* (2010) and *Libambe Lingatshoni* (2017), depict female characters to reveal the inner resilience women embody. It is important to portray females as bold, intelligent and courageous beings as African women are subjected to major patriarchal myths. South Africa prides itself with a progressive Constitution and Bill of Rights that speaks of gender equality and the liberation of all persons. However, in practice women still live under patriarchal bondages and their efforts are side-lined, thus, the essentiality of writings that contributes towards the empowerment of women through displaying their resilience.

Women in literature are mostly depicted as subordinate, submissive and emotional. At times they are portrayed as victims. They are very seldom portrayed as heroes or independent beings. They are constantly placed behind a man instead of in front of a man. This research aims to display women as heroes in their own capacity, without having to be dimmed by a man.

The researcher decided to utilise writings of a male author so as to provide a different perspective from the norm that most male authors are known to write about in issues pertaining female characters. This is also deliberately done to encourage more male writers to change the mythical narration about women and start admiring their contributions without having them shadow any man. The projection of female resilience through the gaze of a male author gives hope that there are men who see and admire women's efforts. It also indicates that men realise now that African feminisms are not against men and instead advocate for equality between men and women and recognise the greatness that could come out of a partnership between the two genders.

Women's behaviour and characteristics are mostly socially constructed, hence the need to exhibit the boldness that black women possess, instead of them only being utilised as nurturing sources and household caretakers. One of the purposes of this research study is to illustrate the resilience that women possess and analyse the forms of torment that women in Saule's chosen novels have experienced and how their experience engenders resilience and a determination to succeed. The women in Saule's three novels selected for this study break the traditional status quo. The approach that this paper will utilize is that of African Feminisms, focusing on Walker's Womanism, Ogunyemi's Africana Womanism, and Stiwanism as the theoretical

approaches. This is because African Feminisms concentrates on the issues related to gender, race and class that African women across spectrums face.

Isishwankathelo mxholo

Olu phando lujolise ekuhlalutyeni imixhamsholo ayisebenzisileyo uSaule ekuzobeni abokhomokazi kwiinoveli zakhe ezihloko zithi, Vuleka Mhlaba (2006), Inkululeko Isentabeni (2010) naleyo ithi Libambe Lingatshoni (2017). Ubadale abokhomokazi bakwazi ukukhalipha nokuba nesibindi sokuyimela inyaniso ngelokukhusela isidima sokhomokazi luphelele. Emehlweni abaninzi abokhomokazi basisigculelo seengcinga zokungendawo kwabododa, ngoko ke kubalulekile ukuyinika ingqwalasela nayiphi na ingcamango eabona njengabanobunganga, abanengqondo ephangaleleyo nabangamatshantliziyo. Oku kungumvuka womgaqosiseko woMzantsi Afrika okhokelisa amalungelo abantu, ukulingana ngokwezini nokokuba wonke umntu ungokhululekileyo kwizwe lakhe. Naxa kunjalo usekhona umlenze onedolo apho abokhomokazi basazifumana bengamakhoboka abododa. Yiyo loo nto zibalulekile iimbalo ezinjongo yazo ikukuxhobisa abokhomokazi ngokukhalipha nobungqakamba.

Kwiimbalo abofazana basoloko bezotywa njengezicaka, abaxhomekeki, amathamba nabaqhutywa yintliziyo ekwenzeni izinto. Ngaxesha limbi bazotywa njengamaxhoba eemeko. Kunzima ukubafumana bengamaqhawe, bekwangabantu abazimeleyo. Kwinto yonke barhorhozela emva kododa endawni yokukhokela phambili. Yinjongo ephambili yolu phando ukuthi ekuhlalutyeni lubonise abofazi bengamagorha ngokunokwabo kwaye bengaxhomekekanga kwabododa.

Kolu phando kusetyenziswe kwazekeliswa ngeembalo zombhali wododa othe wahluka yena kokuqhelekileyo okuzingcinga ezilindelekileyo xa owododa ephalaza izimvo neengcinga ngabokhomokazi. Kananjalo oku kwenzelwa ukukhuthaza ababhali ukuba bayisuse inkungu emehlweni xa bebhala bejolise kwabokhomokazi, babonise ukuyithakazelela indima eyenziwa lukhomokazi njengabantu abanengqondo njengaye wonke ubani. Ukuqingqa nokuzimela kwabokhomokazi akulilo iphulo lokulwa nabododa koko kukuzama ukuhlaba ikhwelo nokuvula amehlo okubona uqilima lwento engakhiwayo xa ezi zibini zibambisene ngamxhelo mnye.

Ukuziphatha nento abayiyo abofazana iphefumlelwa kokusentlalweni jikelele ekungenakutshiwo ukuba kokuzizigqibo zalo. Kungeso sizathu ke ukuba olu phando lubangule, lutyhile okuya kuzithemba ufazana lunalo, bayeke ukusetyenziswa njengentsika yokusulela umkhunyu. Olu phando luza kuveza elubala indlela yokuzingca kukhomokazi

kuthathelwa kwimigagatyu yamava abalinganiswa abafumaneka kwiinoveli zikaSaule ezikhethiweyo. Aba balinganiswa bangumzekelo wokunyonyozela nokutshabhisa ubukhoboka neembandezelo oluzifumana lukuzo ukhomokazi. Iingxoxo kolu hlalutyo ziza kubelekeka kwiingcinga zesithako i*African Feminism*, i*Womanism* kaWalker, i*Africana Womanism* kaOngunyemi, kunye ne*Stiwanism*. Ezi zithako kuphononongo lwazo ziquka bonke abokhomokazi beli laseAfrika ekugqaleni imiba efana nesini, ubuhlanga kunye nocalulo.

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CHAPTER 1

1.1. Introduction

This research study explores the portrayal of female resilience by the female characters in the South African literary texts *Vuleka Mhlaba* (2006), *Inkululeko Isentabeni* (2011) and *Libambe Lingatshoni* (2017) by Ncedile Saule with the premise that literature mirrors the true reflection of society. Feminism is a broad concept with multiple and diverse definitions and characteristics. It is a controversial topic as some argue that the term excludes black women as feminism practised in the West (where the term gained recognition) does not relate to that of black women, more especially those of the African continent (Newman, 1998:57). It is due to this principle that Mohanty (2003:46) argues that feminist historians' sole focus is on gender, and they exclude discussions of race and class.

It would be problematic to omit issues of racism and class when discussing feminist discourse in South Africa as theirs is a triple struggle of racism, class and gender, with the country's colonial and apartheid regime history. Women during these periods found it fundamental to unite with men in order to achieve liberation. And, given Africa's colonial history, the feeling is mutual for women across the African continent. Thus, women such as Clenora Hudson-Weems (1998) argue for the essentiality of an African womanist discourse, one that will include African women's experiences, history, racial and class issues. These are issues pertaining specifically to African women. At first African women like Ama Ata Aidoo, Buchi Emecheta, Ruth Mompati and many others were resistant to the term 'feminist', however, over the decades, African women have accepted the term, using their own way to define it (Kolawole, 1998:29). Thus, ever since, African women have attempted to find a concept that would speak specifically to the African woman, without disregarding the unity of men and women entirely. Feminist discourse has spread across the globe and is given many labels with distinct terms and this is because of the diverse histories and cultures across the globe.

Within the different feminist discourses are the principles and values that women possess. Principles of resilience, courage, intelligence and many other virtues are principles that describe women of all walks of life. It is within this premise that this research study hopes to analyse the resilience of the female characters in the three chosen novels of Saule. Saule's theme focuses on virtuous, resilient, and intelligent women because he believes that black women are bold and intellectually gifted, despite the fact that they are still greatly marginalized.

Even with the beautifully compiled South African Constitution which recognises equality between men and women and many gender equality policies, women, more especially black women, are still oppressed in this country.

Saule's literary texts reveal various scenarios in which women (from young girls and young women at university, to married women) display their resilience. His literary works reveal how women utilise education as means of liberating themselves from patriarchal oppression and marginalization. Saule's female characters also display resistance to patriarchal female mockery. Their plight affects many women in South Africa and the entire African continent.

1.2. Background of the study

It is fundamental to trace women's efforts, strengths and works from the colonial period, through the apartheid era, and to the 21st century. This is because, throughout the decades, women in South Africa have played a pivotal role in the country's liberation struggle. Nonetheless, their efforts and intelligence are ignored and mocked. Instead, women are portrayed as subordinates and inferior to men. While women are often represented as mothers, wives, caregivers, domestics and nurturing, their resilience, determination and strategic characteristics are swept under the carpet and men are given all the praise. Men are celebrated for being at the forefront of the liberation struggle. They claim to be the sole providers and authority in their families. Girls are taught from young ages in many African societies how to present themselves in order for them to be recognised and married by men.

It is against this argument that this research study embarks on changing the narrative portrayed of women as subordinates, nurturers and living in the shadows of others (wives, mothers and so forth). The study showcases women as bold and daring beings, with the ability to mobilize, to think strategically and come up with ideas on how to combat the colonisers, the apartheid regime and current patriarchal systems in private and public domains. Women are educating themselves to further the feminist discourse of fighting against patriarchal injustices.

To further the argument, this study emphasizes the strength of the women who marched to the Union building in 1956, protesting against the apartheid legislation pass laws. Soon many other women's organizations were formed which fought against the apartheid regime laws. As noted by Magubane (2010:976), "The 1950s protests helped give the new organizations guidance with respect to organizing strategy". Women like Dorothy Nyembe, Ruth Mompoti, Gladys

Manzi, Albertina Sisulu and others were fearlessly at the forefront of numerous movements against the apartheid regime. Nonetheless, the efforts of all these women seem to be in vein as they are shadowed by men's efforts.

Women during the apartheid era knew that for total liberation to occur, they had to work together with men to overpower the regime, as it would make no sense to fight for gender issues without addressing race and class inequalities. A FEDSAW¹ organisation pamphlet explains that:

In South Africa, African women, the most vulnerable and deprived of all groups within the apartheid state, has been forced to embark on a road that takes them beyond their own specific oppression. The struggle of South African women for recognition as equal citizens with equal opportunities is primarily the struggle against apartheid, for national liberation. Nor is it a question of putting one first, then taking up the others. There can be no change in the fundamental position of women, in their societal and political status, without the defeat of apartheid. But apartheid will not be defeated if half the people – the women – are constrained from playing their full role in the national liberation movement.

Thus, women worked together with their male counterparts and the main reason scholars like Molaria Ogundipe-Leslie argue for the equality of both genders, working hand in hand instead of one ahead of the other. African feminisms does not go against the opposite sex but rather advocates for equality between the sexes and that is what this research study also wishes for.

It is because of the above that Benya (2015:546) argues that women also play a vital role in the production made in the mines where majority of mineworkers are males. She uses the women of Marikana as an example, where the majority of the population's men are mineworkers. According to Benya (2015:546) the women in Marikana perform all the reproductive work in their households, which in turn assists immensely with the production system in the mines. She further argues that the reproductive work that these women perform should not be taken for

¹ Federation of South African Women, an organisation formed by women across all spectrums in South Africa to fight for the emancipation of women and black people as a whole against the apartheid regime laws.

granted as it takes a courageous being to be able to stand the emotional and physical strength that it requires.

It is through the efforts of women that the men who work at these mines are able to perform to their best abilities. When the mine owners do not pay their miners well or the miners decide to splurge with their salaries instead of taking them home, they infringe upon women's rights as they are not paid for their services rendered. As a result, some women no longer perform the duties they do with ease for men and these men take this for granted forgetting that these women are the source of their continuous strength. Without them, they would not be able to perform to the best of their abilities, because "their [women] reproductive work, while marginalized, is necessary for capital accumulation" (Benya, 2015:547).

Benya (2015:548) further suggests that the women of Marikana are not just the 'invisible hands'. Ever since the 16 August 2012 Marikana Massacre, these women have become a force to be recognised - they organise protests, community meetings and so forth to ensure that their plight is heard (Benya, 2015:548). They are the driving force placed behind the mineworkers. The men are exalted as heroes with no mention of women.

Phakeng (2015:1) concurs that women are not given enough recognition. She argues that black women in leadership in South Africa are invisible and are largely marginalized by male authority. She further states that the number of educated women with PhDs in South Africa increased by 960% from 1996 to 2012 and (Phakeng, 2015). Despite these advancements, there are still few women CEOs and women in management. In fact, government seems to be the only sector that is flourishing with majority representation being women: "South African parliament is the only place that can boast about parity between men and women" (Phakeng, 2015:1). However, South Africa still waits to have a female president, higher education institutions also wait to have more females in managerial posts.

Women's efforts and resilience is yet to be recognised in South Africa and the rest of the African continent, where women are stereotyped as irrational, and while they are nurturing, they are seen therefore as too soft and not good enough. Yet the Constitution preaches gender equality in which a Bill of Rights was incorporated, stating that all persons are to be treated fairly and equally.

1.3. Aims of the study

The aim of this research study is to explore the projection of female resilience through characterization in Saule's novels, *Vuleka Mhlaba* (2006), *Inkululeko Isentabeni* (2010) and *Libambe Lingatshoni* (2017). This thesis is propelled by the escalation of gender inequality and female oppression and marginalization as well as abuse in a democratic South Africa. Women myths and stereotypes stemming from patriarchal notions are increasing and cultural and traditional norms are not evolving.

The researcher decided to explore Saule's works because there are a few male authors who explore female resilience as though through the lenses of women as Saule has done so. Saule is an elderly Xhosa male traditionalist who grew up in a patriarchal society. Yet his writings portray an objective view of women. Echoing Nadaswaran (2011) on the rise of African female writers, Kwatsha (2015:1) argues that more females are writing about courageous and independent single women. There is a dire need for male authors like Saule to also depict women as resilient and intelligent beings. This will change the manner which society thinks of women and instead of only women empowering each other, the opposite sexes are likely to unite and empower each other to grow the country.

This research study also aims at making a vital contribution in changing the way women are viewed in African societies, from feeble and subservient beings to empowered beings with the ability of speaking their minds, being daring without fear of being ostracised, and physically, emotionally and sexually abused. It aims at exposing the courage, determination and strength that women possess in all forms of situations and their ability to strategically think and solve matters.

This study also aims at exploring the different descriptions and concepts given to African feminisms through the characteristics and traits of Saule's female characters. As stated by Ebunoluwa (2009:227) African feminisms are still expanding with different concepts which pertain to basically the same ideologies with slightly newly developed ideas.

This research study also aims at challenging the manner in which women are portrayed even in literature in the shadows of men and submissive beings, therefore undermining female strength, determination and independence. Poems by Autherine (2018:23) attempt to explain that women are at times vulnerable just like men and as stated about men, they too have the ability to rise:

She is a beautiful, powerful badass woman who sometimes falls apart inside after she drops her bags by the door and tosses her stilettos. Her vulnerability at night helps her to rise stronger in the morning.

The poem depicts women as strong beings. It states that women fall apart, hurt and make mistakes like everyone, but rise above the pain and remain unshaken. Thamsanqa Mbovane (1995:65) seems to concur with Atherine in the statement “*ndicela ukuba bonke abantu basebuhlanti bayamkele into yokuba kwisninzi abantu basetyhini bomelele baye banenkqubela engaphezulu kwalo eli qela lasebuhlanti*” (I ask that all men accept that in most instances, women are stronger and more progressive than men). The women described by Atherine and Mbovane are the kinds of women portrayed in Saule’s three novels chosen for this study; *Vuleka Mhlaba* (2006), *Inkululeko Isentabeni* (2010) and *Libambe Lingatshoni* (2017).

1.4. The statement of the problem

Despite the many efforts aimed at eliminating inequality in Africa, with women across Africa on the rise; writing about their experiences as women and portraying women as feminists or defenders of cultural and traditional norms and values from female perspectives, the problem continues to rise. Women are still abused in numerous ways, they are ostracised and oppressed because they are women. Women are treated as though they have no rights, they are discriminated against and unappreciated. They are still portrayed as weak, soft and caregivers who should remain silent.

The author presents the fact that more still needs to be done to change the misconceptions surrounding women, particularly in the rural areas and townships, where the author’s focus is, where many still hold on to patriarchal views. As Somlata (2016:18) states that there is still a lack of education amongst black people, even with the growing number of black people. Another issue is the culture of silence, whereas Kwatsha (2009) mentions that women are told to be silent if they want to get married and also in the patriarchal system women are told that being opinionated is disrespectful. Wives are told to endure the abuse they face in their marriages and the husband simply does as he pleases because he remains the perceived authority of the family.

Across Africa there is a specific image of a proper woman that is said to be appropriate and therefore followed: one that regards men as the authority and women as subordinates. Even with South Africa’s incredible Constitution and its Bill of Rights that includes non-sexism and gender equality laws, South Africa still remains discriminatory towards women. Frenkel

(2008:67) agrees when he says that women in South Africa are seen and unseen, included and excluded with these contradictory laws. Parliament and government entities have the largest percentage of women, yet women and children occupy the highest percentage in physical violence and sexual abuse statistics.

Black women in South Africa during the apartheid regime had included gender issues within the struggle but agreed that apartheid was a racial and class struggle therefore, they knew they had to assist in eliminating those issues first before tackling gender issues. However, in a democratic South Africa, not much has been done to rectify discriminatory gender issues.

It is due to the above that it is stated that “true democracy, or women emancipation, cannot be fully attained when women continue to exist in a ‘crooked room’ where injustices such as gender inequality persist in crippling and rendering them invisible” (Segalo, 2015:73). Women are still largely marginalized and in workspaces, where there are gender equality policies, they are still invisibly unwelcomed and treated unfairly because of their gender. Segalo (2015:73) further contends that many women carry the burden of being single parents and breadwinners as well as domestics yet still work fulltime jobs during the day. In turn they still have to integrate themselves into these unwelcoming workspaces.

Within the workspace, women still occupy lower positions than men and in the few where they occupy higher positions, they are ridiculed and disrespected. According to Segalo (2015:73) women are made to feel the brunt, they have to work twice as hard as men, but their efforts remain unrecognised. Instead they are placed in the shadows of men. Thus, men and women are unable to function equally as there are still many issues of inequality between them.

As much as legislation allows for women to enter all professions, there is still a deafening silence around women’s struggles. “On one hand, women belong and are identified as members of the collectively in the same way that men are. Nevertheless, there are always rules and regulations-not to mention perceptions and attitudes-specific to women” (Segalo, 2015:75). In a patriarchal society as in South Africa, Segalo (2015:75) further contends that this can be viewed as conditional belonging. Where there are limitations placed upon the rights that the Bill of Rights provides for all South African citizens, these conditions, although somewhat better than during the apartheid period still reflect similar conditions than before, which is problematic given the work women assisted with in combatting apartheid injustices.

Women still comprise the majority domestic workers in South Africa, yet these very same women have to go home and perform household duties. Some are the sole providers; others are

the head of their households and others even though they have husbands still have no one to assist them with providing for their children and their extended families. Women are courageous, able to face any challenge as they have been conditioned to do so through socialisation yet their efforts are disregarded and they are oppressed, in fact being a woman in South Africa has become hazardous as women face death, rape and other forms of pain in the country with the many recent abductions and killings of women more especially young women.

According to statistics South Africa released in 2018, a woman is murdered every three hours in South Africa (www.timeslive.co.za). Some reports describe the recent rise of murders, abductions and killings of women by men as an epidemic: “More than 1500 people are murdered every month in South Africa, about 3000 women were murdered last year” (www.iol.co.za). Young women are being abducted, raped and killed, ignoring their hard work and bright futures. Women walk around fearing for their lives in South Africa because female abuse has become the norm. Women are rendered useless, thus killing them has become a norm. There is a serious need to change the narrative told of women, the myths and stereotypes have to be changed so that women can be viewed more positively. Their resilience needs to be highlighted so that patriarchal society sees female efforts.

1.5. Research questions

- How do the characters reveal female resilience?
- Who are the perpetrators and survivors of patriarchy?
- What are the factors that influence patriarchy and how do they escalate it?
- How does a patriarchal society affect the survivors?
- What effects do gender stereotypes and myths have on women?
- How are gender stereotypes represented in the selected texts?

1.6. Significance of the study

This research study hopes to make a significant contribution in changing the patriarchal narrative and projection of women in society. It aims at displaying and spreading awareness of the resilient and bold traits that women possess. It also aims to encourage women to embrace their greatness and continue working hard at showcasing their daring characters to the rest of the world. This study also wishes to indicate that African womanist views do not exclude or despise men but rather advocate for them to work together with women, equally.

One of the goals of this study is to encourage more men to write more literature depicting empowered women. According to Somlata (2016:19) male authors tend to write more about

political issues than female matters. However, Saule proves that is not entirely true and this research wishes that more male authors delve into feminist issues to educate other men and the rest of the world. On the other hand, Kwatsha (2015:2) states that there is an increase in African female authors promoting narratives that portray their experiences and female resilience and Nadaswaran (2011) agrees with her.

However, male perspectives are also needed to show that women's efforts are recognised and also to ensure that men appreciate the efforts made by women in assisting with majority of the things that they do in the workspaces, households and other spheres of their lives. It would also indicate that men see women's hard work as they have to put in double the effort.

As much as women are the perfect candidates to change their narratives, men are mostly the manipulators of culture and tradition for patriarchal gain. Therefore, men have to also be part of the feminist movement in order to develop and transform cultural and traditional norms. They need to admit their role in the stereotypes spread about women and help change those.

1.7. Scope of the study

Chapter one introduces the research, giving a clear outline of the research aims and the reasons that prompted the researcher to take the initiative to investigate the portrayal of female resilience through literature, utilising African feminism, Womanism and Stiwanism as its theoretical framework in Saule's chosen novels. This research contains methodologies such as qualitative methods, resilience methods and the interpretive approach.

Chapter two contains the literature review, which projects how the theories will be employed. This chapter will also review literature from other scholars who have dealt with feminist studies and analyse how the literature has been used. This is to find commonality and differences in order to intensify the arguments about female courage and boldness. This will be done by an analysis of both African and South African literature.

Chapter three contains a presentation of the three novels, *Inkululeko Isentabeni* (2010), *Libambe Lingatshoni* (2017) and *Vuleka Mhlaba* (2006). An account of each novel will be provided as a summary to assist the reader in understanding the novel's context and storyline. This chapter also provides an overview account of the women characters in the novels. This overview account includes the characters strengths and weaknesses.

Chapter four is the data analysis of the novels. This chapter provides analysis of the resilience of each of the female characters in the selected texts and uses the theories to prove the courage, determination and intelligence these women possess.

Chapter five is the recommendations and conclusion of the study.

1.8. Motivation of the study

This research study aims to motivate African male authors to embrace the resilience that women possess and to display it more in their writings. Male authors need to change the stereotypical representation of women in literature. They should portray female characters as the bold, daring, intelligent and capable beings that they are, who have leadership qualities more often.

This research is also motivated by the rapid emergence of female writers who portray their experiences and original narratives to empower other women and young girls to embrace their inner resilience and accept who they are without being conscious of what others say about them. Many female writers have emerged, who attempt to share their experiences and rewrite the injustices that have been conducted around and displayed about females. As mentioned previously, these female writers aim at empowering other women not to be deterred by patriarchal mythical female representations. However, women cannot transform these stereotypical narratives entirely on their own, they need assistance from the originators of patriarchy to change their depiction of women. The entire people should be involved in this process, more especially in male-dominated African societies where culture and tradition play a pivotal role in governing society and are the bedrock of social norms.

Literature is fundamental in society as it remains an essential source of learning in most societies, familiarising people about the norms, culture and tradition of that particular society. Having said that, society would learn greatly through the change of narrative in literature and coming from a male perspective that acknowledges and honours female strength and attributes. When the sources of these great narratives about women are male, the depictions will be viewed unbiased and therefore real, as opposed to all narratives coming from women about women.

It is for these reasons and many others such as trying to appeal to African tradition and culture to transform and develop its ideologies about women, that the researcher has found it fundamental to conduct a research of this magnitude. Saule's literary works have been used because they seem fitting as they originate from a male traditional author, and Saule does not dismiss the fact that women are not just submissive subordinates in society. In all three novels

chosen for this study, Saule recognises women's attributes and depicts the manner in which these women utilise their strengths to not only assist society, but their strengths also prove to be beneficial in aiding their male counterparts. Saule also depicts men and women as equals who both encompass strengths and weaknesses respectively as human beings.

This study shares the same sentiments as Peter (2010:15) that it is essential for male authors to portray women as equals to men. This encourages African male and female authors to continue writing narratives of equality, making it a norm for society to address issues that render inequality between the two genders and also fight for change. This research study also aims to awaken readers to see that cultural practices do not only cause issues of female oppression, discrimination and abuse but they also cause problems in the depiction of women in literature and they open room for myths around the depiction of women.

1.9. Research Methodology

Drawing on concerns raised by resilience research in the social sciences, as presented by Ungar (2003), this study employs the methodology of close textual analysis to understand the nature and scope of African female resilience as represented in Saule's novels.

The qualitative approach as a strategic investigative instrument will be employed. The qualitative method is relevant in this study because it links up with the proposed aim of this study. Its definition also explains the writer's analysis as will be discovered from the following scholars. Walliman (2011:128) observes that qualitative research focuses on social issues, issues pertaining to people, groups and individuals. He shares the same views as Meyers (2009:36) who also touches on 'social issues' with an emphasis on understanding society and its cultural context, which is one of the subjects addressed in this study, namely, critically unpacking the resilience the female characters presented in the chosen novels for this study possess. Understandably, for any researcher, to advance knowledge by analysing the way society is structured, its beliefs and traditions through scrutinizing the texts, is what qualitative research is about.

The ideas averred above are fundamental in this study as the main intention of this study is to make a vital contribution in changing the way women are viewed in African society as feeble and subservient beings into empowered wives, who are able to speak their minds without fear and walk away from toxic and abusive marriages. Regarding forthcoming discussions on 'women resilience', Ungar (2003:87) is reassuring when he further elaborates that qualitative methods assist in addressing the issues that contribute to the need for women to demonstrate

resilience. Ungar (2003) is echoed by Richardson (2002:308) when he defines resilience as a trait that is adopted from experiencing disruptive life events. He continues to state that empowered people view life disruptions as turning points and opportunities to succeed. As it is the case with the female character Boniswa in *Inkululeko Isentabeni*, who has endured profusely in her marriage and realises how strong she is, this self-discovered strength assists her in reaching the decision to officially end her marriage. Boniswa's act of officially ending her marriage breaks cultural barriers of how a wife is supposed to conduct herself in a marriage.

The above courageous act is also found in *Libambe Lingatshoni* (2017) where Nomvuzo found strength in the hardship she endured at university as well as after she was arrested. Thembeke another female character in *Libambe Lingatshoni*, is determined to die fighting for what she believes as justice. She continues to fight to expose her former husband and claim back her ancestral land lost to white rulers.

An integrated descriptive approach, therefore, will assist in giving detailed material which Saule's novels and other relevant sources in understanding the phenomena feminism and its link to the strength which women possess. It will also assist in understanding how Saule has used literature to show the resilience of women in line with Wisker's (2001) statement that the descriptive method helps recognise the material at disposal. Also, according to Kothari (2004) the fundamental purpose of the descriptive method is to describe effectively the facts which are already there.

1.10. Definitions of key terms

1.10.1. Feminism

Feminism generally is a broad concept with multiple and diverse definitions and characteristics. Nevertheless, it concerns itself "with women's inferior position in society and with discrimination against women" (Freedman, 2001:1). According to Ebunoluwa (2009:225) the concept was derived from the Latin word *famina* that defines women's issues. Thus, feminism involves female issues within any definition given to it. Feminist movements fight for the empowerment and emancipation of women from all gender oppressive structures and norms. Mdluli (2013:33) concurs when she defines feminism as any initiative that advocates for women's rights notwithstanding sexual inequalities. This echoes the belief that women should be awarded equal rights and opportunities as men. Feminism has spread across the world and feminists define the concept according to their experiences (Ebunoluwa, 2009:227).

In this research study, feminism will be utilised as a theoretical framework tool in the investigation that will be conducted in the data analysis section. The main goal of the feminist movement is to liberate women from the patriarchal bondages of oppression, discrimination and abuse. It also aims at transforming gender relationships within societies, through the development and transformation of culture and tradition.

1.10.2. Culture

Jadezweni (2015:78) defines culture as the consciousness or being of an individual or persons which derives from grappling with nature and socialization with other people in a collective group. Culture is the “intellectual, spiritual and aesthetic development a particular way of life of a group or historical period or texts and practices which produce meaning” (Milestone and Meyer, 2012:2). With the mention of both these definitions given about culture, Kolawole (1998:27) argues that culture can be easily manipulated for personal gain.

In a male-dominated society, culture is used to benefit patriarchy, therefore oppressing women. As a result, in general “for culture to be meaningful, it needs to be interrogated, sieved and explored to make an otherwise alien concept indigenous and meaningful to the ordinary African woman” (Kolawole, 1998:27). It is clear that culture should advance society as a whole; however women are excluded from this advancement in many African patriarchal societies. This research study aims to analyse the extent in which African and specifically the amaXhosa cultures exclude women. It argues that cultures should evolve and adapt with the times and experiences.

1.10.3. Womanism

Womanism is an approach that emerged amongst black women as opposed to feminism which is a concept that was derived in the West. Womanism embraces black women’s efforts, strengths, intelligence and independence. Newman (1998:57) argues that African women were unable to relate with the then struggles of feminism as defined by Western white women as they were based on their specific struggles. Thus, the need for black African and American women to derive a concept that related to their own struggles, history and experiences. The theoretical framework section of this study will further explain this concept as it dwells immensely on it.

1.10.4. Stiwanism

Stiwanism is a concept derived by Ogunديpe-Leslie (1994:10) which she defines as follows:

‘STIWA’ is an acronym for Social Transformation Including Women in Africa. This new term ‘STIWA’ allows me to discuss the needs of African women today in the tradition of spaces and strategies provided in our indigenous cultures for the social being of women. ‘STIWA’ is about the inclusion of African women in the contemporary social and political transformation of Africa.

Ogundipe-Leslie’s stiwanism as stated above is a concept aimed at interrogating cultural and traditional norms and transforming them to reflect the equal representation of men and women. Stiwanism advocates for the equality of men and women without over selling one or the other. It speaks of a partnership between these genders rather than uplifting one gender more than the other. Stiwanism will be discussed in greater detail in Chapter 2 as it serves as one of the theoretical frameworks of this study.

1.10.5. Patriarchy

Patriarchy can be generally defined as a system whereby men are given authority over women and children. In a society dominated by men therefore, the men have more privileges than women, and they are said to be physically stronger than women, more intelligent and wiser than women. In a patriarchal society, men are viewed as the head of the household and they are entrusted with total authority over many decisions to be made and providing acts. Peter (2010:24) refers to patriarchy as a system where men are granted more status than women. Morten in Kramarae and Treichler (1985:232) defines patriarchy as:

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

The above definition indicates that in a patriarchal system, women are awarded the same position as children. In some instances, they are not even valued as human beings. Power is given to men to rule over everyone. In a patriarchal system, women’s attributes are not considered, rather, they are neglected and oppressed.

1.11. A Brief Critical Perspective of Ncedile Saule's Background

Saule, a male writer from the rural outskirts of the Eastern Cape, despite having sisters, grew up around many boys as he lived with his grandparents while his sisters lived with his parents. Saule had always been taught to respect women and to never lay hands on them. As a result, whenever he played with girls outside of his home, be it at school or just village girls, he became gentle around them, uncertain of how to react whenever they mocked him or lifted their hands on him.

In *Vuleka Mhlaba* (2006) qualities of his upbringing lessons are reflected in Saule's male character, Bantu. Bantu is troubled yet still portrays traits of respect and trust in women even though the situation troubling him is indirectly created by a woman. Bantu allows Noziqhamo into his life and appreciates her support. He does not dispute Noziqhamo's intelligence and admires her boldness and determination. These are traits that Saule illustrates as he is always in awe of the brilliance with which women are gifted. Although Saule has supervised and continues to work with many postgraduate students, both male and female, the majority are females because of the special gift with which he feels they have been bestowed.

In *Libambe Lingatshoni* (2017) Zithembile is portrayed as the nurturer in his household. His wife, Nomvuzo, left him with their son; therefore, he takes care of his son, something very rare to find in many traditional African societies. He is a constant source of support in his son's life, he loves children and even goes as far as playing with his son and his son's friends which is another rare quality in most African societies, where parents have minimal to no time at all to spend with their children. In some cases, parents leave at the crack of dawn for work and return home when their children are about to go to sleep, most single parents still have to arrive home and perform household duties, leaving them with limited to no time to spend with their children. However, Zithembile is different as Saule (2017:54) states:

Kwakukodwa ukuba kudlalwe ibhola, kuqukulwane engceni phaya phambi kwendlu yakhe, naako eyio ntaba ilele ngomqolo enkonye ibhola, oonkabi ke bakhwele phezu kwakhe ngathi ngamaxhalanga exhwitha ihashe elifileyo, bazezo mpukwana zingxolayo zikhwazayo. Yakukhalisana akhalime, athuthuzele, anxolise kwayena.

They used to play soccer, roll each other on the grass in Zithembile's front yard, Zithembile would lay on the grass like a mountain with his back on the grass holding a ball, the boys would climb on top of him like eagles snatching

at a dead horse, they would become noisy mice. Once the boys make hurt each other, Zithembile would comfort them and at times shout at them.

Some of Zithembile's neighbours did not understand his relationship with these kids solely because of his gender (Saule, 2017:54). This goes with the myth that women are natural nurturers therefore, it is expected that women share a close bond with children more than men. As a result, one of Zithembile's neighbours, an old woman, spreads false rumours accusing him of sexually abusing the neighbourhood children (Saule, 2017:55).

In the above perspective, Saule skilfully rides on the premise of his love for children. He finds children very dear but is aware that in the traditional patriarchal setting it is very seldom for men to have a special bond with their children, let alone the neighbourhood children. Men are viewed as strict and as heads of the household: they are the authority in the house, therefore, are to be feared, whereas the mothers are stereotyped as knowing more and are better about their children. Children are required to speak to their mothers when they need or want something, and the mothers in turn approach the fathers. When the children, especially a girl child, misbehaves or goes against social norms, the father blames the mother for not raising the child in the correct manner as is seen in *Vuleka Mhlaba* (2006:100) when Sindiswa falls pregnant at a young age.

Saule is aware of the false accusations that are made about fathers stemming from their involvement in their children's lives. While sexual abuse against children and women by men is at its peak currently in South Africa, in some instances, men are falsely accused. At times when men perform good deeds for their children, they are viewed as though they have something to hide, as if they are overcompensating for something else.

In his novels, Saule does not only demonstrate the resilience possessed by women but he also changes the stereotypes about both women and men encouraging them to work together. He also reverses their roles, depicting both genders as capable of performing the same duties. Therefore, they should be given equal chances in life despite their genders.

1.12. Conclusion

This chapter focused on the purpose of this study, outlining the background context of the study, the aims and objectives of the study and the problem that probed the researcher to investigate further about the topic at hand. Chapter one also provided the questions that this study hopes to respond to in the end with the goal it wishes to achieve. An outline of the key

terms used, and their definitions was also provided. Chapter one also includes a brief summary of all the chapters.

The motivation for the African feminisms research was clearly stated in this chapter, with the research methodological structure that will be utilised to analyse the three novels selected for this study. The mostly used terms and their definitions are provided towards the end of this chapter, with a brief biographical critique of the author to tap into his perspective as a male writer.

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1. Introduction

The main purpose of this literature review is to present insight on the writings, expressions and postulations that were utilized in designing this research study with regard to its title, whose main thrust is the morality of resilience with which female characters are endowed in selected isiXhosa creative texts. All critical sources such as African feminisms, Womanist and Stiwanist texts that will be used in this study will be employed in order to get a better perspective in the analysis of the resilience found in women across African societies. This study is not the first to be done on the author's creative texts; however, it breaks new ground in critically analysing the author's portrayal of women characters gifted with resilience.

The following arguments from various critical scholars bear testimony to the idea so far postulated. For instance, Stralton (1990:120) argues that women have been depicted by male authors in various ways in literary writings, some being gender stereotypical and gender unequal. She further states that male authors have also gone as far as portraying women strictly as mothers, giving them the mother of the nation role that is only capable of nurturing and seeing to domestic affairs of the household. Peter (2010:45) intensifies this argument by stating that other male authors have portrayed women as deceitful humans, who lure men to their death, and Ogundipe-Leslie (1987:37) asserts that women in literature are depicted as sweet mothers, soft and silent, and as mothers who put everyone else before them.

The views of the critics referred to differ markedly from the objectives of this research study. Hence, the inevitability for a study that shows women overcoming the above-mentioned stereotypes and societal norms, using these horrific experiences to engender resilience and success. It is interesting to note that despite the negative observations of some of the critics quoted in the paragraph above, Walker (1983:5) asserts that black women are constantly challenging themselves with great determination, despite the discouragement from cultural and traditional beliefs and practices. This is discernible in Saule's female characters found in the novels chosen for this study. In these selected texts, female characters symbolically define the inner resilience with which women are generally bestowed. Because of their stubborn fairness, which is an ingrained virtue, they become a personification of democratic values and as such are role models and a symbol of hope, not for the empowerment of women, but for their total liberation from all negative perceptions and oppression.

2.2. African Literature

Regarding African literature written in English, Stralton (1990:132) argues that writings such as *Things Fall Apart* (1958) by Chinua Achebe showcase patriarchy at its peak, with female characters accorded a lower status than that of males. When at times the female characters show signs of intellectual strength, they are dismissed, and “[t]his shows that Chinua Achebe and other authors write about themes of male interest often placing female characters in uncomplimentary roles” (Peter, 2010:1).

In support of this unsavoury observation above, Ngara (1989:40) argues that African literature tends to favour a highly cultural and politically dominating group of males. He continues to say that most African novels of the ‘70s portrayed male characters as heroes and female characters as their subordinates. Hence, the statement ‘behind every successful man is a woman’ because the male hero characters are always incomplete without a woman. In a way this statement is crediting women and their efforts, stating that it is through their efforts that men are elevated. However, it can also be viewed as a way of deliberately placing women ‘behind’ men, as second best, in the shadow of men. According to Bongela (2001:23) amongst the amaXhosa, women are to walk behind while men walk ahead of their wives to protect them from harm they might encounter along the way. Feminists like Ogundipe-Leslie (1994) and Kolawole (2002) find this problematic as it also implies that women are fragile and therefore unable to protect themselves. The implication is that women require protection while men are strong enough to protect their families.

Be that as it may, the female characters in these texts are not allowed to participate in any traditional family decision-making affairs. The men of the family make all the decisions for them, as portrayed in Achebe’s *Things Fall Apart* (1958). Nevertheless, Ngara (1989) avers that not all African male authors of the ‘70s portrayed women with negative connotations in the way Achebe did. According to Ngara, for instance, in *Two Thousand Season* (1973) women are depicted in a positive light, they are made to play a vital role in assisting the African continent receive independence and cultural integrity. “In parts of the novel, women are depicted as much more sensible, industrious and patriotic than African men who are portrayed as violent, indolent and greedy” (Ngara, 1989:36).

Women are mostly viewed as promiscuous in many African cultures, and Ngara (1989) tackles this issue using Maillu’s (1974) novel titled *4.30*. The novel portrays women positively and could be viewed as empowering women’s rights. The main character is a woman who is not

afraid to voice that if women are said to be promiscuous then surely men are too because women are not prostituting themselves to each other but to men who offer certain favours such as employment, money, gifts and so forth in exchange for sexual favours. This is visible even in the current era where women are at times forced to have sex with men to gain favours from them.

Ngara's (1989) article shows both the negative and positive representation of female characters in African literature by male authors. This indicates that African authors over time became more conscious of the elevated status of women in society. Currently, the narrative is changing from women being viewed as submissive subordinates in society into bold and assertive women. Saule is a contemporary African author who through creativity, provokes a debate towards the revolution of the patriarchal narrative. However, this change is occurring gradually.

As if aware of the gradual transformation of female narratives changing, Emenyonu (2004:67) in his editorial article for *New Women's Writing in African Literature*, states that there has been a rise in the writing of African literature by African women. She describes this rise of African women writings as a significant phenomenon for the growth of modern African literature founded on democratic conceptions. He further alludes that the writings of these women are different as they are progressive, bringing a remarkably unusual yet fresh perspective on the representation of African women in literature. These African women authors are changing the way women have been portrayed through patriarchal representations, as they tap into topics that have been viewed as taboo for women to discuss. Emenyonu (2004:68) states that this wave of female narrative change can be observed across the African continent and not in just one region of Africa. Emenyonu (2004:68) further argues that these new writings of African females are not against men, but rather portray women as equal to men. Their writings include ideas around "the survival of the female as well as the male in the African society" (Emenyonu, 2004: xi).

On the other hand, Nwajiaku (2004:33) asserts that the change of the portrayal of women in African literature to which Emenyonu (2004:68) refers to is related to African women's writings of the 20th Century. Writings include those of Sindiwe Magona, Lindiwe Mabuza, Buchi Emecheta, and Flora Nwapa to mention just a few. Nwajiaku avers that African female writers of the 20th Century paved a way to the current rise of women's new writings which portray African females as strong, bold and intellectual beings. She further maintains that the writings of first and second generation African women sought to deconstruct imperialist images

of Africans, fight and destroy negative portrayal of women in African literature by men and also turn against Western Feminism, which they viewed as a discourse that excluded their stories and as a result to which they could not relate (Nwajiaku, 2004:55).

In her article, *Representations of the Womanist Discourse in the Short Fiction of Akachi Ezeigbo and Chinwe Okechukwu*, Nwajiaku (2004:54) examines the foundations of African Womanism discourse with focus on the representation of women in the short stories of Akachi Ezeigbo and Chinwe Okechukwu. She echoes Emenyonu (2004:69) by arguing that in the quest for African women's empowerment, men are not excluded and hence, "survival includes the survival of the female as well as the male" (Nwajiaku, 2004:56).

In her analyses of Ezeigbo's *Echoes in the Mind* (1994) and Okechukwu's *When Rain Beat the Cow in the Eyes* (1999), Nwajiaku asserts that both collections explore the struggle for survival in society for both male and female. Nwajiaku (2004:57) states that the first section of Ezeigbo's short stories portrays the minds of her heroines, how these female protagonists face hardships and as a result how their hardships lead to their breakthroughs. Saule uses a similar concept in the three novels chosen for this study.

For instance, in *Vuleka Mhlaba* (2010), Noziqhamo as the lead female protagonist experiences distrust, belittling and ridicule from the males around her, however, in the end, her persistence and strong character assist a friend from being prosecuted by the law. Boniswa in *Inkululeko Isentabeni* (2011) is subjected to emotional stress most of the time in her marriage. However, through her boldness she finds the strength to walk out of the marriage and rediscover herself. The women in *Libambe Lingatshoni* also face these hardships which result from patriarchal ideologies, but they escape and liberate themselves. Saule's female protagonists resemble those of Ezeigbo as they exhibit the "dilemma of the woman in a patriarchal society" (Nwajiaku, 2004:58).

In one of Ezeigbo's short stories the female protagonist is represented as receiving support from her husband instead of the other way around as is always the case in a patriarchal situation. A similar scenario could be experienced in *Libambe Lingatshoni* (2017). Two female characters, Nomvuzo and Thembeke receive encouragement and support from Zithembile; he is an agent of patriarchy but nevertheless acts otherwise.

In another short story of Ezeigbo the female protagonist has three daughters and no male child; despite this her husband loves her and their daughters. This shows that Ezeigbo's female

characters go against all women representation stereotypes in literature. Ezeigbo creates “the man who will complement the African woman” (Nwajiaku, 204:62).

Chinwe Okechukwu’s short stories are slightly different from those by Ezeigbo in the sense that they are influenced and based on the Nigerian (Biafran) civil war of the late sixties. Nwajiaku (2004:64) avers that Okechuku illustrates the plight of women and children in a warfare patriarchal society, where the men are the leaders and therefore go on to fight in the war. As a result, the females become the pillar of the family.

Unlike Ezeigbo who takes the stereotype representation of women and turns it around, Okechuku uses these stereotypes and highlights how both male and female need each other within these stereotypes. The biggest task that female writers have before them, she suggests, is the “dismantling of negative and stereotypical images of the woman in society” (Nwajiaku, 2004:66). Nwajiaku (2004:66) inserts that female writers have therefore taken it upon themselves to rewrite these male chauvinistic myths. And like earlier female writers, the new writers feel it is vital to revisit “issues of the opposition of, and the so-called powerlessness of the women” (Nwajiaku, 2004:66).

Fatunde (2004:111) concurs with Nwajiaku (2004:67) when she states that indeed the 20th Century female writers paved the way for the third-generation female writers. Fatunde (2004:111) argues that the main focus of these female writers was to highlight the plight of women. The rise of female writers in the 20th Century was an attempt to create a new society whereby women are depicted differently. Fatunde (2004:115) continues to state that in all Beyala’s novels a recurring feature is a clash between cultures portrayed by the female protagonist. According to Fatunde (2004:115) the author justifies this as the fact that no matter where the African woman lives, she still faces oppression regardless, Beyala (1996:11) shares the same sentiments when she states that:

The African woman faces three types of battle. First, she has to struggle because she is a woman. Next, she has to assert herself as a black woman. Finally, she has to struggle for social integration. And at the same time, she carries a lot of burden (Beyala, 1996:11).

On the other hand, Fonchingong (2006:50) tries to justify the portrayal of women characters in African literature written by male authors in the early phases of African literature. He argues that in pre-colonial African societies the roles of men and women complemented each other, and things changed after colonization. Fonchingong (2006) asserts that African authors such

as Thiong'o and Achebe cannot be totally blamed for their hegemonic writings as they were trying to restore African traditions which were lost during the arrival of the colonisers. African female writers are currently revisiting the female question and interrogating the general depiction of African women in literature and in society in general as seen above.

Another interesting situation is that exemplified by Kwatsha (2009:129) when she states that in most African societies, the male child is valued more than the female child. The girl child is taught to depend on the male. "A daughter is raised by a mother to be a nurturing and caring person. The daughter is taught to care for others in the family and to believe in the ultimate value of the family...favouritism to the son" (Brown-Guillory, 1996:163). Kolawole (1998:26) states that in African societies women who do not conceive baby boys are viewed as useless and undignified. Their image remains tainted. The girl child grows up with these divisions and as a result, she finds herself growing up to be a subservient woman and wife. Kwatsha (2009:130) alludes that in other African cultures, giving birth to a girl child is frowned upon. It is hoped that the first-born child should be a boy. A boy is seen as a lineage carrier, the one that will continue with the family legacy. Boys are assumed to bring multiplication and power in their families, while women get married and as a result lose their identity (Kwatsha, 2009:132).

Brown-Guillory (1996:163) asserts that Olinkan women are taught from a young age to suppress pain and be silent as no man marries an outspoken woman. "They are taught that pain is not given a voice. Those who can withstand pain go on to teach their daughters to work hard, produce children, and endure pain" (Brown-Guillory, 1996:6).

Traditional and cultural norms play a pivotal role in African society and by extension are used as a means to oppress women: "The culture we live in, is totally of socially transmitted beliefs, meanings, value, ideas, norms and institutions that form the background of our lives" (Van der Vijver et al., 1990:60). These cultural values signify societal life. They are manipulated for personal gain. In most cases, those who manipulate them want to further patriarchal agendas. "Often, culture is used as a sledgehammer of oppression and to perpetuate inequality and specifically gender injustice" (Kolawole, 1998:11).

The argument above is furthered by bringing myths into the narrative. Myths are formed to propagate the cultural and traditional manipulations. Myths as defined by Ilesanmi (1998) are created by humans, and therefore are not aspects of nature: "They are created to explain not only the natural order or reality but also the cultural practices of man in order to justify and

legitimize it” (Ilesanmi, 1998:31). There are many anti-womanist myths found across African societies that originated from patriarchal views in their quest of justifying themselves, they make use of cultural, traditional and biblical text.

Kolawole (1998:23) argues that these myths have a huge impact on women’s self-image, self-realisation, self-retrieval and self-assertion. Often women, more especially young girls internalise these negative values and images of women. Myths are formed in African societies to depict women as fragile, inadequate and subservient humans, whose role in society is to get married and conceive children.

Kolawole (1998) for instance states that Nupe women are said to be witches because of their resourceful and dynamic traits. And in some Ethiopian societies women are excluded from ploughing as it is believed that their involvement would taint production (Kolawole, 1998:18), because of their menstrual cycles. In many African societies menstrual periods are viewed as a dirty mechanism and as a result, women are prohibited from participating in many rituals while on their cycle.

Kolawole (1998:18) mentions that negative myths about women are often used in African folktales, proverbs, oral and written literature. This is because these are sources that are utilised to teach life values. Therefore, it is easier to propagate an awful image of women in literature. These myths play a vital role in the African family as most are directed on marriage, on how a wife should conduct herself. “A very high premium is placed on investing much in marriage and more is expected of the women than men” (Kolawole, 1998:18). With divorce being taboo in many African cultures, pressure is placed upon the wife to tolerate more in a marriage than does the husband (Kolawole, 1998:18). All of these are mechanisms to strengthen and keep the family together. As a result, these values are instilled in young girls who internalise them.

Women are also labelled as untrustworthy and unreliable, and Kolawole (1998:19) argues that is the reason given in patriarchal societies for women not being empowered to be in leading positions. Hence the silencing even in the household. When they are given leading roles, which is very seldom in African societies, women are placed there as a façade.

Despite all these negative connotations about women, Ilesanmi (1998:53) points out that everything in nature was created in pairs, to complement each other positively and equally. She continues to state that in Yoruba every creature exists to complement and is interrelated to the other. She reprehends western ideologies for infiltrating on African soil and changing the African narrative of women.

Currently, the image of women is slowly experiencing a shift from negative to positive narration in Africa. Tremendous work still needs to be done but a shift is visible. Nadaswaran (2011:19) argues that there has been an enormous shift in the portrayal of women in Nigerian writings by third generation women authors. “A distinct pattern emerges of the young girl child/women character developing into a matured, strong womanist” (Nadaswaran, 2011:19). She maintains that these female characters began challenging their familial relationships and they grow up discovering their ‘personhood’, an independent identity for themselves.

Nadaswaran (2011:23) points out that the works of third generation authors in Africa depicts educated, strong and courageous women as opposed to the previous writings of women as wives, mothers and daughters subjected to domesticated sphere roles only. This new positive narration of women empowers women through rethinking the family concept. Nadaswaran (2011:23) and Hudson-Weems (1993:41) warn Africans to be careful of using feminist broad ideologies as feminism does not capture the African women’s needs: “Conceptualised and adopted by White women [feminism] involves an agenda that was designed to meet the needs and demands of a particular group” (Hudson-Weems, 1993:47).

It is because of the above reasoning that Nadaswaran (2011:23) suggests that African women employ Womanist and Stiwanist devices to empower themselves. Currently, African women and some male authors like Saule are questioning and changing the myths that were enforced upon their mothers by patriarchal society structures. “They are redressing misconceptions of women’s allocated roles within the domestic spheres, encouraging women to see beyond the roles as ‘wives’ mothers and ‘daughters’ and to build an individual identity for themselves” (Nadaswaran, 2011:21).

Okpala (2016) in her thesis titled “Redefining the African women in Contemporary African Literature: A study of Adichie’s *Purple Hibiscus*, *Half of a Yellow Sun* and *Americanah*” analyses the depiction of Adichie’s female characters in contemporary African literature. She explores the way in which Nigerian author Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie redefines the image of an African woman through her female protagonists in her above-mentioned novels. Okpala (2016) examines the representation of African women, their experiences and the feminist issues dealt with in Adichie’s novels to conclude her analysis. She also explores the textual strategies employed in the novels to highlight patriarchal imbalances within the novels, which represent the African society. Okpala (2016) employs African Feminism as her theoretical framework. She affirms through her analysis that Adichie’s work plays a vital role in redefining and

transforming the image of African women from a negative, powerless narrative to a positive one.

The above bears testimony to the arguments in this research study in that the analysis thereof clearly demonstrates how Saule's novels are a transformation of the known imagery of African women depicted by patriarchal, sexist and misogynist attitudes. The difference is that this study explores works of an African traditionalist male author to highlight that African men like Saule are also joining the feminist movement in assisting in redefining the image of women.

The different views on the representation of female characters mentioned in the above section, from the authors of the early phases of African literature to the contemporary era writings is fundamental. This shows the narrative is changing with the rise of African feminist authors. Not necessarily females but also male authors are writing against patriarchy, advocating for transformation and equality, and this study encompasses transformation and equality between both genders, and therefore highlights the level-headedness and boldness that Saule embodies in his female characters.

It is essential to include a South African Literature review as well since the setting of Saule's novels is in the rural and township South Africa. It is fundamental to gather what others have written on the topic of feminism in South Africa where culture and tradition are manipulated by the agents of patriarchy to structure societal norms and values, not forgetting that South African women come from a distraught background of apartheid.

2.3. South African Literature

Kolawole (1998:214) avers that post-apartheid South Africa was welcomed by many female autobiographical writers who were part of the liberation struggle against the apartheid regime. "These works capture the disparate experiences of these women by focusing on gender problems" (Kolawole, 1998:215). These South African female autobiographies are an attempt of empowering women to reclaim their identities, identities that were lost to colonialism and apartheid. Given South Africa's historical background, South African women during the apartheid era were not only faced with the gender inequality issue, but also with racial and class issues. Magubane (2010) describes the South African women's struggle as a triple thread. These autobiographies depict a true South African Apartheid era image of women, where women became the sole caretakers of many families because of the migrant workers' flow from rural areas into the cities (Kolawole, 1998:217). This forced women into becoming resourceful.

“The more the oppressive forces encroached on these women, the more resilient they became” (Kolawole, 1998:217).

This research study explores the resilience that South African women have showcased and continue to express through the decades. With the rise of feminist writers, Saule remains part of the few male authors who acknowledge women’s power and their tremendous impact in African society.

Peter (2010:35) in his study titled *The Depiction of Female Characters by Male Writers in Selected isiXhosa Drama Works* focuses on the representation on women characters in drama works. He draws on examples from isiXhosa drama works and uses other African writers’ works as a general analysis. Peter (2010:35) employs literary onomastics, psychoanalysis and feminism as his theoretical framework. Peter (2010:37) argues that it is evident from the works he analyses that female characters in isiXhosa drama play a subordinate role. He continues by saying that his chosen authors’ texts are oppressive and undermining in their portrayal of female characters. Peter (2010) avers that the female characters that do show resistance against male domination and patriarchy are silenced.

Peter’s (2010:42) study focuses on isiXhosa drama works of different writers, meanwhile my study focuses on novels written by the same author. Peter uses multiple theoretical frameworks whereas this study focuses solely on African Womanism and aims to highlight the robust nature of African women instead of dwelling on their weaknesses.

Masuku’s (2005) study, *Perceived Oppression of Women in Zulu Folklore* analyses isiZulu folklore, proverbs and praises in order to determine the extent to which society dictates the way Zulu women should conduct themselves. She utilises a broad Feminist approach to accommodate both Western and African ideologies. This is slightly different from my approach which focuses on African Feminisms. Masuku (2005) found that isiZulu proverbs mostly are about marriage, giving instructions on what is expected of married women. IsiZulu proverbs also indicate that young girls are expected to prepare themselves for marriage from a young age as marriage should be the end goal for all obedient women. Masuku (2005) also discovered that women in Zulu folktales are portrayed as labourers working the fields, rebellious more especially against their culture, those that are bold and beautiful are viewed as witches and women who lure men into distasteful circumstances. Her aim was to investigate whether isiZulu traditional literature was used to correct the gender imbalances embedded in culture or not.

This research study differs from Masuku's (2005) as she focuses on showing the oppression and discrimination of women through gender stereotypes, imbalances and patriarchy rather than showcasing the strength that women possess to overcome these misogynist situations. This research study also differs as it sets out to empower women through other women's narratives of courage and boldness. It sets to change the myths that are said about women across African societies.

Mawela (1994) in her thesis titled *The Depiction of Women Characters in Selected Venda Novels* examines the portrayal of female characters by the chosen Venda authors. Mawela (1994) uses the Comparative Approach to conduct her investigation. She asserts that literary works analysed portrayed women as submissive and those who were reluctant to adhere to male subordination were labelled as disrespectful and terrible mothers.

Gumede (2002) in his study titled, *The Portrayal of Female Characters in Selected Zulu Texts* examines four isiZulu literary texts written by Zulu male authors to conduct his analysis on the representation of female characters in the second half of the 20th Century isiZulu literature. He argues that traditional South African society is dominated by males with strong patriarchal values. Gumede's (2002) study showcases that there was a shift even with some male thinking on the position of women in South Africa, with South African women forming heavy resistance against the apartheid government laws.

Gumede's (2002) study is different to this one as firstly, it focuses specifically on Zulu women and literature. Secondly, he highlights the patriarchal issues that the women characters in his chosen novels face but he fails to show how they overcome these issues in detail. Failure of which, results in the courage and bravery he speaks of being hidden. I further this study by using novels of the 21st Century to demonstrate how the scope of transformation continues to grow in showcasing women of bravery in literature.

Ibinga (2007) focuses on the portrayal of women in South African literature from the period of the Apartheid era to contemporary South Africa. In his thesis titled, *The Representation of Women in the Works of Three South African Novelists of the Transition*, utilizes writings of two black male authors and one female author. He employs the Comparative Theoretical Approach to conduct his analyses. Ibinga (2007) conducts a critical analysis of how the social and cultural effects of the transformation from Apartheid South Africa to Democratic South Africa affect the representation of women in literature. While he points out that fiction is not always a true depiction of reality however, literature in essence plays an enormous role in

educating society about life. Ibinga (2007) argues that the plight of women during the Apartheid era contributed tremendously to the negative representation of women in contemporary South Africa. In his analysis, Ibinga (2007) found that his selected authors had one thing in common and that is their portrayal of women as active agents in the social transforming democratic South Africa.

Furthermore, Ibinga (2007) states that the common feature of these three authors' literary works is the resilience their female characters possess to resist oppression and discrimination. The authors portray women as intelligent, independent and diligent human beings. His study is like my study, however, this research study is rooted in African Feminism. This study focuses on Saule's contemporary works without engaging in depth with Apartheid implications upon the depiction of women.

Be that as it may, however, Frenkel (2008:2) in his article examines the two-folded treatment of women in South Africa. He argues that on one hand they are made visible, on the other invisible, both included and excluded. He argues that South Africa's democratic Constitution includes women yet in practice women are excluded. Frenkel (2008:2) points out the complexity of gender issues in South Africa because of racial issues. Black women in South Africa during the apartheid era felt that theirs was a triple struggle, one that was based on race, class and gender liberation. Frenkel (2008:2) argues that this is the main reason why Western Feminism ideologies can never be the same as those of African feminist ideologies.

Frenkel (2008:3) argues that male domination was intensified by colonialism. He asserts that historically, the colonialists refused to acknowledge and negotiate with African women leaders. African male leaders took advantage of this and as a result manipulated culture to suppress women. Frenkel (2008:3) states that previously, South African customary law allowed women chiefs and accommodated both women and men. However, presently it is oppressive. "The codification of traditional practice to undergird patriarchal constraints coupled with an andro-centric legal system in a male-dominated present, is challenged by a progressive constitution that is only as strong as its legal application allows in in post-apartheid South Africa" (Frenkel, 2008:4).

Hoza (2010), in her article titled *Looking Back Moving Forward: An Appraisal of a Black African Feminist* explores a poem said to be written by an unknown Xhosa woman and published in an isiXhosa newspaper in 1902. Hoza (2010) avers that the poet tackles male gendered constructions of females and patriarchal propaganda. The poet retaliates in a

humorous manner against the patriarchal system's accord of marriage as the ultimate prize for all women. Hoza (2010) acknowledges that decades later the South African Democratic Constitution entails a progressive and equal framework for both males and females. However, women's rights are still heavily infringed upon and women are still gendered, stereotyped. Respect and dignity are still preserved for those women who get married, while those who have children out of 'wedlock' are frowned upon.

The above argument is extended by Magudu (2004) who wrote an article titled *AmaHlubi Women's Experience and Perception of "ukuzila"*. In her article, Magudu (2004:23) scrutinizes the different treatments that men and women succumbed to during the mourning period after losing a loved one. In her findings, she mentioned how dissatisfied the women were. She states that women feel that the practice is discriminative and oppressive towards women. The practice is more intense for women as they mourn for a longer period than do men; women are marked by wearing black clothes, making it distinct for everyone to recognise that they are in mourning. All the instructions are given out by men. Meanwhile, men have no distinct clothing or way that isolates them: men make the rules, they mourn for a shorter period and they are not expected to behave differently during this period.

Unlike Magudu, Machaba (2011) analyses the portrayal of women in Xitsonga literature in her thesis titled: *The Portrayal of Women in Xitsonga Literature with Special Reference to South African Novels, Poems and Proverbs*. She emphasizes the importance of the role literature plays in educating society about cultural and traditional values and practices. Machaba employs African feminist devices to critically analyse the various literary texts. She makes use of Xitsonga novels with women as characters. She uses both male and female writings to project the different views. Machaba (2011) found that male authors are biased in their portrayal of female characters. She asserts that gender differentiation in the Xitsonga culture begins from birth. "If a male child is born, the announcement made to the husband is 'you have begotten a spear'" (Machaba, 2011:164). This suggests that the male child in Xitsonga is regarded as the brave one, the protector, the fighter and hunter. Females, on the other hand, are associated with a basket, as they are the carriers, and the field labourer is portrayed with all domesticated activities.

Unlike Machaba, Hoza (2012) in her article titled *Patriarchal Self-inflated Pompous Image Deflated: A Feminist Reading of Swartbooi's Umandisa* highlights how Swartbooi uses her female character to confront the patriarchal conditions of the 19th Century Xhosa society. Hoza

(2012) argues that Swartbooi utilizes a radical anti-patriarchal feminist narrative to achieve her revolutionary feminist agenda solely aimed at exposing patriarchal behaviour.

Mohale's (2015) arguments are not far from those of Hoza in the main. In his thesis, *The Portrayal of Women in Sesotho Literature with Special Reference to South African Novels, Poems and Proverbs* examines the representation of female characters in Sesotho literary works. He employs an African Feminist theoretical framework. Mohale (2015) argues that Sesotho male authors are biased in their portrayal of women in their works. Women are portrayed as either well-mannered or ill-mannered. Female characters in his selected Sesotho literature are depicted as submissive and cruel people. Mohale (2015) states that his chosen authors portray women negatively, in line with the Sesotho culture where women are restricted to household labour and are forced to respect their male counterparts.

A different angle is followed by Murray (2017) in her analyses of literary writings of contemporary South African authors in her article titled '*I was a Girl of my Time*': *A Feminist Literary Analysis of Representations of Time and Gender in Selected Contemporary South African Fiction by Women*. She explores the depiction of female characters by female authors in these writings with their engagement with general understandings of time and their chronological progression. Murray (2017:7) argues that the female characters are depicted as being conflicted by past traumatic experiences of male subordination and struggle with these in their present life. She stresses that it is fundamental for women to deal with past traumas in order to move forward.

On the other hand, Jadezweni (2015) in his article titled: *Beyond Dudlu Ntombazana! The Voice of S.E.K. Mqhayi* explores selected poetry by the Imbongi yesizwe, S.E.K. Mqhayi praising women for their contribution in the Xhosa society. Jadezweni (2015:135) argues the importance of his analysis in the Xhosa society with high patriarchal systems. He maintains that isiXhosa praise poetry is mostly directed at men, and despite the tremendous work that women have done and continue to do in their respective professions and communities, they are yet to be honoured. Jadezweni (2015:135) examines whether women are ever honoured and if so, the manner in which this gratitude is performed. He focuses on the poetic techniques Mqhayi utilized as well as the gender issues he raised. Jadezweni (2015:137) discovers that Mqhayi honours women through praise poetry and he employs the same poetic techniques he uses to praise males.

Kwatsha (2015) explores the works of numerous African female authors to analyse the representation of single female characters. In her article titled: *The Portrayal of Single Women Characters in Selected African Literary Texts*, she argues that these single female characters are portrayed as strong, resistant and independent characters that are constantly in battle with male dominance. They are portrayed as active and bold agents, as opposed to the stereotypical wife and mother image. Kwatsha (2015) discovers that these single female characters are depicted as free agents, who can take care of themselves in all aspects. This thesis will focus on both married and single resilient women characters and show how despite their status their resilience is portrayed.

2.4. Theoretical Framework

2.4.1. African Feminisms

Feminism, a concept that was designed to emancipate women from all oppressions of patriarchy, was firstly opposed by many scholars such as Buchi Emecheta, Nnaemeka and many others as they argue that it was a foreign concept which did not appeal to Africans. Feminism was rejected and made to appear irrelevant to the African society. It is on these grounds that African female scholars sought a concept that represented the core goal of feminism – the liberation of women from all oppression – while incorporating African tradition and experiences. It is for this reason that Arndt (2002:21) maintains that:

A feminist organization is more than a mere assembly of women, a feminist organization questions and challenges gender inequalities that oppress and discriminate against women. Not all women's organizations in Africa pursued and defended women's rights. Moreover, these organizations did not have the program of transforming gender relationships. Hence, it can be argued that women's movements have a long tradition in Africa and that some of these organizations pursued aims one could label feminist. Thus, African feminism is partly rooted in traditional African societies, but when looking for roots of African feminism one has to take a more complex approach.

In essence, Arndt (2002:21) argues that a feminist approach had existed in Africa for a long time within African women's organizations. However, these movements were not labelled as feminist movements. The approach was more cultural and traditional therefore could not be labelled the same as the feminism of the United States white middle-class women like Betty Friedan which was based on the notion of 'the problem with no name' (hooks, 1998:1844).

It is upon the above basis that this study utilises African feminism as its broad theoretical framework. This is because in the three novels chosen for this study, Saule uses men as complimentary to women and vice versa instead of portraying the two genders at heads with each other as Western feminism would dictate. Arndt (2002:32) argues that African feminism is not against men but rather focuses and encourages men and women to work together. African feminism is different to Western feminist ideology in that it “gets to the bottom of African gender relations and the problems of African women – illuminating their causes and consequences – and criticises them” (Arndt, 2002:32). African feminism also “aims at discussing gender roles in the context of other oppressive mechanisms such as racism, neo-colonialism, (cultural) imperialism, socio-economic exclusion and exploitation, gerontocracy, religious fundamentalism as well as dictatorial and/or corrupt systems” (Arndt, 2002:32).

Arndt avers that there are three types of African feminist literary writers: reformists, transformatives and radicalists (2002:33). Saule falls under the reformist and transformative African feminist writers. “Reformist African feminist writers” according to Arndt, “want to negotiate with the patriarchal society to gain new scope for women but accept the fundamental patriarchal orientation of their society as a given fact” (2002:33). Given Arndt’s (2002:33) definition of a reformist feminist writer, it can be said that these writers consider society capable of reforming from its patriarchal ways. Such writers criticise men as individuals rather than as representatives of the male gender (Arndt, 2002:33). As is the case in *Vuleka Mhlaba* (2006), where Saule criticises Jolela as an individual rather than as representative of men, as Bantu is portrayed in a completely different light from Jolela. Even in *Inkululeko Isentabeni* (2010), Afrika is depicted as the complete opposite of Buyile, yet they are both men. And so is Zithembile in *Libambe Lingatshoni* (2017).

Another common feature of the reformist African feminist authors is that within their writings, women are capable of making the same mistakes as men (Arndt, 2002:34). For instance, in *Libambe Lingatshoni* (2017), Nomvuzo (female protagonist) does something completely against her female character (as would be viewed by patriarchal society) and walks out of her marriage with no apparent reason, leaving her son behind with her husband. Consequently, Zithembile is forced to raise their son alone, another peculiar act in the African patriarchal society. Reformists also portray men and women protagonists working together for a good cause, showing how complimentary the two genders are. As is seen in *Libambe Lingatshoni* (2017) with Zithembile and Thembeke forming an alliance to reclaim their family land. In

Vuleka Mhlaba (2006), Noziqhamo and Bantu work together in correcting the injustices of the South African justice system.

The above are but a few examples found in Saule's writing to justify this research study's reasons for associating Saule with the reformist African feminist. Arndt (2002) alludes that transformative writers criticise men harshly. In the beginning these male characters are depicted as capable of transforming their behaviour. Transformative African feminists are "symbolised by the fact that the man, who embodies the behaviour to be criticised and overcome, is contrasted with one or more positive counterparts" (Arndt, 2002:34).

This is visible in *Vuleka Mhlaba* (2006) where Jolela is at first represented in a positive light, as a married attorney who is willing to assist Bantu with his case, working alongside Ngalo. However, as the storyline unravels, Jolela's character changes, and his true intentions and character are revealed, as seen in *Inkululeko Isentabeni* (2010). At first the writer tells us that Afrika was a good person who adored his friends, therefore, would never carry out any acts of vengeance against them. However, as time goes by Afrika's true character is revealed.

In essence, Arndt (2002:35) avers that African feminism provides a forum for the coexistence of both men and women as opposed to Western feminism which rejects men. And Saule also shows the importance of men and women working together but at the same time highlights women resilience.

2.4.2. African Womanism

This research study utilises three similar womanist theories because all three womanist theories incorporate principles of vibrant, courageous and intelligent women. These are women who know what they want and go through all odds to retain it. The female characters in Saule's three novels discussed here breach all black women stereotypes, abiding by womanist principles. Each theory is a development of the other, therefore, all three theories are important.

Under the umbrella term of African feminism, this study undertakes African womanism and Stiwanism as its focal theoretical framework, infusing both Chickwenye Okonjo Ogunyemi and Alice Walker's womanisms. In this study womanism is used as a tool of empowering women into realising their full potential and defining themselves beyond the roles of being mothers and wives in a manner "asserting their independence in various experiences and family relationships" (Nadaswaran, 2011:22). Saule's female protagonists reveal their resilience through this womanism premise. In *Vuleka Mhlaba* (2006), Noziqhamo is single and has no children. Men like Jolela and the police detectives are intimidated by her independence,

boldness and resilience. Noziqhamo does not allow anyone to walk over her. When the detectives fail to conduct a proper investigation into Bantu's case, Noziqhamo takes over and conducts a private and thorough investigation into the matter. Sindiswa is another independent and strong female character in this novel. She is a magistrate by profession, and this emphasises her boldness, as she enters a profession that is mostly male dominated.

In *Libambe Lingatshoni* (2017), Nosisana (Zithembile's sister) has no children and has never been married but she takes care of her parents' household, her siblings and their many children. She also serves as her brother's confidante. Nomvuzo though married is not confined by her marriage, and she works hard to ensure that she is well educated and does things like shopping and traveling on her own for herself. Thembeke, another resilient female in *Libambe Lingatshoni* (2017) is brave enough to leave an abusive marriage. Thembeke's resilience is marked by her ability to rise even after suffering all forms of abuse from her husband, including rape and torture, which result in a near death experience. However, Thembeke is still determined to fight for what she believes is justice.

In *Inkululeko Isentabeni* (2011), Boniswa is able to turn down men who constantly throw themselves on her, declaring their love for her. She is bold to approach and take the lead in her relationship with Buyile even though her African society frowns upon this act. At a later stage, when she gets married, she has the courage to leave her husband after matters become unbearable in her marriage.

It is because of the above mentioned that this study argues that Saule's characters embody the true meaning of womanism. It is because of their stubborn objectivity that they become a personification of ethical values and as such role models and a symbolic hope not only for the empowerment of women, but also for their total liberation from all negative perceptions and oppressions in the context of patriarchal sensibilities.

Alice Walker's (1983) concept of womanism speaks of its dedication to the survival and completeness of a whole people, with special reference to women. She avers that the womanist theory is for women who constantly challenge themselves with great determination regardless of the restraints placed upon them by patriarchal and cultural norms. An example of this can be found in *Vuleka Mhlaba* (2006) with Noziqhamo and Sindiswa, who are both well-educated and in male dominated professions, where Noziqhamo is a politics professor with a law degree. Both women work relentlessly to prove to society that they deserve to be in these professions just as their male counterparts. Noziqhamo is ridiculed by the detectives and Jolela but

irrespectively challenges herself with great determination to solve a case they are unable to solve.

Nomvuzo in *Libambe Lingatshoni* (2017) dropped out of university because of a man whose ego could not accept rejection from a woman, and therefore decided to torment Nomvuzo by spreading false rumours about her. However, Nomvuzo did not give up nor allow this situation to stand in her way, as she found work in government and studied while working. She persevered and made a name for herself. Thembeke is faced with many challenges and added to her trauma is the pain of having to start afresh after her house burnt down. However, Thembeke also perseveres. And Boniswa in *Inkululeko Isentabeni* (2011) has thoughts of committing suicide but she gathers the strength to dismiss such thoughts and files for divorce from her husband even though it is against her culture.

Considering all the above mentioned, it is fundamental to point out that both Alice Walker and Ogunyemi coined the concept of African womanism independently. Kolawole (2002) notes that womanism originated from addressing issues in Africa and taking into consideration the historical and cultural contexts. African scholars such as Ama Ata Aidoo, Buchi Emecheta and many other first and second-generation female writers argue that feminism is a Western concept which is exclusive to women, therefore is oppressive to African women as it neglects their experiences, culture and history (Kolawole, 2002:93). Another issue that made these African female writers criticise feminism is the fact that it is hostile towards men.

Given the above sentiments, Kolawole (2002) alludes that the most acceptable alternative to feminism for African women is womanism. Therefore, Ogunyemi (1986:63) coined the concept of African womanism and defined it as:

Black womanism is a philosophy that celebrates Black roots, the ideals of Black life, while giving a balanced presentation of Black womandom. It concerns itself as much with the Black sexual power task as with the world power structure that subjugates Blacks.

Ogunyemi's (1983) definition places more focus on cultural, African women's interests and experiences, reserving emphasis on gender issues. "In many African nations, other forms of oppression are more intimidating and self-diminishing than gender and this must be dealt with" notes Kolawole (2002:95). Hence the need for gender issues in the African context to be inclusive, as men also need to be included. Policies that are set to enhance women issues need

to include men, and vice versa (Kolawole, 2002:96). This is because Black women and men still need to fight in unity the legacy of colonialism, European imperialism, apartheid and racial oppression. Hence, Saule's novels all have male and female protagonists that are complementary, working together through a situation. For instance, in *Inkululeko Isentabeni* (2011) Boniswa, a daughter of a political stallion that was killed by the apartheid government, and Buyile, who is a messenger for the Black political prisoners, accompany each other to deliver these letters as an attempt of fighting the apartheid system.

Alice Walker's (1983) concept of womanism is aimed at fighting for the rights of Black women, with their experiences, culture and history at the forefront as seen in Ogunyemi's definition of the term (Ebunoluwa, 2009:228). However, Ogunyemi and Hudson-Weems reject feminism completely, whereas Walker incorporates the term within her womanism and states that it is for feminists. Ogunyemi and Hudson-Weems argue that "womanism differs from feminism because it recognises the triple oppression of Black women" (Ebunoluwa, 2009:230).

Ebunoluwa (2009) argues that even though African womanism is popular amongst African scholars, however there have been many variants of concepts aimed at the emancipation of women from all sexist, racial, classist and cultural oppression. And Molar Ogundipe-Leslie's (1994) concept of Stiwanism that is about to be discussed in the next section is one of those.

2.4.3. Stiwanism

Stiwanism is a term coined by Ogundipe-Leslie (1994) which argues for "Social Transformation Including Women in Africa. Stiwanism stresses the needed for a harmonious society, of both men and women working alongside instead of any gender exclusion or oppression created by the other (Ebunoluwa, 2009:231). Ogundipe-Leslie (1994) emphasizes that this transformation can only occur if both men and women unite. This transformation created by unity of both sexes is portrayed in Saule's novels with Noziqhamo and Bantu working together, the one encouraging the other and vice versa when things become complex (Vuleka Mhlaba, 2006). In *Inkululeko Isentabeni* (2011) Boniswa supports Buyile when he is caught trying to smuggle a letter for an inmate upon their visit in East London. When Buyile and Boniswa are taken to the police station and Buyile is interrogated, Boniswa encourages him to remain strong and not say anything that would incriminate him or the other political prisoners. In *Libambe Lingatshoni* (2017) Zithembile and Thembeke work together to claim their forefathers' land and restore the dignity of many Black families.

Ogundipe-Leslie (1994) also avers that gender issues are just as fundamental as cultural; racial and class issues are in the restoration of Africa. She further alludes that gender issues have been neglected for far too long on the African continent, claiming that “[t]he rise of women in Africa will raise the continent from its current state of dejection and despair to new heights of resourcefulness and creativity” (Ogundipe-Leslie, 1994:197). Stiwanism is about women breaking free from gender oppression, it is about “[t]he demolition and reconstruction: the destruction of energy-sapping myths” (Ogundipe-Leslie, 1994:197).

The above ideology can be found in Saule’s novels, where women walk and stand firm on forbidden ground, breaking gender oppression. For instance, in *Vuleka Mhlaba* (2006) many of the characters are in awe of how vigorously Noziqhamo works because she is a woman. The detectives hurl insults at her and she is ridiculed. However, in the end everyone is astonished at how she is able to solve the case and how determined she was to solve it even though people kept on discouraging her. This certainly made society perceive her differently.

In *Libambe Lingatshoni* (2017) when Nomvuzo is ridiculed and falsely accused, she does not give up but persists to work hard to change the way people view her. As a result, when she and her husband hold a graduation party people are amazed, since they knew her as a university drop-out. And in *Inkululeko Isentabeni* (2011) Boniswa is able to emancipate herself from her abusive bondage, breaking cultural barriers by filing for divorce. Saule’s female protagonists find solutions to their issues and their male counterparts are supportive, changing the statement ‘behind every successful man is a woman’.

2.5. Conclusion

Gathering all that is said in this section, it is clear that writings by male authors about women prior the sudden rise of female writers, has been biased, based on patriarchal views with only a few writings that portray women in a different light from those of a society dominated by male opinion whose only concerns were political and general issues instead of gender issues. However, it is evident that the birth of first generation female authors like Ama Ata Aidoo, Miriama Ba, Olive Schreiner to mention just a few gave rise to second and third generation female writers who continued shining the torch of transforming the portrayal of women from reserved, irrational and emotional beings to courageous, empowered, daring and independent beings.

More women are writing about their experience, showcasing their strengths. Women are changing their narratives from being portrayed as victims, they have changed the narrative to

displaying themselves as empowered survivors. Women are no longer silent; they are tired of being represented as fragile and vulnerable.

Through the use of African feminisms values, African women realise the essentiality of incorporating their history and experiences in their empowerment and attempt to transform African traditions and cultures utilising these experiences. This is because society is based on cultural and traditional norms, therefore they have to develop with the evolving times.

African womanism enforces African feminism norms as it promotes female empowerment and independence. Womanism also advocates for women to utilise their history to write a different narrative from the stereotypical patriarchal narrative. Womanism pushes women to reach their full potential and encourages them to share their greatness with each other and the rest of the world.

Stiwanism also envisages the above-mentioned values with an emphasis on gender equality. It emphasises that African feminisms are not about the exclusion of men but rather the equality and unity of men and women, as the two are greater working together rather than against each other. This is evident in the many struggles that men and women fought together against colonisers and the apartheid government in South Africa.

The chapter that succeeds this literature review is a presentation of the data of this research study. This section is fundamental as it explains the importance of the use of Saule's texts in this study. It also introduces the reader to the texts. The data presentation chapter also taps into Saule's female characters' traits, displaying their history and experiences in order to understand their behaviours.

CHAPTER 3: DATA COLLECTION AND PRESENTATION

3.1. Introduction

This chapter sets out to present the data of this study which focuses on the three novels namely, *Inkululeko Isentabeni* (2010), *Libambe Lingatshoni* (2017) and *Vuleka Mhlaba* (2016). For the purpose of this research an account of each novel will be provided to assist the reader with the contextual background. The chapter also gives an account of all the female protagonists in each novel in context with the modern 21st century woman. The strengths and the weaknesses of each female protagonist will be highlighted in this chapter because, like every other individual, male or female these women also have shortcomings and those occur because of their weaknesses. These women utilize their shortcomings in a positive manner, in a way that works for them individually.

This study utilises specifically the selected novels because, although Saule writes in the democratic era, he revisits past social injustices that affected the majority of the black population. This serves as a means of remembrance of where the country comes from and the mechanisms to utilise going forward, to ensure that the country does not go back to what it was during the apartheid era. Saule uses both men and women in alliance to combat these injustices. Inasmuch as both sexes are used equally, women have a way of coming out stronger because of having to work twice as hard for their efforts to be recognised.

3.2. Summary of *Inkululeko Isentabeni*

Inkululeko Isentabeni is a portrayal of the way in which black people were treated in the apartheid era not necessarily by white people only but by fellow black people working for the whites. The novel showcases the problematic issue of the ten different homelands within South Africa, whereby black South Africans would have to be citizens of their specific Bantustan according to their birthplace (Khunou, 2009:82). The Eastern Cape, which is where the novel is set, was divided into two homelands, the Ciskei and the Transkei (Khunou, 2009:82). Even though the novel has a political background, it showcases women's efforts as well as men's efforts in combating the apartheid regime laws.

In the novel, Boniswa and other fellow teachers who are mostly women were not hesitant in joining learners in their protests as they were all arrested together. Boniswa's father was one of the stalwarts of the liberation movement who, as a result, was killed by the police when

Boniswa was still young. Thus, Boniswa was familiar with politics and shared her father's political spirit. She is not afraid of the police, even when she realises that Buyile is not safe in his apartment because of the police. She suggests that he hide in her apartment and boldly tells him that she is not afraid of the police even if they ransack her apartment. Again, at the police station in East London, she bravely warns Buyile to withhold the information he has on the liberation struggle. Boniswa warns him to remain silent no matter what they do to him.

Inkululeko Isentabeni, is an isiXhosa term literally meaning freedom is on the mountain or hill. Figuratively it means that emancipation is just around the corner. In the novel, South African black people were about to be liberated from the harsh laws of the apartheid regime. For Boniswa this means that she was about to be emancipated from the hardships she faced as a woman and wife.

The novel begins with two friends Afrika and Buyile who fall in love with the same woman, Boniswa. Afrika acts upon his feelings by pestering Boniswa about them dating. However, Boniswa is not in love with him thus she rejects his many proposals. Boniswa is in love with Buyile, who feels intimidated by women in general and as a result tries to stay away from romantic relationships. Afrika is certain that his friend, Buyile, is dating Boniswa and so he plots to get rid of his friend in order to win Boniswa's heart.

Boniswa boldly declares her love to Buyile and they end up dating, promising each other marriage. Meanwhile, Afrika's plot of ousting Buyile thickens. He uses Buyile's involvement in the liberation struggle against him. Eventually Afrika successfully (if indirectly) puts Buyile behind bars. Buyile is imprisoned and sent to Robben Island, ensuring that he is far away from his family and friends.

Afrika then worms his way into Boniswa's life, but she rejects him at first. He resorts to drugging her then sexually violates her without consent. Boniswa tells him the next day that she does not recall anything about them sleeping together. Afrika assures her that she consented. Boniswa finds out that she is pregnant and assumes that Afrika is the father. As a result, they get married to hide the 'shame' of her falling pregnant out of wedlock. Meanwhile, Buyile in prison is plotting his revenge on Afrika.

Afrika and Boniswa's marriage is rocky from the beginning as Afrika realizes that Boniswa is not as subservient and ignorant as the other women with whom he usually sleeps. He continues

with his infidelity lifestyle. Afrika becomes so scarce in their home to the point that he takes a second wife without informing Boniswa. Boniswa's married life is horrible and as a result she considers suicide.

Boniswa finds out that Afrika is not her son's biological father, but her mother tells her to keep her son's paternity a secret. Boniswa lives with the secret and it eats her up daily. However, prior to her son's manhood rite of passage she tells Afrika that he is not her son's biological father. Afrika refuses to believe Boniswa and insists that the boy perform his rituals at his family's homestead. However, the boy manages to escape and return to Buyile's family, as his biological son.

Boniswa finally finds the courage to leave Afrika, and she files for divorce. She had been waiting for the right moment, where Afrika would not be able to overthrow the divorce as he had been involved in illegal government business. South Africa reaches its period of transition and Buyile and most liberation struggle comrades are released from prison. When South Africa is in its negotiation period, and the homelands ceased to exist and apartheid regime laws were abolished, Afrika dies in a horrific accident. Buyile and Boniswa then reunite and live happily with their son.

3.2.1. An Overview of the character of Boniswa

In the novel, Boniswa is present when Afrika betrays Buyile in court, giving evidence against him. She cries firstly, because of the pain of losing Buyile and secondly, because of Afrika's betrayal. She feels Buyile's pain more especially when he has to sit and listen to his friend betraying him in front of everyone. Boniswa's good character shows here.

One of Boniswa's strengths is that she is fearless and brave. She knows what she really wants, and Afrika is not it. She is not afraid of confidently conveying this message to him, (2010:18, all translations are mine):

Boniswa: *"Hayi, Afrika andikwazi tu ukuthandana nawe. Imvano yethu mayiphelele apha kubuhlobo."*

Afrika: *"Unomnye umntu othandana naye le nto kucaca ukuba akuthembisi nokuthembisa oku?"*

Boniswa: “*Tyhini wandigrumba mfondini, ziphi iintloni zakho? Hayi ukho kodwa akafuni wena.*”

Boniswa: “No Afrika, I cannot be in a relationship with you. We should stick to being friends.”

Afrika: “Are you in a relationship with someone else that you do not even promise?”

Boniswa: “Why are you pestering me? Where are your manners? There is someone else but that does not concern you.”

Boniswa is a go-getter as she knows that she wants to be with Buyile, and she knows he is slow at making moves; therefore, she takes the initiative of leading him. Boniswa even tells Buyile that she is popular as men are always running after her. Thus, she tries to find out from Buyile if he also sees what the other men see in her. Such conversations are rarely led by a woman.

Another strength that Boniswa has is that of a daring character. She walks with her head held high, while aware of the false rumours that people spread about her because of the multiple men that are constantly following her. Even Buyile thinks that she is in a relationship with someone better than him. Saule (2010:22) even says that, “*ubukhulu becala yile ndlela kwa kucingwa ukuba uziphethe ngayo. Wayesoloko ejikelezwa ngamadoda emfuna nasengceni*” (“This is because of the manner people perceived Boniswa conducted herself in. She was always surrounded by men, even on the grass”).

Boniswa is not afraid to look all these men in the eyes and tell them where to get off. However, no-one believes that she is single, she is the only one who truly knows that she is single and has never even promised anyone love (Saule, 2010:23). Boniswa shares this with Buyile, allowing herself to be vulnerable in front of him, showing him that having to fight men on a daily basis because of their short-term lust is a serious battle as everyone thinks she is moved by everyone. That on its own is another struggle. Buyile is taken aback, with no words.

Such a situation is a struggle for many women across the world. Although Boniswa is audacious enough to chase away men that run after her and she can brush off insults hurled at her and hush rumours that are being spread about her by those same men and others who observe her constantly being crowded by men asking her out. However, there are women who

are not as bold as she is. Monet (2015:2) argues that as much as women in the 21st century have learnt to ignore/shrug off the insults and labels thrown at them by misogynists and have utilized these negative words as means of empowerment as their way of retaliation. However, the negative connotations carried by such words have in some instances killed women's self-esteem. Such words have assisted in shaping the negative role of women in many societies and also in general cause more damage than good (Monet, 2015:2). "These words" according to Monet, "have been used for millennia to shame women from all walks of life" (2015:2). From an early age, girls are still told what to wear and how to carry themselves so as to not attract men and create for themselves a 'bad reputation' (Monet, 2015:2). Boniswa is ostracized for her beauty, as though it is a crime to be beautiful, and more especially for her freedom of choice on who to be with.

Many women are said to have multiple partners because they are seen with multiple men around them and different men at times. This being something that has carried over periods within the townships and rural areas. Nonetheless, women are currently doing their best to fight such stigmas with the hope that they will one day combat these stereotypes. Campaigns like #AmINext (www.news24.com), are currently trending on social media. This campaign draws attention to the violence against women with the aim of eradicating rape and all other abuse against women. Women across South Africa are asking the question 'am I next?'

In Saule's novel, there are also women like Welekazi, Boniswa's friend that use their weakness as an advantage. Welekazi knows that her husband is ugly, and says freely that, "*ayimbi indoda yam*" (my husband is ugly) (Saule, 2010:24). She continues to say that if he were to hold milk, the milk would turn sour. However, Welekazi's husband, Rhadebe's beauty surfaces in the way he treats Welekazi. He is respectful towards his wife and understands that marriage is a partnership. Whereas, handsome men like Afrika are arrogant and demeaning to women.

Boniswa still portrays confidence when Afrika visits her and Buyile. Afrika teases Buyile of being in love with Boniswa and Buyile retaliates faintly but Boniswa jumps in and says, "*ke iya kukhathaza into yokuba ndithandane noBuyile, yena phofu engakhathazeka ukuba ndinokuthandana nawe?*" (does it bother you that I am in love with Buyile? Would he be bothered if I were to fall in love with you?) (Saule, 2010:26). Both Buyile and Afrika are astonished at how Boniswa, as a woman, can just blurt out such words.

Boniswa also has great intuition, a visionary sense, as is the case with most women. She follows fast and easy as she is intelligent. She warns Buyile about Afrika, but he brushes off her warning (Saule, 2010:28). Indeed, Afrika is planning to backstab his friend; therefore, Boniswa's warnings are genuine (2010:28):

Afrika: *“Andazi ukuba yintoni le uthole nca yona kwesiya simuncu sethole
lerhamba eliza kuzifumana lisezinkathazweni ngenye imini
esidenge.”*

Boniswa: *“Wathetha ngolo hlobo ngomhlobo wakho, kwenze njani?”*

Afrika: *“Unezinto azifihlayo kum, bubuhlobo ke obo? Uzenza
umnyembelelana kanti unzulu okomgxobhoza okulo lwandle
lwaseMonti”*

Afrika: *“I don't know why you are so close to that idiot of a serpent's child
that will one day find itself in big trouble.”*

Boniswa: *“Why do are you speaking in this manner about your friend.”*

Afrika: *“There are things he is hiding from me, is that a friendship? He
portrays himself as a friend, yet he is as deep as East London Sea.”*

Afrika's hatred for Buyile stems from his jealousy of Boniswa and Buyile. Immediately after this conversation, Boniswa realizes that Afrika is planning something. She notices the bitterness in Afrika's eyes. Boniswa's bravery helps her get what she wants and that is Buyile. Had she taken a step back and waited for him to make the first move, she would have waited for a long time and probably forever because Buyile had not even once thought of asking her out. This is clear because firstly, Buyile is afraid or rather intimidated by her. Secondly, he never looked at Boniswa in that manner. According to him, he only viewed Boniswa as a friend prior to her act of bravery. He never thought they would end up as a couple as he says, *“zange nemini enye ikhe ifike engqondweni kaBuyile into yokuba angaze athandane noBoniswa”* (it had never, not even a day crossed Buyile's mind that he would ever be in love with Boniswa) (Saule, 2010:22).

Boniswa's bravery also breathes strength to Buyile. This is depicted when the police break into Buyile's home (Saule, 2010:53). Upon his return home, Boniswa suggests that he live with her for a while just in case the police decide to return. Buyile voices his concern that if the police find out that he is staying with her, they might intrude at her place. But Boniswa responds by saying, "*hayi wethu, ukuba amaCiskei amahle ayandifuna, aya kundifumana. Mna andilingene*" (if the Ciskei police want me, they will get me. I am not afraid of them) (Saule, 2010:56).

One of Boniswa's weaknesses, declaring her love for Buyile to him, is also a strength. She promises to never love another man besides Buyile. She says that (Saule, 2010:56), "*kanti ke eneneni Buyile ukuba uva ngam ndiyintombi kaGatyeni andinakuze nditshate omnye umntu ngaphandle kwakho. Ukuba akundifuni kungcono ndihlale ndingendi ubomi bam bonke*" (In all honesty from the horse's mouth, I would never marry any other person besides you. If you do not marry me, I would rather remain single my entire life). Nonetheless, things take a turn for the worse as Buyile is arrested and sentenced to life imprisonment on Robben Island. Boniswa marries Afrika even after her promise to Buyile.

Boniswa enters into a loveless marriage with Afrika. She does not enter into this union with Afrika in vain however, as firstly, she agrees to protect her mother from disappointment and embarrassment (Saule, 2010:98). Echezona-Johnson (2014:4) alludes that pregnancy in many African cultures like among the amaXhosa can be a dreadful period for unmarried women. "There is a revolting stigma appended to unwed pregnancies" (Echezona-Johnson, 2014:4). This is because pregnancy before marriage is viewed as taboo, therefore the mother and her family are subjected to ostracizing and ridicule by the society. According to Echezona-Johnson (2004:4), women who fall pregnant before marriage are at times disowned by their families because of the 'embarrassment' they bring to the family.

Thus, Boniswa agrees to marry Afrika. Secondly, she marries Afrika to afford her son the opportunity of having a father figure in his life as Boniswa's father died while she was still young. With Buyile in prison, she would have to provide her son many explanations. Therefore, having Afrika in his life saves her from all of this.

It is clear that Boniswa did not agree to marry Afrika out of love but rather because of selfish reasons. Arguably right as Afrika manipulated her into marrying him. As much as Boniswa is filled with anguish in her marriage, she strategically waits for the correct time to divorce Afrika.

She knows that Afrika holds tremendous weight in government, therefore he is at an advantage to overturn a divorce. Thus, she waits for the political transition period and finally files for divorce in order to reclaim her freedom and happiness. Buyile is released from Robben Island and reunites with Boniswa and their son.

3.3. Summary of *Libambe Lingatshoni*

Libambe Lingatshoni challenges the land expropriation issue that has become topical among black South Africans. The novel traces the injustices that were performed against the amaXhosa of the Eastern Cape by the colonisers. Thembeke and Zithembile discover that their forefathers and many others were manipulated into buying land that belonged to their people from the beginning and even after purchasing the land it was not given back to them. At her graduation party, Thembeke receives a key from her grandfather that opens the safety deposit box where the important land purchase documents by the amaXhosa of *Nkonkobe* are kept. She coincidentally meets Zithembile and they end up working together in reclaiming the land of their forefathers.

The novel tackles land issues while using Thembeke, a woman, as the person who finds solutions to these issues. She works hand in hand with Zithembile, again showcasing the importance of the unity between the two sexes. Even with this unity, Zithembile as a man is amazed at Thembeke's daring character. She is brave to confront matters that even he is afraid of confronting. They both work together in restoring their forefather's land.

This novel, similar to *Inkululeko Isentabeni* is packed with a series of issues that are pertinent to everyday life. These matters are tackled by the use of different protagonists in this novel, with Nomvuzo and Zithembile in leading roles. Nomvuzo and Zithembile work together and Nomvuzo realizes that she likes Zithembile and wants to spend the rest of her life with him therefore she approaches him. Zithembile is astonished as he always thought Nomvuzo to be out of his league. He has always looked down upon himself, therefore never thought that Nomvuzo even noticed him. When Nomvuzo approaches him, things become heated and as a result she ends up proposing marriage to him and they get married and have a son together.

Prior to their meeting, Nomvuzo faces immense pain and abuse at the hands of a young man called Sanuse, at university. Nonetheless, she is able to pick herself up from the trauma and

start afresh. She finds employment where she meets Zithembile. Nomvuzo continues with her studies while working with Zithembile's influence and support, and they graduate together.

Their marriage is not smooth sailing. Although they love and respect each other, Zithembile's siblings are unwelcoming and disapprove of their brother's wife. His sisters are jealous of Nomvuzo as their brother is the sole breadwinner in their family. Zithembile finically supports his sisters and their many children. Thus, his sisters feel threatened by Nomvuzo's presence in Zithembile's life.

The tension between Nomvuzo and one of Zithembile's sisters, Dideka spirals to a point that she spitefully throws a photograph at Nomvuzo that has a woman and child. Dideka claims that the child's father is Zithembile. Dideka further uses witchcraft to ensure that Nomvuzo leaves her brother completely. Indeed, Nomvuzo is made livid by the photograph and divorces Zithembile, neglecting their son in the process as she takes her son to her aunt, who later takes the child to Nomvuzo's father. Nomvuzo's father then tells Zithembile to fetch his son.

Nosisana, the only one among Zithembile's sisters who is fond of Nomvuzo assists Zithembile in supporting their siblings and their children. Nosisana becomes Zithembile's pillar of strength throughout his divorce. Nosisana offers Zithembile support and encouragement.

Zithembile continues with life as he brings up his son as a single parent. He coincidentally meets Thembeke, who he later discovers is related to him. Thembeke is a divorcee who goes through sexual, physical and emotional abuse at the hands of her ex-husband. Thembeke is a fighter on all fronts as she does not give up even in near death situations.

Nomvuzo and Thembeke's ex-husband meet coincidentally. He convinces her to venture into business with him. At first Nomvuzo is reluctant but her greed for money and Zondani's persuasive nature weaken her judgment and she ventures into business with him unaware that she is entering into an illegal business. Nomvuzo becomes involved in serious trouble and danger but her cunning character saves her from the danger. Unfortunately, she is unable to save herself from serving time in prison. She accepts her fate and goes to prison. Upon her release, Nomvuzo and Zithembile rekindle their love and raise their son together as a family in Nkonkobe as Thembeke and Zithembile win the land case for all the amaXhosa families that lost their land to the colonisers in Nkonkobe.

3.3.1. An overview of the female protagonists in *Libambe Lingatshoni*

This sub-section begins with an overview of Nomvuzo's character. She comes across as sensitive and protective of her marriage. This can be seen when Nomvuzo becomes jealous when Zithembile tells her that he does not like using his cellular phone, and as a result he often does not answer phone calls. She responds by saying (Saule, 2017:14), "*ngokuba kutheni, unabantu owoyika ukuthetha nabo? Okanye ke mhlawumbi ungena ukuba bakufowunele ngexesha...*" (Why? Are there people you are afraid of talking to? Or maybe you are afraid they call you during...). Another part where an element of jealousy shows up is when Zithembile arrives at home, only to find Nomvuzo furious and waiting for him (2017:14):

Ngenye imini angene endlini uZithembile evela empangelweni, intombi yasemaTshaweni imi phaya entla isibakele ngathi kukuza kwenkanyamba, ibuza ngesingolokotho ukuba, "kanti ixesha eli ungatsho nje ukuba unomntwana enkazaneni, kutheni?"

One day Zithembile returned home from work and found Tshawe's daughter standing livid as though a tornado was about to erupt. She furiously asked him, "Why did you not mention that you have a son from another woman?"

Zithembile is astounded by Nomvuzo's fury. Out of anger, she does not give Zithembile time to explain himself, she decides to leave him. Nomvuzo's decisions are irrational as she decides to leave their home and divorce Zithembile. She ends up moving to Mthatha without hearing Zithembile's side of the story. It is in this period that Nomvuzo meets Zondani. Zondani finds a vulnerable Nomvuzo and takes advantage of her state by luring her into his illegal activities. Driven by greed for money, Nomvuzo digs herself a deep hole and as a result has to live with the consequences.

It is essential to mention that Nomvuzo's irrationality is not in any way linked to her being a woman. Brescoll (2016:415) argues that the stereotypical statement of women being irrational beings is false. This is not the case, as emotions of irrationality depend on the individual's character rather than gender. The problem that led to the irrational reaction is also a factor relating to the way an individual reacts. Certain situations bring about more anger than others and depend on how an individual is able to handle their temper (Brescoll, 2016:416).

Nomvuzo faces immense negativity from Zithembile's siblings, especially from Dideka, yet she continuously and genuinely tries to please Zithembile's family. She reaches boiling point when Dideka gloats over her brother's 'side' family. Hence, Nomvuzo's irrational behaviour. Dideka also uses external traditional forces to chase Nomvuzo completely out of Zithembile's life.

Nomvuzo faces another disadvantage as she lets her guard down; she enters into a business deal with Zondani without doing a background check on him. This lands her into big trouble, as when she discovers the kind of person Zondani is, it is too late. As desperate as she is for her money, she tells Zondani to keep it until he is able to pay it back. Nomvuzo is afraid of Zondani. However, one of the greatest things about Nomvuzo is that she is bold, therefore she does her best to hide her fear from him (2017:137):

Wafika wahlala phambi kwakhe wamjonga akathetha, bajongana. Ukuba into awayekwazi ukuyenza uMthikazi kukujonga emehlweni umntu. UZondani wayengayenzi into yokuwamilisela amehlo, ufike keeqhwanya qhwanyaza ngathi lizima.

Wathi eqhwanyaza wabe uMthikazi engathengazi tu, emthe ntshoo ngathi yilaa mantyi iza kugweba isela leenkomo.

She arrived and sat in front of him and kept quiet, they looked at each other. If there was something Nomvuzo could do, it was to stare at a person. However, Zondani's eyes were flickering.

When Zondani blinked, Mthikazi was staring at him.

Although Nomvuzo is petrified of Zondani, the above passage indicates that she hides her fear of him very well. She is in control of the scene. Zondani is fidgeting; he cannot look at her directly. The scene continues (2017:138):

Zondani: *"Hayi, ndithe mandize ngokwam kuba akuphenduli ucingo... Ndifuna wazi ukuba akukho nto itshintshileyo, umcimbi usahamba kakuhle"*

Zondani: “I thought I should come to you because you no longer answer your phone... I want you to know that nothing has changed, the deal remains the same.”

Nomvuzo wants to ask what Zondani is talking but she is afraid, her throat suddenly dries up and no words seem to come out. A thought immediately crosses her mind that, “*zulumke ke ntombazana, liphandlwa kubekanye*” (Be careful girl, you only get bitten once) (Saule, 2017:138).

Nomvuzo’s weakness costs her, her marriage and family. She ends up in prison. However, she returns from prison a changed person, having had time to reflect and learn a lesson. Therefore, she will never compromise herself again. It takes a strong individual to be able to admit mistakes and learn from them.

Nomvuzo and Thembeke share the same fearless trait. Thembeke has an incredible ability to hide pain and fear. When Thembeke and Zithembile meet at the Café, she is in great pain and shock from the ordeal she just survived, but she composes herself, hiding her feelings from everyone else: “*...emva kokulaqaza, laza kuhlala phambi kwakhe lisonge izandla okomntwana onento ayifihlayo phantsi kwamakhwapha*” (After her eyes scouted around, she sat next to him with her arms folded like a child hiding something under her armpits) (Saule, 2017:57). It is visible from this statement that Thembeke is suffering from shock and pain.

At first Zithembile thinks of Thembeke stereotypically as a ‘blessee’ looking for a man to entertain her (Saule, 2017:57). According to Mampane (2018:1) the blesser and blessee phenomenon involves a sexual transaction between young women and older wealthy men. Thobajane, et al. (2017:8717) concur that the blessee enjoys all the benefits provided by the blesser. They continue to state that the blessee gets involved with the blesser purely for financial gain. Blessers play an essential role in the lives of their blessees as they provide for them and the blessees thank them sexually. According to Tsoaledi, et al. (2017:8717) the blesser and blessee phenomenon has become a common culture in society.

It is with this premise that Zithembile thought Thembeke to be a blessee scouting for a blesser because she came out of nowhere and sat next to him. Strangely, Thembeke does not even look like a blessee. In fact, she politely refuses when Zithembile offers to buy her food (Saule, 2017:58). She tells him that she only wants to watch him eat. When Zithembile attempts to

analyse Thembeke, he realizes that she looks innocent. Thembeke speaks as though she has not just experienced a great deal of suffering (Saule, 2017:59).

While analysing Thembeke, Zithembile notices that her hands are scratched and her shirt is torn (Saule, 2017:59). These indicate that she was in some form of accident. Thembeke continues to strengthen herself, hiding her physical and emotional discomfort. Zithembile insists on buying her food and she thanks him politely.

Thembeke is prepared to take the blame for the accident she was involved in even though she is not the direct perpetrator and she shares this with Zithembile (Saule, 2017:61):

Thembeke: *“Ndicela ukuba endleleni yakho uyokundibeka khona.”*

Zithembile: *“Ndiyokukubeka phi na ntombi kaMlonyeni?”*

Thembeke: *“Emapoliseni”*

Zithembile: *“Uyokwenza ntoni emapoliseni?”*

Thembeke: *“Ndiyokuzibambisa”*

Zithembile: *“Uyokuzibambisa”*

Thembeke: *“Ewe, ndibulele abantu!”*

Thembeke: “On your way could you please drop me off somewhere.”

Zithembile: “Where should I drop you off daughter of Mlonyeni?”

Thembeke: “At the police station.”

Thembeke: “I am going to turn myself in.”

Zithembile: “You are going to turn yourself in.”

Thembeke: “Yes, I killed people!”

In the above conversation, Thembeke accepts full responsibility for her attackers’ deaths even though she caused the accident to defend herself. Zithembile drops her off at the police station

and as she enters the gate she trips and falls (Saule, 2017:62). This indicates that Thembeke's body cannot handle the physical pain she is suffering anymore, she tries very hard to strengthen herself but as soon as she enters the police station building, she collapses and is taken to hospital by an ambulance. Zithembile is told by the police that Thembeke is very sick and he is surprised because when they were sitting together, she showed no signs of being sick (Saule, 2017:63).

Thembeke yet again shows bravery in hospital when a man sent by her ex-husband illegally enters her room and attempts to kill her (Saule, 2017:75). The man strangles Thembeke while searching her for the key her grandfather gave to her. The man keeps on asking for the key but Thembeke bravely keeps quiet. She refuses to tell him about the key and as a result the man is ready to kill her (Saule, 2017:75), "*isixhiphothi sendoda simbambe ngobhongwane simnyusa ngodonga*" (a gigantic man was holding her by the neck, lifting her against the wall).

In conclusion, it is fundamental to reiterate the opening statement of this subsection, which was that Thembeke's bravery, boldness and stubborn nature have a positive and negative impact on her character. Positive in that her fighting spirit astonishes many, even her tormentor who gives up because everything he tries to do to hurt her fails. Instead, she retaliates with all the strength she has. And her courage to fight back saves her from death. This also has a negative impact in that she risks her life with her stubborn character. The men who abduct her could have killed her because of her unwillingness to cooperate with them. The man who attacks her in hospital could have also killed her had the police and Zithembile not arrived at that exact moment.

3.4. Summary of *Vuleka Mhlaba*

Vuleka Mhlaba tackles the injustices that are found within the justice system of South Africa, where the police, detectives and the prosecutors fail many innocent South Africans with their little to no investigative ability. Many have been wrongfully prosecuted. Shumba (2017:180) argues that the criminal justice system in South Africa has not managed to ensure that only guilty persons are convicted, and the innocent be acquitted.

In the novel, Noziqhamo is a woman who steers the ship to correct the injustices within South Africa's legal system. She daringly beats detectives, the prosecutor, and Bantu's lawyers (all males) and finally solves Dora's murder case. In this novel, Saule shows that women are able to enter into the professions formerly reserved for men. He shows that women are not irrational

beings, as Noziqhamo remains calm and hopeful throughout. She is determined to get to the bottom of Dora's murder. Everyone else is emotional and behaves irrationally

Vuleka Mhlaba is a continuation of Saule's *Unyana Womntu* (1989). Bantu, the lead protagonist finds himself mistakenly on the wrong side of the law. He is accused of cold bloodedly murdering his wife, Dora. In *Unyana Womntu* (1989) Bantu is arrested and sentenced to life imprisonment. However, Bantu's friend Noziqhamo believes in his innocence and vows to do her best to assist him prove his innocence. After realizing how useless Bantu's lawyers are, Noziqhamo ventures on a quest to find evidence that would acquit Bantu. She finally finds something, and Bantu's sentence is overturned. Nevertheless, Bantu is not acquitted but he is released from prison, and the court gives the state time to gather substantial evidence that would prove their case.

In *Vuleka Mhlaba*, Bantu is on a quest to get acquitted and clear his name. However, he faces many challenges from people who do not believe he is innocent. He reaches boiling point and realises that it is all too heavy to handle. Bantu loses hope and attempts suicide twice. However, Bantu is not alone. Noziqhamo is by his side. She becomes his source of support and encourages him not to give up. Noziqhamo continuously assures Bantu that they will find the real killer and his name will be cleared.

Noziqhamo remains strong for Bantu and at times he is surprised by her boldness and determination. The other men in the novel disrespect and belittle Noziqhamo because of her gender. They do not understand her reasons for helping Bantu and Noziqhamo is constantly humiliated by these men. Nonetheless, she does not allow them to get the better of her. She retaliates daringly, ensuring that her work speaks for her.

Another female that features in the novel is Sindiswa. Sindiswa saves Bantu from his second suicide attempt. After spending time with Bantu while he is in hospital, Sindiswa realises that she has romantic feelings for him. She bravely tells him and d their relationship. But she discovers that she is not the only woman that has won Bantu's heart. Sindiswa tries her best to push Noziqhamo away from Bantu's life but Noziqhamo strategically fights back.

Bantu is confused as both women play a vital role in his life. But in the end Sindiswa cannot tolerate being treated as second best and ends things with Bantu. Bantu is assisted by

Noziqhamo and they discover Dora's actual killer. Bantu is acquitted and the actual murderer is arrested. Noziqhamo and Bantu end up together in a romantic partnership.

3.4.1. An Overview of the female characters in *Vuleka Mhlaba*

One of Noziqhamo's weaknesses, which can also be interpreted as a strength, is her reserved character when it comes to romance. It is a weakness because she allows an opportunity to pass by, which goes against her courageous and confident character. Noziqhamo is in love with Bantu (Saule, 2006:28). Yet she holds back, knowing fully how reserved Bantu is and as a result would never be the first one to approach her even though he feels the same about her. Bantu feels intimidated by Noziqhamo's character, therefore finds it hard to speak about a romantic relationship (Saule, 2006:30).

Noziqhamo decides to remain silent about her feelings for Bantu because she fears that he will think that she is taking advantage of his vulnerable state of mind (Saule, 2006:28). Yet she sees that he feels the same about her, as Saule (2006:28) notes, "*wayembona ukuba (uBantu) uyamthanda*" (she could see that he loves her). At the very same time, Bantu contemplates proclaiming his love for her as he also feels as though Noziqhamo will think that he is taking advantage of her kindness and support as well as abusing this period to push his own agenda (Saule, 2006:28), "*Lo mntwana wabantu akazukuthi ndiyamvuyelela na, ndisebenzisa le meko noku kuzinikela kwakhe ukumqobongela? Akazi kusuka athi hayi na, ndibe ngokabani kwabahleba kangaka?*" (Isn't this child going to say I am taking advantage of this situation and her dedication? Is she not going to reject me, then what would I do amongst these gossipers)?

Bantu and Noziqhamo are both conflicted. Bantu has other pressing matters that at least occupy his mind rather than forcing him to overthink the situation. Noziqhamo, on the other hand, constantly thinks about Bantu as stated in Saule (2006:29), "*ngelishwa uthando lwalumtshisa ade azibone ngelinye ixesha sele esenza ethetha izinto ezimothusayo*" (unfortunately, she was dangerously in love that at times she found herself saying and doing things that shocked her). However, Noziqhamo still holds back and thinks that approaching Bantu would be inappropriate, giving other women like Sindiswa space to shoot their shots and prosper (Saule, 2006:110). As a result, Noziqhamo almost loses Bantu to Sindiswa. She has to endure sharing him with Sindiswa for a lengthy period because of her silence.

On the other hand, not approaching Bantu becomes a positive aspect for Noziqhamo as Bantu is emotionally troubled and not in a good space to start dating. He is confused about everything and as a result he entertains both Noziqhamo and Sindiswa uncertain of what it is that he really wants (Saule, 2006:115). To indicate that he is confused, he feels guilty about Sindiswa's continuous visits in hospital and he hides and even gives away all the gifts she brings him so that Noziqhamo does not see them (Saule, 2006:115).

Sindiswa on the other hand is an opportunist. She is not afraid of going after what she wants. Perhaps Sindiswa's personal experiences while growing up had an effect on her character. Her determination comes from her will to educate herself even in the toughest times. She had to sacrifice her childhood and her family and as a result turned to education to fill the gap and empower herself.

Sindiswa is not afraid of telling Bantu that she has feelings for him, in fact she reacts to her feelings immediately knowing that Bantu is still in hospital. Regardless, Sindiswa continuously visits Bantu in hospital, bringing him gifts. She flirts with him and even kisses him. Sindiswa displays her daring character at all times and even asks Bantu to choose between her and Noziqhamo. She is bold enough to tell Bantu that she disapproves of his relationship with Noziqhamo.

As much as Sindiswa's opportunistic character results in her losing Bantu, it can also be interpreted as a good thing because she is not afraid of going after what she wants. She does not allow herself to long for something yet not make the means to go for it. She also does not settle for less than what she wants, if she cannot have it all. This is evident when she realises that she has to share Bantu and that is not what she wants. Sindiswa is brave enough to walk away, realising her self-worth.

Noziqhamo's reserved character when it comes to romance also works to her advantage here because Bantu feels that Sindiswa's forward character does not sit well with him (Saule, 2006:117). Sindiswa used Bantu's vulnerable state to her advantage as a result Bantu realised this and ended up feeling suffocated by her behaviour. Whereas, Noziqhamo is very patient and understanding. She does not force him into making decisions, as she is aware that he is not in the right emotional state to make any drastic decisions, let alone enter into a serious relationship with her. As a result, when Bantu heals, he settles down with Noziqhamo.

3.5. Conclusion

The presentation of women discussed in this chapter is a very cunning and impressive one to be realized by a male author who portrays women as resilient beings and acknowledges their shortcomings as normal individuals. The essential part is how the author realizes that women have been endowed with a visionary faculty which in turn they use to liberate themselves whatever the situation.

The everyday woman in the rural areas adheres to cultural norms of serving the husband and allowing him to attend traditional meetings and other gatherings for the virtue of being a man. Her weakness is adhering to these rules, where she is told she cannot attend certain gatherings and meetings because of her gender; she cannot voice her opinion or dress and carry herself in a certain manner because of her gender. Cunningly, she uses this weakness to benefit herself by listening attentively when her husband briefs her about the discussions held in these sessions. She then wittingly voices her opinion to him, giving him solutions to some of the issues discussed by men but unsolved by them. She gives her husband a solution and he proposes it to the gathering. Similarly, in the average rural household, the husband might think he has authority as the wife grants him authority, however the wife wittingly makes suggestions which he can act upon.

There are also women in the townships who are single parents. Their weakness is falling for these good for nothing men (not insinuating that all men are like this or that women are the only victims of such behaviour), who desert them at the first signs of pregnancy. Nevertheless, these women end up raising their children on their own, instilling in them values of responsibility, independence and boldness. They give their all as single mothers to ensure their children have a loving and secure home even without the fathers.

This chapter is dedicated to all the extraordinary women mentioned above and all the others whose stories are not recalled here. Saule's female characters portray resilience: Boniswa, with all her downfalls, taps into her state of vulnerability and love for comfortability even though it brings her pain for a lengthy period. Nomvuzo, with all her faults and love for money bravely survives a dangerous situation. Thembeke's stubbornness gets her into many near death experiences and Noziqhamo and Sindiswa's stubborn characters ensure that things are done their way. All of these difficulties in one way or another work out for these women.

In the next chapter, the data that was presented here will be analysed, portraying the daring and courageous characters through the hardships they face in a patriarchal society. Boniswa, under the pressure of apartheid South Africa and among a Xhosa society influenced by colonial powers has to navigate her way through a loveless and emotionally abusive marriage. Nomvuzo, Thembeke, Noziqhamo and Sindiswa fight the injustices within the justice system as well as in a male-dominated society, and they remain resilient.

CHAPTER 4: DATA ANALYSIS

4.1. Introduction

The status of women in African society is burdened by negative attitudes which are nothing more than man's constructs that are often regarded as normal. It is against this background that the feminist activists have seen it their mission to prove through debate, literature and scholarly analysis that the undermining of women is an injustice. In this chapter, to examine how Saule portrays his female protagonists, I draw sustenance from literary sources, conscious creative writers so to speak, and utilise African feminisms to demonstrate that women have resilience, determination, and intellectual strength equal and at times more than their male counterparts.

This chapter will focus on the women in three of Saule's novels, *Inkululeko Isentabeni*, *Libambe Lingatshoni* and *Vuleka Mhlaba*. These novels are all-time action-packed novels that by their unique qualities assume episodic patterns, skilfully strung together by a common eccentricity of steadfastness. By the stubborn objectivity of the female protagonists, they become a personification of ethical values and as such role models. They are also a symbol of hope not only for the empowerment of women, but also for their total liberation from all negative perceptions and oppressions in the context of the patriarchal sensibilities.

It will be demonstrated through argument that the texts exhibit strength of survival seen in the day to day experiences of resilient women whose cardinal goal is to live life to the fullest despite its challenges. The trajectory of argument stems from the premise of women empowerment in the modern context, where women break new ground as leaders in business and other economic sectors as well as in social communities. For instance, Boniswa demonstrates an African women activism by breaking free from the patriarchal traditional marriage institution therefore, fulfilling the principles of the African Womanism theory. Nomvuzo breaks new ground with her confidence and will to fight through all the agony that

men like Sanuse and Zondani put her through. Thembeke also fights for her life at the hands of men. Nosisana bravely stands for all unmarried women against discriminatory patriarchal marriage traditions, and Sindiswa as well as Noziqhamo show that women can be educated and enter into the professional fields in the public domain generally occupied by men. From these novels' descriptive portrayal of these female protagonists versus all women, it is evident that they are virtuous women of strength. *Wathint' abafazi wathint' imbokotho* as the contemporary context reverberates.

4.2. Analysis of female resilience in *Inkululeko Isentabeni*

4.2.1. Youthful, resilient Boniswa

The female protagonist, Boniswa in *Inkululeko Isentabeni* (2010), demonstrates womanist values from her youth. She arrives at a new high school, having begun at a different school but immediately makes friends at the new school. She becomes popular as she is an extrovert, she is intelligent, participates in all school activities and is always first place in everything at school. She is also a strong, confident character who is able to defend herself against boys (2010:34):

wakhawuleza waqapheleka kuba ngumntwana ondwebileyo. Igama lakhe likhawuleze labizwa ngenxa yokuba ebe neziphiwo ezi liqela, ikrelekrele intokazi, iya ziphendulela emakhwenkweni, ikho kuzo zonke izinto ezidlalwayo esikolweni kunjalo nje iphambili.

She became popular immediately because of her extrovert character. Her name became popular because she was talented, intelligent, she was able to answer for herself even to boys, she was involved in all the school activities and was always first place in everything.

Boniswa is not afraid to speak her mind as she teases Afrika and Buyile about playing rugby like sheep and she also makes fun of them for wearing huge jerseys (Saule, 2010:34): “*ndinibonile nidlala umbhoxo nigquzulana okweenkunzi zegusha ngathi aninangqondo*” (I saw you playing rugby, clashing into each other like sheep.).

The above shows Boniswa's resilience, portraying womanist views which Walker (1983:ix) partly defines as a state of being 'girlish', a part of a female that is constantly eager to know more. Boniswa possesses this trait by her involvement in all academic extra-mural activities with the drive to learn more and to better herself continuously.

Boniswa is also not afraid of opposing the traditional patriarchal system by diverging from its norms and being bold enough to declare her love for Buyile. She is astonished that Buyile has never made a move on her whilst most men she knows drool over her daily. She decides to probe Buyile first to find out if he does not feel threatened by his friend, Afrika, who has declared his love for Boniswa. Buyile responds negatively. Boniswa again displays confidence by telling Buyile that he is exactly the type of man she is looking for (Saule, 2010:21): “*hayi, uzimisele ndoda, ulolu hlobo lwabantu ndiluthandayo kanye*” (You are confident, you are exactly the type of man I am looking for.). Here Boniswa can be interpreted as the type of woman that Ogunyemi (1985:49) speaks of as demonstrating her African womanism, which challenges cultural and traditional patriarchal values that are oppressive to women. This refers to Boniswa’s boldness of wooing a man, something unusual in her Xhosa culture for a woman to confidently approach a man. Usually, women wait to be approached by men. And Buyile’s astonishment by Boniswa’s behaviour shows that he has never had a woman approach him before.

Boniswa is determined to pursue Buyile and dismisses the cultural norm. As Walker (1983: ix) explains, the womanist theory speaks of women who constantly challenge themselves with great determination despite the barriers in their way. Boniswa is a ‘go-getter’, but she sees that Buyile is reserved and shy and therefore does not take the lead. In the following text from *Inkululeko Isentabeni* (Saule, 2010:36) Buyile shows how astounded he is by Boniswa’s behaviour:

Buyile: “*Hayi, wenza ntoni?*” ngelo xesha uBoniswa uhlala angqiyame
 ngengalo awayethe ukuhlala uBuyile wayaneka apha
 elingqamekweni lwesofa. Uya zama ke ngoku umfo omkhulu ufuna
 ukususa ingalo yakhe phantsi kwentamo kaBoniswa. Naanko
 uBoniswa eyiminxisela ngentloko. Bajika bajongana, basondelelana
 kakhulu ngoku ubuso.

Buyile: “No, what are you doing?” ...That time, Boniswa sits, leaning using Buyile’s arm that he had stretched on the corner of the sofa. He tries to remove his arm from under Boniswa’s neck. Boniswa squashes him using her head. They turned and faced each other; their faces drew closer.

Buyile is extremely shy and asks Boniswa what kind of impression they are setting for someone who might walk into the flat and find them sitting in this manner (Saule, 2010:36), “*Umntu*

onongena sihleli ngolu hlobo uza kuthini?” (what would a person who enters here say when he/she finds us sitting this way?). Boniswa is persistent, responding with a counter question (Saule, 2010:36): *“uza kuthini ngantoni? Akuhlalwa ngolu hlobo kakade?”* (What would they say about what?). Buyile, still afraid, pulls back and utters that people usually sit like that when they are in love (Saule, 2010:36), *“ewe, kodwa ke ngabantu abathandanayo”* (yes, but people who are in love).

Boniswa, displaying her womanist fierceness asks him if they are in love and moves her face closer to his. Meanwhile, Buyile tries to look away and Boniswa once again asks (Saule, 2010:36): *“Thina asithandani?” Endaweni yokubhekelisa ubuso, uya busondeza ngeli xa yena uBuyile azamela ukuba abe kude mpela. Wahleka kancinci uBoniswa* (Are we not in love? Instead of moving her face, she draws it closer yet Buyile tries to move far from her. Boniswa laughs softly). Boniswa is amused by Buyile’s reaction and is in awe that a man could be afraid of a woman to such a state that he would run away from her (Saule, 2010:36): *“Kanti uligwala kangaka? Kade ndisiva ukuba uya woyika amantombazana. Yiyo le nto undibone ndifanelwa nguAfrika, kungokuba uya ndoyika. Ngelishwa ke mna andikoyiki”* (I did not know that you are such a coward. I have been hearing that you are afraid of girls. That is why you see me suitable for Afrika, it is because you are afraid of me. Unfortunately, I am not scared of you). This conversation portrays Boniswa’s resilient, go-getter character. She takes the lead in roping Buyile into her life, while he acts shy and afraid, reversing the roles of normal African society where men are the chasers and hunters.

Boniswa did not stop there, she then gave herself to Buyile taking the lead. This is described in detail below (Saule, 2010:37):

Esabukele leyo (uBuyile), wabona ngoBoniswa emgudla ngesifuba, wasondela wamphuza apha esandleni, isandla safuna-funa apha eziphikeni ezitsho ngefukufuku loboya, uBuyile akadana, nesakhe isandla senza njalo, izandla macala zamana zisiya buntlonti phaya naphaya zade zaqhela, kwada kwaqheleka, tyhini imizimba yaphefumlelana, kwasuka kwazenzekelela.

While Buyile was still watching that, he saw Boniswa rubbing her chest against him, she kissed his hand and her hand moved about his hairy chest, Buyile’s hand also followed Boniswa’s actions, their hands kept on moving around until they became accustomed to their actions, their bodies breathed on each other and things started happening naturally.

The above demonstrates that Buyile also has feelings for Boniswa however, he was afraid of approaching her, thinking that he would not stand a chance with all the other men who declared their love for Boniswa. Little did Buyile know that Boniswa was relentlessly fighting a battle to protect her womanhood from all the men who approached her because of her looks. She knows that they are after one thing only (Saule, 2010:28), “*engayazi nje uBuyile, intombi enkulu yayisilwa idabi elikhulu lokukhusela isidima sobuntombi bayo, ikhaba ingaqheliseli*” (Buyile was unaware that Boniswa was fighting a tireless battle, trying to protect her virginity). Women continuously fight this battle as men are at times unable to accept rejection and may sexually force themselves upon women.

Alice Walker (1983:1) and Collins (1996:33) speak of courageous women as fulfilling womanist ideals and Boniswa, audaciously, yet firmly, rejects Afrika’s multiple proposals (Saule, 2010:16), “*Hayi, Afrika andikwazi tu ukuthandana nawe. Imvano yethu mayiphele apha kunuhlobo*” (No, Afrika I cannot be in a relationship with you. We should remain friends). Afrika is shocked at Boniswa’s rejection as he is not used to being refused by a woman and as a result he continues to bombard her with questions, thinking that she is romantically involved with someone else.

Afrika immediately thinks that Boniswa and Buyile are dating, even prior to them being involved. A common misconception amongst African societies is to think that men and women cannot be friends. When spotted spending time together, they are immediately assumed to be dating. Afrika could not understand why Boniswa kept on rejecting him, particularly as women threw themselves at him and none had rejected him before (Saule, 2010:24), “*wayecapuka ngakumbi kuba ababhinqileyo awakha wacela uthando kubo, nguBoniswa kuphela owathi, hayi*” (he was livid because from all the women had asked out before, Boniswa is the only one who refused him).

4.2.2. The misconception of umtshato as ‘igugu’ in a resilient woman

Afrika is amazed at how firm Boniswa stands by her words. Boniswa and Afrika get into a power play conversation where the one says something and the other counters it. Afrika insists on bombarding her with the usual egotistical male persuasions, even though she has bluntly rejected him.

Afrika still persists, and unwilling to accept rejection from a woman, he changes his strategy and asks Boniswa to marry him instead of them dating (Saule, 2010:29), “*ngumtshato lo ndithetha ngawo. Mna andikuthandeli kudlala, ndifuna sakhe ikhaya uya kuba nguMaGatyeni*

emaTshaweni” (It is marriage that I am talking about. I am not toying with your heart, I want us to build a home and you are going to be a *Gatyeni* in the *Tshawe* household).

Boniswa is not fazed by Afrika’s marriage proposal, in fact she tells him to stop being lazy by going for marriage when they are not even dating, she adds that she cannot marry someone she is not in love with (Saule, 2010:29), “*hayi Afrika, sukuba liqhitala... kukuthini ukusuka ukhokhelise ngomtshato, uthando ungekalufumani? Ndimtshata njani umntu ndingamthandi?*” (No, Afrika don’t be lazy... How could you forwardly propose marriage when we are not even in love? How do I marry someone I am not in love with?). Boniswa shows how different she is from other young women by assuring Afrika that she is certain that in his list of ladies, one of them would agree to marry him (Saule, 2010:29): “*...kula mantombazana unawo Tshawe, akukho neyodwa enokuze yale xa uyicela umtshato. Yiya phaya kuwo, uyekane nalo Boniswa ungekaboniswa soka*” (...from the women you have, not even one of them would turn your marriage proposal down).

Afrika is infuriated by Boniswa’s response and states that she is rude and disrespectful. He voices that he is giving up on her (Saule, 2010:29), saying “*hayi, uya geza mntwana wabantu ndikuncamile!*” (You are rude and disrespectful, I give up!). Still, refusing to accept that Boniswa does not want to be with him, he seeks a reason because to him it is unbelievable, he needs something he can pin it to. He uses Buyile, his friend, as his scapegoat, and insists that it is because of him that Boniswa does not want to be romantically involved with him (Saule, 2010:29): “*...phofu ke ndiyabona, ndivalwe yitshomi le yam apha kuwe*” (I see that my friend is the one standing in my way with you).

The above conversation between Afrika and Boniswa demonstrates her firmness and bravery. Boniswa ends the conversation by telling Afrika that he should forget about the two of them ever falling in love and confidently removes herself from her seat and leaves him at the table, showing that she has ended the conversation (Saule, 2010:29): “*hayi Afrika andifuni nokuba ndibe ndikuqakathisa, eyokuba masithandane yona into masiyilibale, akukho nanye incwadi ebhalwe kuyo*” (No Afrika, I don’t want to even promise you, you should forget about us falling in love, it is not written in any books). Afrika is awestruck by Boniswa’s last words, he cannot believe that a woman could so strongly refuse being romantically involved with him (Saule, 2010:30): “*heyi madoda ukukhatywa yintombazana ngolu hlobo*” (Wow! Being rejected by a woman in this manner).

In his deeply angered condition, Afrika utilizes Buyile's arrest as a moment to draw closer to Boniswa. In her weakness, she finds solace in her friendship with Afrika. He uses this as a way to worm himself into Boniswa's life. Afrika buys Boniswa a beverage and drugs it to make Boniswa unconscious (Saule, 2010:85): "*wada wakhwela eqhingeni uAfrika, isiselo awayemphathele sona wasigalela into elalisayo*" (Afrika resorted to coming up with a plan, he drugged a drink that he bought for Boniswa). When Boniswa woke up the following day, she was confused to see herself with Afrika. Afrika denied taking advantage of her and said that everything they did was consensual (Saule, 2010:85): "*bendingayenza into enje, kanti khangе uvume? Hayi Boniswa sukundenza ixelegu. Ungathi ndikucenge kangaka phantsi ubusuku bonke?*" (Do you think I would do something like this without your consent? No Boniswa, I am not that foolish. I begged you almost the entire night). Boniswa retaliated, even though she was unaware of what had happened and told Afrika that she was not on any contraceptive (Saule, 2010:86), "*andicwangcisi ke. Ukuba ndikhe ndakhulelwa, uze uyazi into yokuba uD uza kuba nento nawe*" (I am not on any contraceptive. If I fall pregnant then know that you will be in trouble with my mother, D).

We are now introduced to Boniswa's mother, D. She is said to be a strict woman who still abides strongly by traditional norms. D kept on reminding Boniswa to protect her womanhood at all costs (Saule, 2010:77), "*kuyo yonke into eyenzekayo ke mntwanam, uzigcine iinkomo zika yihlo*" (In everything that you do my child, keep your father's cows safe). This was something that was engraved in Boniswa's mind from a young age (Saule, 2010:77), "*yayithethwa qho ke le nto kuye, yada yabetheleleka engqondweni into yokuba anagaze nakanye adlalisele ekuthini umzimba wakhe awenze isizulu samaxelegu abafana abangaxeli nokuba kuyasa*" (She was frequently warned about this, until it was engraved in her mind that she must never allow her body to be a victim of foolish men no matter what).

Therefore, when Boniswa finds out that she is pregnant out of wedlock, she is devastated, especially since she dislikes Afrika. However, she is also worried about embarrassing and disappointing her family by falling pregnant out of wedlock (Saule, 2010:86): "*...kodwa kuyo yonke into wayengafuni ukuhlazisa unina kunye noyise elele kobandayo*" (but in everything she did not want to embarrass her parents).

The above is echoed by Ogundipe-Leslie (1994:74), albeit differently. She states that, due to societal and cultural pressures, women insist on having their children fathered, despite the emotional oppression and pain they have to endure within marriage: "[t]hey expect little from

men in terms of companionship, personal care and fidelity” (Ogundipe-Leslie, 1994: 74). This is exactly the situation Boniswa finds herself in. She ignored her dislike of Afrika for the sake of her son having a father (Saule, 2011:86).

Taking into consideration the above, Afrika uses this as bait and proposes marriage to Boniswa again, fully aware that she would not turn him down this time around. Hoza (2012:145) argues that African women are tamed into believing that marriage is their ultimate destiny. She further argues that marriage is “widely regarded as one of the most important rites of passage” (Hoza, 2012:145). She continues to allude that African women are trained to be submissive through the African traditional marriage institution.

As a result, Boniswa was devastated throughout her wedding preparations (Saule, 2010:86): “*emva kukuba yaziwe le nto, intombi enkulu yayisoloko inyembezana*” (After they had shared the news of her pregnancy with everyone, Boniswa was constantly teary eyed). Boniswa did not change how she felt about Afrika and was resilient enough to tell herself that her marriage was to hide the circumstances she was under, otherwise it would not have occurred. However, people around her including her friend, Welekazi, were relieved that Boniswa was finally getting married as she had almost passed the ‘marriage age’. Like the poet in Hoza’s (2012:140) article, who worries about getting old as it limits her chances of finding a man to woo her and propose marriage, people around Boniswa were worried for her as well. “She is uneasy about the prospect of remaining a spinster all her life and thus without recognized ‘status’ in her society” (Hoza, 2012:146).

Welekazi showed her happiness for her friend, however she was unaware that Boniswa disliked Afrika. Boniswa used to pray with tears in her eyes, begging God to hear her prayers. Her soul was broken, yet Afrika could not believe his victory over Boniswa (Saule, 2010:86):

... into wayengayazi uWelekazi kukuba entliziyweni kuye wayengekho uAfrika, engekho ukungabikho oku kona. Ithandaze ilile intokazi izibika ubuze bantliziyo kuSombawo. Wangcungcutheka umntwana wabantu walikheswa emoyeni, engalulibali yena uAfrika uloyiso olukhulu”

... something that Welekazi did not know is that she (Boniswa) did not love Afrika. She would pray with tears in her eyes, pouring her heart to God. She was heartbroken, meanwhile Afrika regarded himself victorious having conquered Boniswa’s heart.

Boniswa's inner self spurns Afrika outright but the social circumstances (which, as a female, she was coerced by custom and tradition to swallow), the stigmas and the negative attitudes characterise that her plight is epitomized by the anguish rhetoric emerging from within (Saule, 2010:86), "*Yinto endiza kuyithini le njengokuba uAfrika endinukisela ngevumba esathi gqi eMchathu? Igazi lam alidibani tu naye, ndakucinga umzimba usuka urhawuzelele*" (What am I going to do about this, when I cannot stand the smell of Afrika? My blood and his do not mix, even when I think of him my armpits start itching). This captures Boniswa's feelings towards Afrika and it also paved the way their marriage would be.

Agreeing to marry Afrika was the worst decision Boniswa made. After their wedding and moving in together, Afrika became scarce and seldom went home. His excuse would always be work (Saule, 2010:88): "*ngokuhamba kweminyaka, uAfrika wamana enqaba ngokunqaba emzini wakhe, etyholo umsebenzi owawungamniki thuba*" (as the years passed, Afrika became scarce from his home, using his work as an excuse). Afrika's absence from home did not bother Boniswa as she disliked him and did not want him near her (Saule, 2010:88): "...*Ingekuba phofu wayehlupheka xa engamboni, wayengamfuni uAfrika ecaleni kwakhe, egxeka ummiselo ombi ukuba abe kulo meko*" (Boniswa was not bothered by Afrika's absence, she did not want Afrika anywhere near her, blaming the circumstances that placed her in this situation).

Boniswa demonstrated resilience through her careless act towards her husband's absence. People around her worried about her but she could not be bothered (Saule, 2010:89): "*Umntu waye nokucinga ukuba uBoniswa uya hlupheka, kukungabonakali kukaAfrika emzini wakhe. Intombi enkulu yayisuka izihlalele izonwabele*" (people would think that her husband's absence hurt Boniswa but she was not hurt, instead she enjoyed his absence). Another woman would have been devastated by this but Boniswa kept her cool. Boniswa had not slept with her husband since they got married, yet she was not bothered. Instead she raised her child.

She knew that her husband had several affairs as he had done prior to them getting married. The difference is that now his women were even calling in their homewhen Afrika was not there and Boniswa had to answer these calls. This began to stress Boniswa and she would comfort herself by telling herself that she has no husband in Afrika and no woman can ever claim him because he was a lady's man (Saule, 2010:90): "*kweku, andinamyeni kanene apha kuTshawe, engekho kunjalo nje nomnye onokuze athi unomyeni apha kuye. Yintoni le ingaka ithandwa ngala mantombazana apha kuye?*" (I cannot really say I have a husband in Tshawe, and no one else can say they have a husband in him. What is it that these women see in him?).

Boniswa did not understand what these other women saw in Afrika as she was disgusted by him.

Boniswa through her marriage embraced Ogundipe-Leslie's (1994:76) stiwanist principles, which stated that in order for true social transformation in Africa men and women had to work hand in hand, they needed each other. Hence, we see that Boniswa is not against institution of marriage though it has its shortcomings. She tried to work together with Afrika, by ensuring that their household was tidy and she would cook each day and dish up for her husband in case he would return home that day and if he did, she would still grant him the respect a wife is said to give to her husband (Saule, 2010:89): "...*akholwe ke uTshawe yakuvuka ezinzulwini zobusuku imququzelele intokazi*" (Afrika would be delighted to see Boniswa wake up in the middle of the night and tend to his needs).

Even with his ill-treatment of Boniswa, Afrika knew that Boniswa was smart and intelligent. She was never to be underestimated, unlike the women he was having affairs with (Saule, 2010:98):

...ingqondo kaBoniswa yayibukhali, ikhawuleza kunjalo nje, wakuqaphela oko uTshawe. Wayengafani ngokucinga nala mantombazana wayewaqhelile kulula nokuba lula ukuwaqhatha. Kuye kwakufuneka uthethe uwabala amagama.

...Boniswa had a sharp head, she was a fast thinker at it and Tshawe noticed this. She was not like the women he was used to, who he was able to trick. With her (Boniswa) one had to count their words.

As the years went by, Boniswa began to worry more. Afrika was not going home and was unavailable. When Boniswa called the office, they would say he is at home meanwhile he was not. These things occurred with Boniswa unable to salvage the situation. Afrika became more distant and absent as the years went by. The passage below from *Inkululeko Isentabeni* (2010:99) shows how things had become in Boniswa's marriage:

Ezi zinto zazisenzeka uBoniswa ezibukele exakene nomzi wakhe. Waya enqaba ngokunqaba ngoku uAfrika, ndithi mna ziphele iiveki engalali endlwini, engaziwa nokuba uphi. Akufowunela eofisini uMzikazi ngesithukuthezi sendoda engabuyiyo, kuthiwa khangaphangele kuloo veki usemzini wakhe eBhisho.

These things used to occur while Boniswa watched. She could not control her marital issues. Afrika became scarcer than before, weeks would go by without him setting foot in his house and no one knew where he was.

Boniswa would call his office and they would say he is at home.

Boniswa remembers that her marriage to Afrika is loveless and more than anything was an arrangement that was made because of an ‘accidental’ pregnancy. This goes back to how Jadezweni (2017:12) argues that marriage is viewed as every woman’s dream. As a result, unmarried women are regarded as unworthy, as though there is something abnormal about them. Thus, many women would rather remain in loveless, abusive and oppressive marriages than get divorced. Single women who fall pregnant would rather enter marriages with men they disapprove of just to hide or cover the ‘shame’ and ‘embarrassment’.

The above is echoed by Ogundipe-Leslie (1994:75) albeit differently. She states that, due to societal and cultural pressures, women insist on having their children fathered, despite the emotional oppression and pain they have to endure within marriage. “They expect little from men in terms of companionship, personal care and fidelity” (Ogundipe-Leslie, 1994: 74). That is exactly the situation Boniswa finds herself in. She placed aside how she felt about Afrika for the sake of her son having a father (Saule, 2010:86).

Throughout the heartache in her marriage, Boniswa manages to still contain part of herself. Her resilience shows when Afrika decides to go home one evening. Boniswa questions him on his whereabouts. Afrika is astonished by this as he is used to doing as he pleases with no woman questioning his actions. Boniswa tells him that she would like to know the reason he has abandoned his house. She reiterates by asking him if he still remembers that he has a wife and child. As stated in Saule (2010:101), “*Akukho ndaba ndifuna ukuziva nto nje bendifuna ukubuza ukuba umzi lo wakho kutheni uwunikele umva nje? ... Ndiyabuza tata kaZingisa, usazazi na ukuba unomfazi?*” (There are no news I would like to hear, I just want to know why you have forsaken your house? ... I am asking Zingisa’s father, do you still remember that you have a wife?).

Afrika is taken aback, he wonders why Boniswa asks these questions as she had never before questioned his whereabouts as Saule (2010:101) explains: “*Engqondweni wayefuna ukwazi uAfrika ukuba yintoni le isuse uMzi ukuba abuze ezi zinto engazange axwesise nesikweko kuzo phambili*” (In his mind, he wanted to know what had alerted Boniswa into asking all these

questions she had never asked before). Afrika, as the coward he is, rose from his seat and left without responding to Boniswa's questions.

4.2.3. Cultural and Traditional Influences

Tradition and cultural norms play a vital role in society. Moloko-Phiri et al., (2016:245) assert that premarital counselling is vital in many South African indigenous cultures. Premarital counselling usually occurs prior to the bride being taken to her in-laws or upon her arrival at her in-laws. This becomes an opportunity to instil in the wife values of perseverance, tolerance, patience and sacrifice (Moloko-Phiri et al., 2016:245). Meanwhile, the husband is told that he is the head of the house, therefore he has authority and complete autonomy over the household, making him superior to and different from the wife. African men generally do not let go of gender roles as posed by cultural norms, they maintain the view that "a father cannot be equal to his daughter or a husband cannot be equal to his wife" (Ogundipe-Leslie, 1994:209). Ogundipe-Leslie (1994:209) goes on to say that African men do not wish to change these gender roles and as a result they are unable to express emotion to their wives.

Hence, in the novel, Afrika feels unable to return home to his wife everyday after work, as he is taken aback by the fact that Boniswa is a strong, opinionated, intelligent and confident woman. He knows that she is not afraid to speak her mind, and therefore sees through him. Afrika is afraid that Boniswa would even question the illegal dealings that he is involved in at work, and he would rather spend time with women he knows will not question his acts. He is intimidated by Boniswa's strong presence which makes it seem as though he has no authority over his own household.

According to his own cultural belief system, Afrika is permitted to take on a second wife although he should first consult with his first wife. Nevertheless, Boniswa only finds out that Afrika has taken another wife from a newspaper article with Afrika and his new wife on the cover page. Boniswa is deeply hurt by this, she is shocked even though she knew that her husband was cheating. The text below shows how devastated Boniswa is by the news of her husband taking a second wife and having to find out from such a public platform:

Ndiyatsho nje, soze uAfrika aziphathe ngolu hlobo kanti akukho nto ichukumayo. Phofu ke bendilindele ntoni? ...Ingaba sisohlwayo okanye sisibetho esi? ...Ndohlwaywa ngubani, ndibethwa ngubani ngasiphi isizathu? ...Phofu ke nale nto yokwenda sewumdala inezinto zayo.

I knew that Afrika would not behave this strange without him having done something on the side. What was I expecting though? Is this a punishment or a curse? Who would be punishing me and for what reason? Getting married at an old age also has its issues.

Thus, Ogundipe-Leslie's (1994:75) argument that in marriage women are the most oppressed is true. This is because, amongst many other reasons, "she becomes a client or possession, she is voiceless and often rightless in her husband's family" (Ogundipe-Leslie, 1994:75). This is seen in Boniswa's case as she has no say in her husband's family affairs where they make all the decisions with Afrika and he only informs her after the decisions have been made about her son's rite of passage to manhood ceremony (Saule, 2010:174). "She also has to submit to dominance by her husband or face execration and blame from the total society" (Ogundipe-Leslie, 1994:75). Indeed, everyone was talking about Boniswa, when the thought of leaving Afrika crossed her mind, she thought of how she would be the laughing stock of the community. (Saule, 2010:102).

Boniswa was feeling the pressure as her son also noticed Afrika's behaviour. Her thoughts became conflicted as she was carrying a heavy load in her heart (Saule, 2010:105): "*wathi embemile esebenza ekhitshini uMzikazi, waziva esindwa ngamadolo, wayeka yonke into wayakuthi khebevu esitulweni, wahlala waqethukisa intloko wajonga entungo*" (As she was standing working in the kitchen, she felt dizzy and stopped everything she was doing and sat on a chair. She sat and rested her head, facing far away).

As much as Afrika is an absent father and husband, he provides for his family financially. His household did not lack anything materialistically as he had sheep delivered and slaughtered there every week, he bought groceries, sent money, bought furniture and made sure that the yard was cleaned every now and then. Men in his culture are expected to be the providers and see to it that they take care of all these things.

It is then fundamental to mention that "the culture we live in, is the totality of socially transmitted beliefs, meanings, value, ideas, norms and institutions that form the background of our lives" (Van der Vijver et al, 1990:60). These cultural and traditional practices signify societal life, and are manipulated for personal gain. Those who manipulate them the most want to further patriarchal standards. These beliefs and practices ought to move with the times as many are oppressive towards women.

In an article where she analyses the practice of 'ukuzila' amongst the *amaHlubi Nguni* women, Magudu (2004:140) finds that most women view the institution of marriage amongst Africans as patriarchal as it caters more towards men than women. Magudu (2004:141) argues that these women find cultural practices oppressive and gender discriminative. Even mourning practices favour men and silence women. She continues to say that according to African tradition, men are said to be the providers, their duty is to go out and work for the family then return home to feed the family and pay the bills. This is problematic because men have been conditioned to think that providing financially is their only role in a marriage.

Often in African societies, culture is manipulated to enhance patriarchy (Kolawole, 1998:18). For instance, in many African societies the girl child is prepared for marriage from an early age (Kwatsha, 2009: 131). Kwatsha maintains that Olinken girls are taught to behave in a specific manner in order to grow into respectful women who will then in turn be chosen by men to marry. Girls are taught from a young age to be submissive to male domination with a guarantee of the ultimate dream of a marriage. This on its own is problematic, as it teaches women to depend upon men and that as stated before, women ought to get married. If unmarried therefore, a woman is deemed to be unworthy: "They are taught that pain is not to be given a voice, which often results in insanity. Those who can withstand pain go on to teach their daughters to work hard, produce children and endure pain" (Brown-Guillory, 1996: 6). Masuku (2005:23) concurs that even in the Zulu culture, women are told to persevere in marriage, despite the issues they encounter because perseverance results to rewards.

The idea of divorce slowly creeps in Boniswa's mind however, she is still conflicted and the following conversation with herself (2010:105) shows how disturbed Boniswa was in marriage:

Mandiwuqhawule lo nomgogwana womtshato... Hayi, akukho nto iza kunceda kuyo loo nto. Zange nditshate kakade, ligama nephepha nje elo, bebetshilo abaya bafazi entabeni... Mandimfake uviko uAfrika awuqhawule ngokwakhe ngoba eneneni asimpilo iyephi imeko enje. Ndiya kuba ndizenza intlekisa nyani. Tyini bafazi.

I should cut this joke of a marriage... No, nothing will come out of that. I did not really get married in first place, it was just a word and a piece of paper, that is what those women said... I should put pressure on Afrika to end the

marriage himself because this is not life. I would be making myself a laughing stock.

Boniswa is still resilient as she tells herself that she will put pressure on Afrika to be the one that ends their marriage. Perhaps she knows how cunning he is, and since he works for the government, if he did not want the divorce to go through, he would be able to stop it as he had illegal dealings within governmental affairs.

As much as she wanted to end their marriage, she was still calculating about the entire matter. She also did not want to make things easy for Afrika because he might also have been waiting for her to leave him. When Boniswa speaks to her mother about this complex situation, D tells her to return home as the situation seems like a dead end. But Boniswa is adamant that if she were to leave her marriage now, she would be giving Afrika leeway to disrespect her. She assures her mother that things had not yet reached breaking point and that she could not just walk away as though she was uneducated. This is seen when she says: “*ndiya kuba ndiyamgezisa ngekumbi uAfrika ukuba ndikhe ndayenza loo nto... Akukabikho nto yonakeleyo, nam lo kaloku kufuneka ndichule ukunyathela ingabi ngathi andifundanga*” (I would be giving Afrika the upperhand if I do that... There has not been anything pressing yet, I have to be strategic about the entire thing and not act uneducated) Saule (2010:106). Even with all the challenges that Boniswa faces, she remains brave and strong enough to think before reacting. She tells herself that she will show Afrika that she is still different from the women he had encountered; she was no walk over: “*uza kuyibona kanene into endibhinqe ngayo*” (he is going to see what I am capable of) (Saule, 2010:106).

Meanwhile, Afrika was telling people that he had done nothing wrong. He even explained to his father that he had committed no sin because tradition permits him to have two wives: “*hayi kaloku kweli lethu ilizwe ayikho into ethi akungebi nabafazi ababini... Intlalo kaNtu iyodwa, icawa iyodwa*” (in our African world, there is nothing that condones having two wives... African tradition is different from christianity) (Saule, 2010:107).

The above demonstrates that Ogundipe-Leslie (1994:76) and Hoza (2012:150) are correct when they say that the African traditional marriage institution is oppressive towards women as it favours patriarchal values. This also shows the manipulation of cultural and traditional beliefs to benefit patriarchal practices, that in turn leaves women with no say in society and they endure more than they can in their domestic affairs.

As much as tradition is on Afrika's side, Boniswa is livid that Afrika lacked the decency to take another wife without speaking to her first. She was ready to engage him on this matter, but he did not return home. In fact, this time around he did not set foot in their home for a long time. During his absence, Boniswa and the rest of the teachers and learners from her school were arrested, because of a riot that had broken out at the school.

Afrika as head of the police services, carried weight in the correctional services area. He cowardly wanted to get rid of Boniswa and told the police not to release her when all the other teachers and learners were released. He saw this as an opportunity to make sure that Boniswa left him first: "*makayekwe phaya eziseleni azokubhadla... Lithuba lam eli lokumgxotha aphume aphele kwamasango asemaTshaweni. Ndamtshata ngempazamo*" (Leave her there... This is my opportunity to chase her out of my house. I married her by mistake) (Saule, 2010:110).

This did not, however, derail Boniswa, as she knew that Afrika had authority to assist her, but chose not to. While Boniswa was in the holding cells, Afrika would arrive at their home every now and then with different women at night and leave in the morning. He took this as an opportunity to do as he pleased. The only person who visited Boniswa in jail was her mother and D told her daughter that this was Afrika's way of telling her that he did not want her anymore: "*isizathu sokuba ube lapha mntwanam kukuba akunatyala. Akusekho entliziyweni yendoda yakho ngoku, yindlela ekwala ngayo*" (The reason you are here my child is because you are innocent. Your husband no longer loves you, this is a ploy to show you that he does not want you anymore) (Saule, 2010:111).

Boniswa knew all her mother told her was true. She was angry that Afrika was such a coward, that he could not tell her and end their marriage but instead he acted cunningly by throwing her in jail as he had done with Buyile. Eventually when Afrika gave authority that Boniswa be released, he hoped that she had received the message. He lied to her by saying that he had tried very hard to pull strings to have her released, but his hands were tied up until that moment. Boniswa knew that he was lying.

On their way home, Boniswa was livid and seized the moment as an opportunity to discuss the second wife. She brought the matter up very wittily: "*uphangela phi yena uNomathamsanqa?*" (Where does Nomathamsanqa work?) (Saule, 2010:112). Afrika ignored this question, and whenever she brought up the topic, he brushed her off. Boniswa eventually dropped the subject, but was still conflicted on whether to remain married or to leave Afrika.

The pressure and pain were now getting to Boniswa. She did not hide the fact that her marriage ended a long time ago, that in fact it had never begun: “*ubunzima babungaphaya kwencindi yekhala, kodwa wanyamezela umvambo. Xa ethetha wayengayifihli into yokuba owakhe umtshato waphelayo. Inyaniso ikukuba zange ubekho*” (she was struggling but she persevered. When she spoke, she did not hide that her marriage had ended a long time ago. The truth is that it never existed) (Saule, 2010:114).

While tidying up her house, Boniswa found divorce papers. She was shocked and thought it meant that Afrika had filed for divorce but was not brave enough to give her the papers himself. She told herself that she would not make things easy for him by bringing up the topic, she would simply act as though she did not know anything (Saule, 2010:114):

Into ethetha ukuthi kwa kukudala equqa enkundleni! Tyhini! Kukuthini ukoyika ukundinika elam sele enze into ebhadle kangaka? Andizi kumncedisa kanene kubugwala bakhe, ndiza kuba ngathi andazi nto ade aphume egusheni.

This means that he has been going to court! Why is he afraid of giving me my paper as well when he has done such a noble act? I am not going to assist him in his cowardness, I am going to act as though I do not know anything until he tells me.

Boniswa did not bother verifying if these divorce papers were legal. Things were becoming overwhelmingly hard for her, but she remained strong for her son’s sake: “*Zazidibene zininzi ke ezi zinto zikrenca umphefumlo wakhe. Womelela noko ezinye zisiya ziba mandundu ngokuba mandundu, ekoyisile ukulukuhlwa ngumtyholi ohamba ngeenywawo*” (There were many things that broke her heart. She remained resilient even though she faced many trials, she had conquered the deceiving devil.) (Saule, 2010:114).

Boniswa was stressed by the fact that she knew Afrika was not her son’s real father and soon he would have to go to the mountain for his manhood rite of passage. She did not know how to tell Afrika and their son the truth. Another issue was the fact that Afrika took Nomathamsanqa, his other wife, everywhere with him. People kept on reporting to Boniswa when they saw them together and Boniswa would tell the gossipers that she did not care. By doing so, she had stopped the gossipers from bringing her news about Afrika.

Her anger towards Afrika increased and she wanted to tell Afrika what was on her mind, but she still could not get hold of him as he stopped going home. She then decided to go to his workplace, but when she arrived there, people ran away. Boniswa was shocked by their behaviour until someone told her that Afrika was not around, and that Afrika had given instructions that no one should speak to her if she ever arrived at his workplace.

Afrika lied to people and said that Boniswa was a witch hence he seldom went home and he was waiting for the perfect time to get rid of her (Saule, 2010:119):

*Nantsika ndazenza ukutshata igqwirhakazi elithakathayo kunye nonina...
Ndizungula ithuba elifanelekileyo kungenjalo ndingafa fi. Nani aba ningaze
niyenze into yokujongana nalaa mfazi, ningaqabuka nizizithunzela. Uyabona
ngaphaya kobuya buhle, yinkohlakalo kamtyholi yodwa, angakungcwaba
uhleli umfazi wam.*

I regret marrying a witch that bewitches with her mother... I am waiting for the perfect time to leave her otherwise, I might die. You should also never look at her unless you want to turn into zombies. Behind all that beauty, is a devil, she could bury you alive.

When Boniswa came back home after another day at work, she found annulment papers on the table. She looked at the papers then through them away. People noticed how heavy-hearted she was feeling. The school inspectors called her in and told her that her work was suffering at school. Her mother had told her a long time ago that she should keep her son's paternity a secret (Saule, 2010:134): "*Into kaBuyile yayiyimfihlelo yakhe, imfihlelo awathi unina uD maze ayivalele mba esifubeni ukuba ufuna ukuphila ubomi emhlabeni*" (My friend I had been wondering why you no longer mention Afrika when we talk about our husbands. Wow! You can endure, I would have left a long time ago).

Boniswa's mother consoled her every time by telling her to persevere and sit upon whatever challenges she faced in her marriage because no one would assist her in fixing them, she was the only one who would be able to revive her marriage (Saule, 2010:145): "*Hayi, mntwanam, ziyenzeka ezi zinto, asinakuzibulala ke ngenxa yazo. Umfazi emzini uhlala phezu kwezinto zakhe nezomzi wakhe. Iizinto zakho soze zilungiswe ngabantu baphaya phandle*" (No, my child, these things happen, we cannot kill ourselves because of them. A bride sits on top of her marital issues. Your problems will never be solved by anyone else).

Opuku-Agyemang (1998:83) states that in African societies, women are told to be silent about their thoughts and emotions if they want to lead a blissful life in marriage. Kolawole (1998:18) utilises a Yoruba proverb which compares a vocal wife to a wild tree that has bad odour, therefore cannot grow amongst people. This suggests that a vocal woman cannot be brought home as she would be a bad influence on others, as women should have no say.

Thus, Ebila (2015) analyses the former Kenyan president's definition of a 'proper woman', which states that "in the traditional African imagery, women are expected to be quiet when men speak, respectable by being respectful to men (especially to male leadership), good mothers of the nation and not to challenge authority in general" (Ebila, 2015: 144).

While Boniswa was being told to keep quiet and act as though things were fine, she was dying inside and decided to speak to her friend and colleague, Welekazi. She told Welekazi about the state of her marriage, the divorce, and the annulment papers she had found. Welekazi was not surprised as she said she knew and everyone else knew but they were all amazed that Boniswa remained in Afrika's house even after all this happening.

The conversation between Welekazi and Boniswa (Saule, 2010:135) demonstrates how boldly the female characters in the novel have been portrayed:

Welekazi: *"Kodwa ke mhlob' am bendimana ndizifunela apha engqondweni ukuba kutheni na le nto ungasafane uthethe ngoAfrika xa sincokola ngala ethu amadoda. Hayi! Uyanyamezela Kodwa mfazi. Mna, ngekudala ndaphumayo."*

Boniswa: *"Hayi kanti akululanga njengokuba usitsho."*

Welekazi: *Zintetho ezinje kanye eziwagezisayo la madoda. Siyawaphulela engakufanelanga oko. Yhini le!*

Boniswa: *Hayi wethu, mhlawumbi uThixo unesizathu sokuba izinto zenzeke ngolu hlobo. Kuza kulunga!*

Welekazi: My friend I had been wondering why you no longer mention Afrika when we talk about our husbands. Wow! You can endure, I would have left a long time ago.

Boniswa: "It is not as easy as you say it is."

Welekazi: “It is such talks that boost these men’s egos. We make things easy for the, which should not be the case.”

Boniswa: “Maybe God has his reasons for things to turn out the way they are. Everything will work out.

Boniswa’s life was miserable, her head was filled with many situations that did not seem to have a solution, such as her son, whose father was Buyile, and her false marriage: “*kuye engqondweni zazintathu ezazigquba, uBuyelekhaya ongengomTshawe, uyise onguAfrika onika umntwana imali eninzi ngenxa yesikhundla sakhe sobuphathiswa, umtshato ongekho*” (There were many things crowding her mind, amongst many was the issue of Buyelekhaya who is not a Tshawe, his father who is Afrika who rewards his son with a lump sum because of his new post and her non-existent marriage) (Saule, 2010:139).

Boniswa started to have dark thoughts as she realized that she was not free, but was in chains by issues of the soul (Saule, 2010:139): “*waziqonda nje ukuba kuye ayikho Inkululeko, ukhonkxwe ngamakhamandela omphefumlo... Mna andinabo tu ubomi*” (she came to realise that she is captivated by issues in her heart). As she said that, she became vulnerable and thought about committing suicide. The follow extract, (Saule, 2010:139) shows how devastated Boniswa was feeling to the point that she would consider committing suicide:

...ukuba litsho engqondweni elo lizwi kwasuka kwamnyama phambi kwakhe, kukho into ethi makatsibe eteksini ibaleke afe kube kanye.

Ufike kuthe cwaka emzini wakhe, qolokotho wangena endlwini wonda ngekhtshi, wavula idrowa. Izinkempe zamabhoso okusika inyama zazingqengqe zibengezela.

Boniswa: “*Thatha libe linye uzithi bobho eluvalweni*”.

Hayi akwavuma!

Naanko esiya kungena egumbini lakhe, wagubhulula eqokelela zonke iibhotile ezineepilisi, watsho yazala iplastiki kaCheckers, gwiqi waya kungena ekhitshini iduma intloko zintungu, ijikeleza ngathi uza kuwa.

The minute that voice came to her head, everything went blank in front of her, she felt like jumping out of the taxi and dying.

When she arrived home it was quiet, she went straight to the kitchen and opened the utensils drawer. All the knives were in there, neatly packed up.

Take one and stab yourself.

She could not do it.

She went to her bedroom and emptied all her tablet bottles and placed the tablets in a plastic bag. She then returned to the kitchen, meanwhile her head was buzzing so that she felt dizzy.

The above passage demonstrates how oppressive marriage is for women, to the point that an individual may lose their identity. Confident and resilient Boniswa lost all her courage and frivolous nature in a moment of weakness because of the emotional abuse Afrika and the pressures of tradition placed on her. Boniswa is not the only one, many other women go through the same issues, and as a result, women are left emotionally scarred, many are unable to survive the emotional, physical and sexual abuse within their marriages and decide to take their own lives. They are unable to speak up because of the myths about how women should endure silently, how you are not a real woman if you are unable to persevere and the many patriarchal definitions of and instructions for a proper African woman and her behaviour.

However, Boniswa returns to her senses, and does not go forward with the suicide attempt. This is where her resilience shines. Through it all she manages to contain herself and rethink a strategy she could use against Afrika. After a long period of not returning home and not making any contact with Boniswa, Afrika finally decides to go home to address Boniswa. Boniswa meets him with hostility. As Afrika takes a seat, Boniswa remains on her feet. The following conversation from *Inkululeko Isentabeni* (2010:160) between Afrika and Boniswa shows how agitated Boniswa is by Afrika:

Afrika: *Kudala ndifuna ukuza apha, kodwa kunzima ukufumana ixesha.*

Boniswa: *“Uzokwenza ntoni?”*

Afrika: *Ngumbuzo onjani lo wakho? Ungumfazi wam nje, ndiya kuthini ukungezi xa ndifuna.*

Lwaqala ukunyuka oluya gwebu lomsindo kuBoniswa, wasiva isifuthufuthu sisiza sikhawulezile, wazicenga wahlala phantsi, kodwa kwisitulo esithe qelele kuAfrika, bajongana.

Afrika: I have been meaning to come see you, however I have not had time.

Boniswa: To do what?

Afrika: What kind of question is that? You are my wife; therefore, I am entitled to come see you whenever I want to. Boniswa's anger came back, she immediately got hot flushes, she tried to calm herself and sat down but sat on a chair opposite Afrika, and they faced each other.

Afrika had come to tell Boniswa that he wanted their son to study abroad the following year. He also told her about the date he had set for their son's rite of passage and that his family would administer the whole ceremony. Boniswa was livid because, firstly Afrika had already made these decisions about their son's futures without involving her. Something that he fails to do all the time, which is to discuss things with her before making decisions. And secondly, she was angry that he was making all these decisions about a child that was not even his. Boniswa tells him the truth about Zingisa's real father in the conversation that follows between them (Saule, 2010:160):

Boniswa: *"AmaTshawe aza kumalusa njani"*

Afrika: *"Njani, njani?"*

Boniswa: *"UZingisa akangonyana wakho."*

Afrika: *Ngunyana wam uMzingisi, uphuma apha...Andinakuze ndikhulise umntwana ndimondle kanye nonina, ndive sendixelelwe ukuba asingomntana wam.*

Boniswa: "How can the Tshawe clan administer the ceremony?"

Afrika: "How?"

Boniswa: "Zingisa is not your son."

Afrika: "Mzingisi is my son, he comes from me...I cannot take care of a child and his mother and then be told that he is not my son."

The above illustrates how Boniswa was already trying to free herself from Afrika and break away from the torment of this anguishing marriage by telling Afrika the truth thinking he would finalize their divorce. In the following conversation (Saule, 2010:160) Boniswa demonstrates her resilience by dominating the conversation and asking the question she had been longing to ask Afrika:

Boniswa: *Undibiza ngomfazi wakho wakugqiba ukuqhawula umtshato?*
Wakugqiba ukundishiya apha ndedwa uyokuhlala ngaphaya
eNgqushwa? Ndingumfazi wakho njani?

Afrika: *Ubona laa nto ibhalwe kweliya phepha? Umtshato emaXhoseni*
wakhe waqhawulwa ngephepha kakade?

Boniswa: “You are calling me your wife, yet you have annulled our marriage? After you left me here and moved to Pedi? How am I your wife?”

Afrika: “Just because of what was written on that piece of paper. Have you ever seen a marriage in the Xhosa culture being ended by a piece of paper?”

Boniswa was angered by Afrika’s arrogance, she told herself that she would end their marriage herself. She vouched to herself to never allow any man to ever torment her, she told herself she would never be any man’s slave ever again (Saule, 2010:162): “*nokuba kube yintoni, sobe ndiphinde ndibe likhoboka le ndoda, nayiphina*” (no matter what may be, I will never be any man’s slave again).

4.2.4. Conclusion

Throughout this section, Afrika keeps on referring to tradition as his binding reference to excuse his behaviour. It is tradition that permits him to behave in this manner, as it grants him authority in the marriage. However, because Boniswa is a strong-willed and opinionated woman, she does not allow Afrika to walk over her. She is educated and able to take care of herself and her son. Afrika had not thought that Boniswa was this strong that she would question his authority.

Complications found within the union of marriage in African societies manifest mostly because of the African patriarchal values associated with marriage. In African marriages men enter with the perception that they are superior to women. They are conditioned to think that they are the

head of the family. They subsequently take complete authority over their household and treat the members of their family as subjects.

Women are conditioned from birth by cultural norms that men are superior and should be treated in a specific manner. Women are instructed on how to conduct themselves and are told that marriage is a fitting reward for all 'proper African' women. Women across South African indigenous cultures are advised to endure in their marriages. They are told to be silent and keep to the kitchen. Women are given new identities, denoted by new names from their in-laws and they must take on their husband's surname.

In *Inkululeko Isentabeni*, Boniswa represents both the old and modern woman. At first, she gives in to societal pressures by entering a loveless marriage for the sake of hiding her 'disappointment' or 'embarrassment' of falling pregnant out of wedlock. Even though it is mentioned many times in the novel how broken Boniswa was within the marriage, she keeps it to herself and endures. Her mother continuously urges her to persevere and remain silent. Boniswa does not voice her frustrations and feelings to her husband because that is deemed as deviant by society. A vocal wife is said to be disrespectful. She bleeds in silence.

However, society is slowly evolving and granting a voice to women. Women across Africa are reclaiming their identities, uncovering lies disguised as cultural values that urge women to persevere under all forms of pain. Women are neither weak nor weaker than men, therefore should not be viewed as forces of opposition. "They are binary forces of complementarity" (Ilesanmi, 1998:40).

Saule stresses that women are resilient in many of his novels and in this particular one dealt with in this paper. This shows that there is a shift in women's narrative, as Nadaswaran (2011) notices this shift in third generation Nigerian authors, where the portrayal of women is that of young girls growing up to be strong womanists. She goes on to say, "as female characters challenge their familial relationships, they develop their sense of personhood, reclaiming wholeness, authority and female subjectivity, changing prescribed roles of structure" (Nadaswaran, 2011:19). Boniswa is an example, she rediscovered and empowered herself to break free from all chains of patriarchy.

In the following section female resilience is represented by three female characters. The author also shows us that females are capable of inflicting pain on other women as well. Men are not the only ones that hinder women's empowerment and advancement. This is fundamental more especially in the African societies with patriarchal cultures and traditions. In the section that

follows the author has also used a man and woman as a united tool, showcasing Stiwanist values of how powerful men and women are when working together for a greater purpose instead of fighting against each other for power.

4.3. Analysis of female resilience in *Libambe Lingatshoni*

4.3.1. Introduction

Given all that is mentioned in the previous chapter about stiwanist and womanist values, it is worth noting that Ogundipe-Leslie (1994:204) agrees with Thomas Sankara, the former president of Burkina Faso, who was assassinated, that it is fundamental for African women to receive African liberation. She emphasizes that “there can be no liberation of African society without the liberation of African women” (Ogundipe-Leslie, 1994:209). She argues that for African liberation to occur, African men and women must unite and work together in building a better African society. Hoza (2012:67) concurs:

For Black Africa to be brought back, the black women of our country will go out there together with the black men; then we will begin to say, “*Mayibuy’iAfrika!*” Go on, go on great lady, take the steps which we are eager to follow. Daughters of Afrika play your role in bringing back and developing Afrika, the land of your birth.

Taking into account the above-mentioned premise, this section of the chapter will showcase the resilience of three courageous women of different walks of life found in *Libambe Lingatshoni* (2017). These women work together with a man, portraying stiwanist and African womanist values. In this chapter female resilience is represented by the female characters, Nomvuzo, Thembeke and Nosisana.

This study has chosen parts which it deems fit for this section from Walker’s (1983: ix) womanist values and Ogundipe-Leslie’s (1994:223) stiwanism. According to Walker (1983: ix) a womanist is a woman who acts womanish, by womanish she means responsible, grown up and courageous.

Collins notes that “Womanism seemingly supplies a way for black women to address gender oppression without attacking black men” (1996:11), which echoes Walker (1983: ix) who maintains that womanists are not separatists, therefore encourage the unity of men and women in participating equally in the public domain.

Walker (1983:x) stresses that it is fundamental for women to first uplift themselves and then assist in the upliftment of people as a whole. This view is echoed by Davis (2004:33) when she states that: “Walker draws her reader’s attention to the importance of women’s intellectual, physical, emotional, and spiritual wellness, and she stresses the need to create a global community where all members of society are encouraged to survive and survive whole”.

This section will re-iterate how men hold themselves above rejection and showcase their male chauvinistic character harassing women because of being afraid of rejection (www.psychologytoday.com/za). It will also be discovered in the discussion that follows that women are also prone to inflicting pain upon other women.

The section begins with an analysis of female resilience depicted by the character, Nomvuzo from her university years to her period as a wife and even her character beyond being a wife. The second courageous woman that this chapter will examine is Nosisana, who is uneducated yet still resembles a strong and prudent woman. The third and last audacious woman that will be examined in this chapter is Thembeke with her fearless and robust character.

4.3.2. Showcasing female resilience through the character, Nomvuzo

As mentioned in the introduction of the study, one of the values of stiwanism and womanism is the liberation of African women with the inclusion of women in the public spheres. Ogundipe-Leslie (1994:210) contends that some African men are comfortable with equal salaries, jobs, positions and so forth but are uncomfortable with women’s equality in general and more especially in the family home, as “They think that men and women are not equal in general” (Ogundipe-Leslie, 1994:210).

Ogundipe-Leslie continues to say that some African men think that women were created to be their subordinates. Hence, Sanuse’s reaction to Nomvuzo’s rejection (Saule, 2017:23). He felt ashamed and embarrassed, therefore saw the need to humiliate her to a point that would break her because being humiliated by a ‘subordinate’ crippled his male ego.

Ogundipe-Leslie (1994:210) further states that in many African societies it is believed that a husband cannot be equal to his wife. Men deliberately do not want to change the tyrannical gender roles especially in their family households. Thus, it becomes complex for men to express “tenderness in intimate relationships” (Ogundipe-Leslie, 1994:210). Their actions are guided by how culture and tradition dictate a husband and father should behave towards their wives and children.

Nevertheless, in *Libambe Lingatshoni* (2017) the gendered roles are reversed. Nomvuzo is more assertive and bolder as she takes the lead in making the first move on Zithembile and she even ‘ties’ herself to him using the traditional beaded bracelet that men normally use to propose marriage to women (Saule, 2017:26). Nomvuzo walks up to Zithembile and demands that he accompany her to the gate to buy fruit (Saule, 2010:26), “*ndikhaphe wethu siye phaya esangweni*” (accompany me to the gate). Nomvuzo’s robust character dominates even when they get to the fruit stall, she shares the fruit with Zithembile and forces him to accept it as she sees that he is about to resist (Saule, 2017:26).

A few days later, Nomvuzo invites Zithembile to her father’s house to a family ceremony. Zithembile arrives and assists Nomvuzo’s father with a stubborn cow (Saule, 2017:27). His clothes accidentally become dirty and Nomvuzo’s father asks her to assist him clean up. Nomvuzo invites him into one of the houses in the yard and immediately closes the door after Zithembile enters (Saule, 2017:30). When she throws her hands around him, at first he attempts to resist but Nomvuzo kisses him and he responds positively (Saule, 2010:30): “*wabuya nocango uNomvuzo, esamangalisiwe uZithembile, yonda ngaye intombi, yangathi iyagqitha, esathi uthi gu bucala, yamtsibela yajikelisa iingalo zayo entanyeni, yamanga*” (she closed the door behind her, Zithembile was shocked by her actions, she threw herself at him).

And daring Nomvuzo did not end there, as can be seen by how she proposes to Zithembile (Saule, 2017:31):

Ethubeni wathi rhuthu ikhonco lentsimbi emhlophe uNomvuzo, walibhijela ngobunono esihlahleni kuZithembile laneminqa emihlanu, akugqiba waliqhina, iqhina lesitixo. Wayazi engaxelelwanga ukuba intombazana yasemaTshaweni izibophelela kuye ngeqhina lomtshato elingasayi kuze liqhawulwe mntu.

After a while Nomvuzo brought out a beaded wrist bracelet with five rows of beads and tied it on Zithembile’s wrist. Zithembile knew without being told that Nomvuzo just proposed marriage to him.

Such a move from Nomvuzo is a bold act that is commonly conducted by men in many African societies. This is a sign of the resilience Nomvuzo possesses, as she takes charge of the relationship instead of waiting on her male counterpart to do so. Ogundipe-Leslie (1994: 211) claims this to be uncommon as men are reluctant to let go of their patriarchal roles in relationships. She further holds that in the majority of the African societies, men are to be

respected and spoken to in a certain manner. However, Nomvuzo confidently speaks her mind with Zithembile.

Nomvuzo further shows womanist values as she courageously lifts herself up from the torment and tainted reputation, which she suffers at the hands of Sanuse. Secondly, Nomvuzo is arrested for having unknowingly been involved in illegal business with Zondani (Saule, 2017:68). Her reputation yet again tainted by a man, nonetheless, she accepts her punishment and serves her time in prison. She remains strong during this period and is not afraid of going back to her husband and son upon her release from prison, showing remorse for abandoning them. She is not afraid to be bold, daring and different from other women.

Another incident where Nomvuzo showcases a resilient character, behaving against the normal African patriarchal status quo is when she expresses herself the way she wants to in front of Zithembile. Saule (2017:57) here deploys one of the most common tools used by female authors, specifically of isiXhosa novels of the 19th century. According to Hoza (2012:66) in Swartboo's *UMandisa*, gender role reversal is prominent with *Mandisa's* mother and grandmother being the matriarchs of the family. "Swartboo uses her portrayal of male characters as a narrative ploy in her subversion of traditional roles reserved for men" (Hoza, 2012:65). Saule (2017:67) assigns the normally projected role of a female as a nurturer to the father, Zithembile.

Gender role reversal begins when Nomvuzo is given a photo of a woman and a child said to be Zithembile's son with the woman in the photo (Saule, 2017:51). She is not afraid of confronting him about the photo (Saule, 2017:52). This results in Nomvuzo ending her marriage and she moves to Mthatha, leaving their son behind (Saule, 2017:52).

Zithembile is left with their son and he takes great care of him. He plays the nurturing and providing role that is said by African society to belong to the mother figure. This is the reordering of African society and family that Ogundipe-Leslie (1994:210) argues needs to occur. She further argues that the need for transformation of the same kind that occurred in Nomvuzo and Zithembile's household with the justification that "changes within the indigenous family patterns stemming from new developments which have to be integrated" (Ogundipe-Leslie, 1994:210).

However, Saule (2017) shows that not all men are as understanding and humane as Zithembile. He uses Sanuse to show how egotistical men can be. Degges-White (2018) elaborates on this by stating that research that was conducted in the 1990s around the sensitivity some people

(mostly men) feel when it comes to being rejected. She further argues that there is a “gender difference in cultural expectations regarding acceptable responses to rejection” (www.psychologytoday.com/za). According to Degges-White (2018), culturally males and females are expected to take rejection differently. For instance, males tend to take rejection as a knock to their masculinity “or an insult to their perceived place in the social hierarchy” (www.psychologytoday.com/za).

The above is the case with Sanuse, a young, popular, rich man that Nomvuzo rejected at university (Saule, 2017:21). After completing matric, Nomvuzo decided to study at Fort Hare University. In her first year, she was constantly asked out by men because she was beautiful (Saule, 2017:21). She had to relentlessly use her inner resilience and reject all these men because she knew they were not in love with her but with her beauty (Saule, 2017:21). And the author's words in the extract below show (2017:21) how persistently bold Nomvuzo had to be:

Aheshe, akhabe, abhebhethhe, agxothhe, intoni na, ubuhle bakhe basuka bamenzela iintshaba. Kwakusithiwa yi-PD (public demand), ngabakwaziyo ukunyelisa, wonke nje umfana emrhorhozelela ngathi yintaka ileqa ibhabhathane.

She would reject, kick, scream and chase men away but none of that worked, her beauty created enemies for her. She was called Public Demand because men followed her around like a bird chasing after a butterfly.

Sanuse was full of himself and bragged around about how he had never been rejected by a woman before and that no woman could ever resist him, therefore Nomvuzo could resist all the men on campus but she would never resist him (Saule, 2017: 21). More than anything, Sanuse wanted to prove a point to everyone. That is why when Nomvuzo rejected him, he took it as both a knock to his masculinity and his position in the social hierarchy.

Degges-White (2018) argues that because of the above-mentioned, men tend to want to 'get even'. Hence, when Nomvuzo declined Sanuse's love proposal, he lied about her, spreading false rumours about her and convinced other men to do the same (Saule, 2017:22): "*Hayi ke mnta' kamama, unqali' intloko waseRhawutini, wasongela, wathukisa kwathi kanti uza kufumana abancedisi, kuthi kusisa kube kukho umbhalo ekuzotywe kuwo uNomvuzo ethukwa*" (Sanuse threatened and swore at Nomvuzo, unfortunately others joined in and assisted him, by morning there was already a drawing that swore at Nomvuzo).

Nomvuzo was called all sorts of names, including a slut, whore, prostitute and many other names used to degrade women (Saule, 2017:22). Degges-White (2018) avers that for most men when their pride and sense of self is focused on conquering one particular romantic quest, the need to take action can result in violence (www.psychologytoday.com/za). That is why Sanuse accused Nomvuzo of witchcraft, resulting in violent threats made against Nomvuzo (Saule, 2017:22):

Esokugqibela isisongelo nesambangela ukuba asincame isikolo uNomvuzo, kukungabuyeli eFortera kukaSanuse kulo nyaka wesibini, kukho ilizwi elithi uthakathiwe nguNomvuzo. Xoka. Kuqunywa into yokuba uSanuse ebanjwe ebhaqwe elele nomkamntu wabethelwa oogqirha nezicaka wanyothulwa iliso. Ebantwini wayesithi hayi yena ebezigqibele ephupha ngathi ulele noNomvuzo elokuzithethelela.

The last straw that made Nomvuzo give up university in her second year was Sanuse's exit from Fort Hare, the following year. There were rumours that Nomvuzo bewitched him. These false allegations were to hide the fact that Sanuse was caught with a married woman and the husband violently attacked him to the point that he lost his eye. Sanuse lied to people and said that he had been dreaming about Nomvuzo and woke up with only one eye.

Nomvuzo found herself, vulnerable, with threats coming from all around campus, she woke up the next morning with a bottle of acid on her doorstep and a note stating that the acid would be poured on her face (Saule, 2017:22). The police could not protect her (which is every women's tragedy in South Africa) therefore, she opted to leave university.

Even through that traumatic experience, Nomvuzo did not give up on life. She resiliently looked for a job and found one at the local government offices. She then continued bravely to work hard and in due time continued her studies via correspondence and she eventually obtained her degree (Saule, 2017:23). People gossiped about how she had to drop out of university but Nomvuzo paid no attention to those rumours. She did not allow her experience to detour her future. That is a courageous act.

Nomvuzo realized that the only way as a woman she would be taken seriously in society would be to educate herself. Thus, even after the above-mentioned affliction, she was determined to study again one day, even though she was afraid of going back to university she would find a way through correspondence (Saule, 2017:23).

“Education has been unanimously recognised by all feminist writers as the ultimate instrument capable of ensuring women’s self-emancipation” (Hoza, 2012:65). Saule (2017:23) sees education as the most powerful means that Nomvuzo could utilise to reintegrate herself into society as a respectable woman.

Nomvuzo does not only face pain in the hands of Sanuse but is also scorned by a woman, her sister in-law, Dideka (Saule, 2017:32). Singh (2011) explains that the most common cause of a sister in-law’s ill-treatment towards their brother’s new brides is jealousy. “Because you’re a threat to a valued bond, she will do anything to protect that bond by making your life miserable” (www.all4women.co.za). And that is exactly Dideka’s actions, she is determined to get Nomvuzo out of Zithembile’s life even though she is indirectly hurting her brother in the process.

Ogundipe-Leslie (1994:211) mentions a group of African women, to whom she refers as ‘the married incorporated’. She argues that this group of women are afraid of speaking out and challenging patriarchal traditional culture as they have become comfortable in being dependant on their husbands, which is devastating as women should unite in the battle for liberation. This group of women also casts stones at single women. She also mentions another group of women who infringe on the rights of other women; therefore, the discrimination of women is not only performed by men on women but also occurs amongst women. This is visible in *Libambe Lingatshoni* (2017:34) between Zithembile’s sisters and Nomvuzo.

Dideka and the rest of Zithembile’s sisters are irresponsible and dependant on Zithembile and Nosisana (Zithembile’s eldest sister) to take care of them and their children (Saule, 2017:34). Therefore, when Zithembile married Nomvuzo, they felt uncomfortable and threatened as they thought he would stop supporting them. They thought Nomvuzo would take their role in Zithembile’s life (Saule, 2017:35). Dideka, Zithembile’s youngest sister was the worst of them all. She always challenged Nomvuzo, trying her best to destroy her. Dideka once had a physical altercation with Nomvuzo, whereby Nomvuzo had to fight back to defend herself (Saule, 2017:34).

Even through the above-mentioned altercation, Nomvuzo displays courage, she maintains that she can stand up for herself. Her husband defended his wife when he found out about the fight, he smacked Dideka in the face (Saule, 2017:35). Nomvuzo was furious and told Zithembile to never fight her battles for her ever again. She assured her husband that she was capable of fighting her own battles. This short conversation between Nomvuzo and Zithembile shows how

irritated Nomvuzo was with her husband treating her like an invalid that cannot fight its battles (Saule, 2017:35):

Nomvuzo: “*Ungabe uphinde umbethe usis Dideka, undilingene.*”

Zithembile: “*Ngumfazi kabana lo uza kukhutshwa isidima nguDideka?*”

Nomvuzo: “*Kungcono akhuphe mna isidima kunokuba akhuphe wena.*”

Nomvuzo: “Never hit Dideka again, she is my match.”

Zithembile: “Whose wife must be disrespected by Dideka?”

Nomvuzo: “I would rather have her disrespect me than have her lower your dignity.”

Dideka did not stop there at making Nomvuzo’s marriage miserable. She proceeded to call her using derogatory terms like *maconini*. *Maconini* is a term used among the amaXhosa when the wife does not adhere to the rules and regulations put in place by the in-laws. “When she became stubborn and failed to follow the pattern of rules set for her in this home, she was sent home after the mention of the term *maconini* by either the husband or her sisters-in-law” (Bongela, 2001:216). When the term is used all the brides of that particular family have to go home, it applies to everyone. Bongela (2001:216) continues to say that the term should not be used loosely as it carries serious implications. To highlight the seriousness of the repercussions of the term, everyone who hears Dideka saying *maconini* is stunned (Saule, 2017:36). By the end of the day all the brides of the Zotsho men had gone back home to their maiden families. Word had spread that Dideka said *maconini*, insulting all the brides.

Nomvuzo had not been disrespectful nor had she done anything out of the ordinary for Dideka to apply the term to her. Dideka said it out of spite as stated (Saule, 2017:34): “*uDideka ekuhambeni kwexesha, itshantliziyo apha elaziwayo lona lathi lakukruquka kukuthukwa ngokutsho kwakhe, wathi maconini kuNomvuzo*” (hard headed Dideka, after being irritated by Nomvuzo’s ‘disrespectful words’ decided to say *maconini* to Nomvuzo).

As a result Nomvuzo left her husband for a short period (Saule, 2017:34). Zithembile was able to salvage the situation but Dideka was still determined to destroy Nomvuzo’s marriage. She went to the extreme of lying about her brother to make Nomvuzo miserable and the last straw was using witchcraft on Nomvuzo (Saule, 2017:36).

Dideka and the rest of Zithembile's siblings were adamant that Nomvuzo was lazy. However, Nomvuzo was able to call them into order (Saule, 2017:36):

Jongani apha ntombi zamaZotsho, anifane nalahlwa ngamadoda enu nje, kukunqena ukusebenza. Ilapha engqondweni ke loo nto hayi ezandleni. Soze ndiphulukane nobhuti wenu ngenxa yenu. UZet ndimphiwe ngamaTshawe namaZotsho. Iphelile ngoku into yokuba uZotsho asebenzele oonduxu abafana nani. Zizandla ezi ninazo hambani niyokuzifunela imisebenzi, mininzi enifaneleyo phandl' apha.

Look here Zotsho girls, that is why your men left you, you are lazy to work. It is all in your heads, not in your hands. I will never lose my marriage with your brother because of you. Zet was given to me by the Tshawe and Zotsho ancestors. Zotsho will not work for lazy people like you. These are hands and you have them, go and look for work, there are many that suit you outside.

Throughout the hardships that her sisters-in-law threw at her, Nomvuzo was able to rise and strike back. Dideka had thought by giving Nomvuzo a picture with a woman and boy in it, whom she claimed was Zithembile's child was going to end his marriage with Nomvuzo. Nomvuzo left Zithembile but it was a temporary matter (Saule, 2017:36). Instead after a long period, Nomvuzo and Zithembile got back together and renewed their vows (Saule, 2017:150).

4.3.3. Showcasing female resilience through the character, Nosisana

Not all of Zithembile's siblings were jealous and cruel towards Nomvuzo. Nosisana has no children and has never been married before. She is an independent, hard working woman (Saule, 2017:34). Nosisana plays the role of parent to all her siblings, including Zithembile, even though he is a man (Saule, 2017:34). Hoza (2012:63) argues that this is fundamental as it eradicates the patriarchal view that all women are dependent on men. Nosisana resembles what Ogundipe-Leslie (1994: 201) states as the re-examination of gender roles in Africa.

Nosisana also portrays qualities of womanism that Walker (1983:x) states as a woman who loves other women, not necessarily sexually but women culture and strength. Nosisana makes it clear that she has sisterly love and respect for Nomvuzo (Saule, 2017:38). She does not understand her siblings' resentment for Nomvuzo.

Nosisana detests patriarchal values of marriage and admires the strength that she and other women like Nomvuzo possess. Nosisana does not resent men, thus her tireless support for her brother, Zithembile (Saule, 2017:38).

Nosisana dislikes the use of the word *makoti* which is given to brides as it comes from the Afrikaans phrase '*maak n tee*', meaning make a tea, therefore associating the bride with making tea and other domesticated duties (Saule, 2017:38). Hoza (2012:64) concurs as she contends that the institution of marriage is the most anti-female and patriarchal cultural structure that oppresses women. She is also against the tradition of the in-laws giving the newly married bride a new name, which forces the bride to abandon her identity and form a new identity that includes her husband (Saule, 2017:40): "*Hayi, tyhini! Yinto ephi leyo yokuthi umntu akwenda anikwe elinye igama kodwa yona indoda ihlala neliya layo? Nokukuhlonipha, yinto nje yokucinezela abantu basetyhini*" (No, for goodness sakes! What kind of thing is this where a person is given a new name when they get married, yet the man remains with his old name? This respecting thing is just a tactic to abuse women).

Nosisana is not afraid to interrogate patriarchal traditions. She feels strongly about the situation to the point that she treated Nomvuzo as her own sister instead of her brother's wife (Saule, 2017:38). Nosisana never called Nomvuzo by her married name, instead she used her maiden name or called her sister.

Nosisana was uneducated, she worked as a cleaner to support herself and her siblings and their children (Saule, 2017:37). Unlike her siblings, she did not wait for Zithembile to do things for her. This is fundamental in combating the inequality in gender roles between men and women.

Ogundipe-Leslie (1994:210) argues the importance of the above-mentioned and states that some women exploit men financially, enjoying the comfort of having a man to depend on for everything. She further alludes that "African women need to educate themselves about the rights and responsibilities of liberal democracy in a modern nation-state for the woman as an independent individual and not as a dependant" (Ogundipe-Leslie, 1994:210). She further maintains that as people, we cannot talk about liberation, yet women are still dependant on men, they should be able to be take responsibility of their own expenses and everything else.

Saule's (2006:38) character, Nosisana, resembles Ogundipe-Leslie's (1994:211) independent woman. Ogundipe-Leslie's (1994:211) independent woman is a woman who is empowered and empowers others. She is bestowed with great strength, foresight and courage, a woman who is not afraid to stand her ground and enter into any kind of situation with a solution. A woman who can take care of herself in all forms and not rely on anyone else. Ogundipe-Leslie (1994:211) further argues that if an independent woman enters into a marital state, she has to

also contribute financially just as the man does in the household. Thus, she argues that women cannot speak of emancipation from patriarchal norms without accepting responsibilities which come with liberation. Nosisana is the epitome of this form of independent woman. She does everything for herself with the little that she earns. She maintains her family home, accepts all the responsibilities that come with being a deputy parent even though she also has her own needs. As mentioned before, Zithembile helps where he can but he does not live with his siblings therefore is unable to always know what needs to be done and so forth (Saule, 2006:36). However, Nosisana lives in their family home with their siblings and their children, therefore she is the driving force of the family.

Nosisana always has a way of assisting Zithembile see the bigger picture. She knows all the correct things to say to console his brother whenever he has an issue. Nosisana is the one who would gather the family together when something was to be discussed (Saule, 2017:38). Nosisana is intuitive as she knows that something must have happened for Nomvuzo to just up and go, leaving behind her husband and son. Nosisana tells Zithembile not to give up on Nomvuzo as she will one day return because she did not leave on her own, but something drove her out of her marriage (Saule, 2017:38). Ogundipe-Leslie's independent woman ties in with her concept of stiwanism.

4.3.4. Showcasing female resilience through the character, Thembeke

As stated previously, Ogundipe-Leslie's (1994:230) concept of stiwanism, comes from the acronym STIWA, which stands for social transformation including women in Africa. Ogundipe-Leslie stresses the importance of including women in social transformation in the African continent as she emphasizes that there are issues that have to be tackled by both men and women together in Africa, more especially the issues of class and race.

The stiwanist theory resonates with the ideas shared by Magubane (2010:974) about the women that were involved in the liberation struggle in South Africa during the Apartheid era. Magubane (2010:975) argues that these women faced a triple struggle of class, race and gender. The race and class struggle affect black men as well, hence their decision to work together equally in combating these issues (Magubane, 2010:975).

The statement mentioned below stems from Ruth Mompoti's words in one of the ANC's publications (1981:5):

For the oppressed women of South Africa to achieve their emancipation, their equality, they have to fight for the freedom and dignity of their people. The fight for national liberation is the prerequisite for women's emancipation.

The women of South Africa during the Apartheid era epitomised resilience as they mobilized and formed an alliance with men to combat Apartheid laws against black South Africans (Magubane, 2010:978). As stated in one of the women's liberation organisations, a FEDSAW pamphlet (1983:16):

In South Africa women are the most vulnerable and deprived of all groups within the apartheid state, they have been forced to embark on a road that takes them beyond their own specific oppression. The struggle of South African women for recognition as equal citizens with equal opportunities is primarily the struggle against Apartheid, for national liberation. Nor is it a question of putting one first, then taking up the others. There can be no change in the fundamental position of women, in their social and political status, without the defeat of Apartheid. But Apartheid will not be defeated if half the people – the women – are constrained from playing their full role in the liberation movement.

Even though Saule (2017) writes in the democratic era, where the main struggle for women is inclusion and equal rights in public domains, South Africa still faces issues of race and class as is evident in *Libambe Lingatshoni* with black people still landless, while their forefathers' lands are owned by white people. Women like Thembeke still work with men to combat such issues (Saule, 2017:159).

Thembeke survives a great deal of challenging ordeals. Her tragedy began when she married Zondani Mlonyeni, a dangerous monster of a man (Saule, 2017:76). Thembeke suffered immensely because of this man. Firstly, he married her knowing that her grandfather had given her a special key on her graduation day, a key which pertained to greatness and is thought to unlock riches (Saule, 2017:98). Zondani sent his men to abduct Thembeke in the hope of seizing the key to find the 'riches' himself.

The men abducted Thembeke but she challenged them with all the power she had. The following short extract from *Libambe Lingatshoni* (2017:100) demonstrates Thembeke's fighting spirit even though she is outnumbered:

Mfana: *“Ungenzi ngxolo Mem Mlonyeni kungenjalo ndakukuqhawula isinqe ngalo mpu, nantsiya imoto masambe.”*

Mfana: *“Tshonisa intoko, uyifake phakathi kwamadolo.”*

Thembeke: *“Nindisaphi?!”*

Uthe makaphakamise intloko, yathiwa gximfi ukunyanzeliswa phantsi. Isandla sikamnene sithe sakungafumani not emqaleni, sehla ngezantsi phakathi kwamabele, saphuthaphutha. Hayi ke, akwenziwa njalo kule yasemaZotshweni intombi.

Yahlahlamba yazivuthulula ivunguza, intoni, oomkhwabi, ngombo ngembukrumba yenqindi ezimbanjeni, lanyela lonke icala langasekunene.

Mfana: *“Khangelani ebhrukhweni” ...izandla ezigadalala zirhabaxa zamxhwitha, azabuya nanto. Ngalo lonke elo xesha uyazidlikidla, kodwa ukutsho kwenqindi nengqiniba emqolo nasecabangeni kumtsho abesisigogo.*

Uve ngesandla sisithiwa khatha ngobundladiya obukhulu apha ngasemva ebhrukhweni, sangena sagqitha sagudla umsintila, saya kujikeliswa ngaphantsi, nkomfu endaweni. Waxhuma ngokungathi uma ngeenyawo, yangena impamakazi phakathi kwamehlo, sebizwa ngawo onke amagama okunyelisa Umntu obhinqileyo ongeziphethanga kakuhle.

Imbambe ngelo xesha enye le yamfuthanisela ngesandla nedolo yamjija intamo le okungathi kubotshwa inkomo endlongondlongo, hayi ke aphela ngoku Amandla akhe.

...Loo bhrukhwana yakhe ihliswa ngoku ngekho mbekweni, gqi iimpundu, kwahlekelwa esigezweni, khatha umnwe ngaphantsi, hayi ke wagxwala ngathi yibhokhwe exhelwayo, latsho inqindi emqolo lilandelwa sisithuko, mpembe zemka iingqondo.

Mfana: *“Don’t make a noise Mrs Mlonyeni otherwise I will break your waist with this gun, there is the car, let us go.*

Mfana: *“Shove your head in between your knees.”*

Thembeke: “Where are you taking me?!”

She decided to lift her head in resistance but one of the men shoved it back, pushing it down carelessly. His hand searched her neck for the key and when he could not find it, his hand made its way between her breasts. Thembeke was enraged by his actions.

She furiously shook her body, trying to fight the hand off her breasts, she then felt a strong fist hit her right-side ribcage and her right side immediately became numb.

Mfana: “Search her pants” ... Big, rough hands searched her and found nothing. Throughout, she continued fighting back by shaking off the hands, but a fist and elbow hit her unaware and numbed her entire body.

She felt a hand forcing its way from behind, the hand went in and thrust her buttocks, it then made its way to her vagina. Thembeke immediately jumped up as though attempting to stand. One of the men smacked her in the face and the men started swearing at her, using slandering names used to demean women.

One of the men held her tightly and snapped her neck as though he was tying a rope around a stubborn cow, she felt powerless.

They took her pants off violently, exposing her buttocks and laughed at her in an insulting manner, a finger was inserted in her vagina causing her to jump up like a goat that is being slaughtered and immediately a fist hit her again but this time she became unconscious.

Throughout the ordeal, Thembeke remained brave, hiding her fears. She fought back despite being overpowered by the two men sitting next to her in the back seat. When she regained consciousness, she discovered that she had been raped and immediately thought of a way to free herself (Saule, 2017:101). She told herself that she would rather die attempting to escape instead of giving up. Thembeke bravely and unexpectedly jumped to the driver’s seat and diverted the steering wheel. The men were surprised at her actions and pulled her down, the car went downhill and the men in the backseat fell forward (Saule, 2017:101). Thembeke survived the accident but the men died on the spot. Her enormous courage saved her from a traumatic experience which could have taken her life. Her strength and immense faith got her

through the entire ordeal. Zithembile could not forget Thembeke's bravery (Saule, 2017:120), "*Ndiyancoma lo mfazi womelele*" (I must admire, this woman is resilient) and even the policeman was amazed by Thembeke's bold and courageous character.

That was just the first of many traumatic experiences Thembeke faced at the hands of her former husband. While she was in hospital, he sent another one of his men to search for Thembeke's key and kill her (Saule, 2017:123). A man was strangling Thembeke when Zithembile and a policeman walked into Thembeke's hospital room (Saule, 2017:123). Thembeke survived again, assisted by Zithembile. A third incident occurred when Zondani sent men to burn down Thembeke's house while she was visiting their son in prison (Saule, 2017:146).

Zondani thought that Thembeke would be inside the house and therefore instructed his men to burn the house with her in it. However, she came back to a blazing house, but she survived again (Saule, 2017:146). Thembeke was stubborn when the police told her that they would get her a place to stay in town for protection but in the end, she gave in and accepted.

Throughout these disturbing incidents, Thembeke was assisted and strengthened by Zithembile. After the car incident, Thembeke managed to get a lift to King Williamstown, where she met Zithembile and he bought her food then she asked for a lift to the police station and he took her (Saule, 2017:134). However, Zithembile did not stop at that, he became inquisitive and felt an urge to assist Thembeke. Therefore, upon discovering Thembeke's key on her request that he should keep it for her, Zithembile was determined to discover its use with Thembeke. This led them to uncovering the truth about the land of their forefathers and other Xhosa clans.

4.3.5. Conclusion

The women in *Libambe Lingatshoni* face many different challenges. Nomvuzo although detained in her path, firstly by Sanuse the male chauvinist in University, she did not give up. Instead she restructured, found a job, and furthered her studies through a different channel. She faced immense judgment when she married Zithembile. Her in-laws disliked her but she told them that she married their brother, not them, and therefore she remained strong in her marriage. However, external forces beyond her control took over. As a result, Nomvuzo found herself in trouble but she took her punishment and was not afraid of going back to her husband and child.

Although Nosisana is uneducated, she is able to carry her siblings on her back. She portrays enormous strength as the deputy parent to her siblings and their children. Even her brother consults with her when he faces challenges. Her intelligence stems from within. And Thembeke, the heroine faces multiple near death experiences at the hands of a greedy man.

Thembeke survives all these ordeals and in all of them she fights for her survival, she tells herself that whatever may be she will die fighting. Thembeke's fearless spirit is admired by Zithembile and his police friend. She gives hope not only to many abused women but also to men. She helps rediscover the land of their forefathers and brings down her former gangster former husband.

The acts of all three of these women give hope to many who suffer at the hands of ignorant and arrogant men. Men who are not accustomed to rejection abuse women to boost their egos. These are men look down on women because of their gender. Although education plays an immense role in the upliftment and reaffirmation of women, it is not the only mechanism that can be used as is visible with Nosisana to show her robust character. This brings us to the last novel that will be analysed to depict the resilience found in Saule's novels.

4.4. Analysis of female resilience in *Vuleka Mhlaba*

4.4.1. Introduction

According to Hoza (2012:63) in most instances, as touched upon in the previous chapter feminist authors portray their female protagonists as intelligent women. This is a deliberate ploy to counter the normal negative male-dominated view of women as inane beings, who are only good at domesticated chores. Saule (2006:74) also uses this tool, portraying Noziqhamo as an intelligent politics professor at a prominent university. She is also an advocate, who has made an immense contribution in law as one of the well-known females in law and Sindiswa is a magistrate.

Pillay (2010:64) argues that in most cases with the social upheavals that occur, women arise to address the issues that like healthcare crises which threaten social life. "At the cessation of open armed conflict" notes Pillay, "women turn to re-establishing critical services, aiding return and reconstruction processes, ensuring access to justice and supporting political and economic development" (2010:64). The women mentioned in *Vuleka Mhlaba* (2006) are the epitome of what is mentioned here. Noziqhamo and Sindiswa come to Bantu's aid during the hardest times of his life.

Noziqhamo is not just a professor, she is also well-known for her enormous contribution to human rights issues. Sindiswa is a law abiding citizen, who fights strongly to correct injustices. According to Pillay (2010:65) women in most cases are determined to bring about transformation even if it is through radical methods. For instance, Noziqhamo is determined to assist Bantu clear his name at all costs. While everyone else gives up on Bantu, Noziqhamo works adamantly at assisting him, and even when he loses hope, she motivates him.

In this section, it will be demonstrated how Noziqhamo and Sindiswa resiliently survive in a male-dominated society, with men belittling women because of their gender. Noziqhamo is demeaned daily by the men in her profession, Sindiswa is raped yet her family punish her as though it was her fault. These two women rely on education to reclaim their identity and to make names for themselves. Even though educated, they still have to work harder than men to be respected. However, they both do not give in to societal pressure and standards and decide not to get married.

This section also illustrates how men having two women in their lives has been normalized and viewed as a cultural value. An emotionally crippled Bantu sees nothing wrong in having two women in his life. He enjoys the feeling of emotionally exploiting these two women as he receives the different aspects he needs in his life to fill the hole in his heart. The one moment he spends with Noziqhamo and the other with Sindiswa.

This causes issues of resentment and jealousy between the two women. Both women are resilient, therefore, determined to win Bantu over. They both see maturity, love and respect in Bantu despite him cheating on them with each other. They are both not prepared to lose him to the other. However, Noziqhamo realizes that she cannot direct Bantu's heart and decides not to pressurize him. In the end, Sindiswa realises that she deserves a man who can make time for her, a man who only has eyes and time for her, and so she leaves Bantu.

4.4.2. Showcasing female resilience through the character Noziqhamo

Noziqhamo is fighting a constant battle as men are always belittling her because of her gender. This is evident in the novel, where men like Jolela continuously make comments such as (Saule, 2006:8): "*akho mntu kulo profesa leyo*" (she does not deserve to be a person). There are also men in the legal domain like Ngalo who think that she is driven by emotions because of being a woman (2006:29):

Tyhini profesa, kuthi kanti uyindoda. Kufuneka ubuyekele emadodeni ke ngoku ubudoda, ube ngumfazi kulo mfo kaZathu. Ukuba ukhe wamyeka, uya

kucholwa ngaba krebekazi balapha eKapa, bamdlakaze ibe buhlungu intliziyo yakho.

Oh professor, it seems as though you are a man. You should stop acting like a man and allow us to be men, you should be a woman to Zathu. If you let him slip through your fingers, he will fall into another woman's hand here in Cape Town and your heart will be shattered.

He insults Noziqhamo, meanwhile Noziqhamo did his job for him and got hold of the evidence that was needed for Bantu's acquittal. Something both Ngalo and Jolela could not do. Noziqhamo is resilient and determined that Bantu is innocent of murdering his wife but the two lawyers that are supposed to be on his side are adamant that he is guilty and there is no way of proving his innocence (Saule, 2006:9). Even, after Bantu is released from prison, Noziqhamo is adamant that she will assist him clear his name.

Jolela insults Noziqhamo for the second time by calling her an idiot in front of the two police detectives investigating Bantu's case. The detectives tease Jolela about how he did not save Bantu from being imprisoned but Noziqhamo did. Jolela retaliates by saying: "*utsho esiya sibhanxa somfazi?*" (are you referring to that stupid woman?) (Saule, 2006:26). Jolela does not pass an opportunity of mentioning 'that woman', showing how little he regards Noziqhamo because of the drive she has yet she is a woman.

The two detectives are also intimidated by Noziqhamo because of her intelligence yet she is a woman. They show no respect for her as they refer to her as (Saule, 2006:28), '*isibhanxa*' or '*laa profesa/mfazi*' (an idiot/that professor or that woman). They never address her by her name or surname, yet they award Bantu, a man they believe is a murderer, respect by always addressing him using his surname.

According to Miller (2016:12) the reason for all these insults mentioned above is to make Noziqhamo feel powerless because of her gender. Men hurl insults at feisty women because they feel intimidated by them and therefore they try to deflate powerful women to better themselves (Miller, 2016:12). Thus, the continuous ridicule of Noziqhamo by these men.

Nevertheless, Noziqhamo continues to show womanist and stiwaniist values of "committing to the survival and wholeness of the entire people, male and female" (Walker, 1983:ix). This is when she stands by Bantu as his pillar of strength. This is evident by the encouraging words she endlessly and tirelessly offers Bantu to uplift his spirits (Saule, 2006:26).

With all the insults hurled at her, Noziqhamo does not give up, she remains Bantu's only source of strength. Bantu goes through a lot yet Noziqhamo is not afraid of assisting him carry his pain. She remains strong for him, motivating him and this is part of womanist ideals, revealing great resilience.

Noziqhamo has feelings for Bantu but unlike the previously mentioned novels' female characters, she is quite reserved when it comes to romance. Perhaps this is because she feels that Bantu is still vulnerable and therefore, does not want to take advantage of him. She seems to portray a womanist character again when she guards her heart against male egotistical chauvinists. As much as she has feelings for Bantu, she reminds herself that (Saule, 2006:28), "*amadoda zizilwanyana ongenakuze ugqibe uthi uyazazi. Ngenye imini ndingadibana naye sele ndityhola ngelithi ndazigudla kuye ndamwisa engacingelanga nto*" (Men are animals that one can never be certain of. One day he might accuse me of seducing him at his vulnerable moment).

To demonstrate Noziqhamo's feelings for Bantu, the day he goes missing in church Noziqhamo waits for him after everyone has left. She is hopeful that he will return (Saule, 2006:49). Bantu tells her that he wants to commit suicide and urges her to allow him to do so, making himself vulnerable in front of her, something men rarely do. Men often hide their vulnerability, always portraying themselves above everything and everyone. This is perfectly demonstrated by Jolela's arrogance when he is overheard saying (Saule, 2006:56), "*ndinguJolinkomo mna madoda nindijonge kakuhle. Ndandinixelele ukuba alikho elinye igqwetha elinengqondo apha eKapa ngaphande kwam*" (I am Jolinkomo, take a good look at me. I told you that there is no better lawyer than me in Cape Town).

It is said in the novel Bantu and Noziqhamo have known each other for a long period, even prior to him marrying Dora (Saule, 2006:79). Many people thought that Noziqhamo would also get married. This shows how people in a patriarchal society think that marriage is prestigious and therefore all women should get married. However, Noziqhamo ceaselessly told herself that there are no really single men out there, men always have someone even the married ones have someone on the side. She would tell people that (Saule, 2006:79), "*maninzi amadoda anxibe iibhrukhwe phandl' apha mnta'kamama, kodwa amadoda angamadoda anqabile*" (There are many men who wear pants out there but real men are scarce to find).

Noziqhamo was never jealous of Dora and Bantu's marriage as she was also in a relationship at the time. However, her relationship did not last long (Saule, 2006:80): "*uthe khona akuba*

yiprofesa, hayi ke mntakamama, amela kude amanene. Belusithi lisaqala ukungathi luyafudumala uthando, ithi yakukroba ngaphaya inkewu, ifike kubomvu zizambatho zemfundo, kwee, iqhawule” (When she became a professor, men ran away from her. She would enter into a relationship and the minute men discovered she is a professor, they ran away from her). This emphasizes Hoza’s (2012:67) words that men are intimidated by educated women. By educating themselves, women feel empowered and become easily independent.

Noziqhamo respects her education, therefore knows exactly the type of man she is interested in. She respects everyone but is careful of falling victim to people therefore, is careful of the people she engages with. Thus, she is called ‘The Iron Lady’ for her strong willingness and intelligence (Saule, 2006:83). As Hoza (2012:64) alludes, Noziqhamo like the female protagonist Hoza analyses, values education to the extent that she believes it is the only way to emancipate herself from the patriarchal traditions of her culture and professional field. However, education on its own is not enough for female emancipation, therefore Noziqhamo chooses not to get married and adhere to societal norms, even though she and Bantu end up together.

Fearless Noziqhamo is one of the few people who are not afraid of retaliating from Jolela’s conversations as visible in the following conversation between the two of them (2006:82):

Jolela: *“Heyi, sahlutha esi sipaji sakho profesa.”*

Nozi: *“Asinakuhlutha njengesakho kaloku, imali kaZathu wayitya wayiva ngomnwe.”*

Jolela: *“Hayi noko professor, ndikubona umisa ndithi mandibulise ndakugqibela kudala, nawe ke unqabile.”*

Nozi: *“Hayi kaloku mntakwethu bekungekho nto ibiza kusidibanisa ngoku. Andithi netyala laphela”*

Jolela: *“Kaloku amatyala ayaphela, abantu bona bancokole ezinye.”*

Nozi: *“Bancokole ezinye?”*

Jolela: *“Sendithetha kwinto yokuba ndiyabawela khe ndifumane ithuba lokuthetha nawe, kodwa ingezizo ezasemthethweni.”*

Nozi: *“Andikholwa ukuba kukho into endinokuze ndiyithethe nawe Mnumzana Jolela”*

Jolela: “Your purse is full professor.”

Nozi: “It could never be as full as yours, you ate Zathu’s money.”

Jolela: “Oh no professor, I saw you stop and thought I should come and greet, you are scarce.”

Nozi: “There is nothing that would involve the two of us. Bantu’s case is over.”

Jolela: “Cases end but people continue conversing about other things.”

Nozi: “Converse about other things?”

Jolela: “I mean, I would like to have a moment with you and not discuss law.”

Nozi: “I do not think there is anything I would ever discuss with you Mr Jolela.”

Noziqhamo shows defiance with Jolela in this conversation, she is in charge and she closes it, showcasing boldness. Jolela is angered by Noziqhamo’s responses. He then insults her again by calling her an idiot, trying to retaliate to boost his ego. He is not only angry at the fact that Noziqhamo is not interested in him and that she is intelligent but he is also angry at her for being persistent in assisting Bantu uncover the truth about the person that killed his wife (Saule, 2006:87). Jolela makes it clear that he is jealous that Noziqhamo has feelings for Bantu and not the slightest for him as he says (Saule, 2006:87): “...nesiya simuncu seprofesa siya kutsho sibe nengqondo siyazi into yokuba nathi singamadoda” (Even that idiot of a professor will get it into her brain that we are also men).

Men have a perception that beautiful women should be in a relationship. For instance, one of the detectives wonders why a beautiful woman like Noziqhamo is not in a relationship but instead she is wasting her time assisting a ‘murderer’ (Saule, 2006:92). Noziqhamo shows her resilience once again when she retaliates at the preposterous questions that the detective poses to her (2006:92):

Detective: “Yintoni ke kanye le uyifuna emva kwalo mfo profesa?”

Noziqhamo: “Wena Bonakele, yintoni kanye le uyifuna emva kwalo mfo wakwaZathu?”

Detective: “Ndilipolisa akuyazi loo nto? Umcuphi nalapha emapoliseni.”

Noziqhamo: “Ndinguprofesa akuyazi loo nto? Eyepolitiki nalapha eziprofeseni.”

Detective: “What is it that you want after this man professor?”

Noziqhamo: “What about you? What is it that you want after Zathu?”

Detective: “I am a police officer don’t you know that? A detective at that.”

Noziqhamo: “I am a professor, don’t you know that? A political professor at that.”

The detective tries to act arrogant, accounting himself and his profession in a high position but Noziqhamo does not give him the chance. She retaliates and owns the conversation, she even ends the conversation.

Noziqhamo is constantly faced with battles created by the men around her, even her brother does not understand her friendship with Bantu. Like many other patriarchal men, he thinks that the only time a man and a woman are close, is because one of them seeks romantic relations. Noziqhamo puts Ntozini, her brother in his place (2006:118):

Ntozini: “*Ngumtshato ke?*”

Nozi: “*Hayi ayingomtshato.*”

Ntozini: “*Ke ungayekani nalo mfo nje ahambe ezakhe?*”

Nozi: “*Ucinga ukuba umtshato yeyona nto ifunwa yintombazana endodeni?*”

Ntozini: “*Ewe.*”

Nozi: “*Umuncu mntanasekhaya ndikuncamile.*”

Ntozini: “*Utsho kuba uligqwetha mna ndingelilio.*”

Nozi: “*Zezo bumuncu nezo. Ngubani othe ungabililo.*”

Ntozini: “Is it marriage?”

Nozi: “No, it is not marriage.”

Ntozini: “Then why don’t you let him be?”

Nozi: “Do you think marriage is the only thing a woman wants from a man?”

Ntozini: “Yes.”

Nozi: “You are an idiot my brother, I give up.”

Ntozini: “You are an idiot my brother, I give up.”

Nozi: “That is preposterous, who said you should not be one?”

In the above conversation between Noziqhamo and her brother, Ntozini shows his patriarchal beliefs. However, Noziqhamo is brave enough to call him out. Ntozini’s ego is bruised when he hears Noziqhamo’s bold retaliation and he tries to hide it by saying that Noziqhamo thinks she is better because she has a law degree. But Noziqhamo confidently tells him that it is a result of his immaturity that he speaks in this manner (Saule, 2006:118).

As a result, Noziqhamo continued supporting Bantu. Noziqhamo is always reasoning with Bantu, making sure that he thinks straight about all the issues crowding his mind. She is constantly seeking ways of drawing him closer to solving the mystery of Dora’s real killer. Her determination portrays resilience. Noziqhamo continues to encourage Bantu even when she has her own issues, as seen when she tells him, “*zininzi izinto zimana ukwenzeka ziphinda zidlule, nale iza kudlula*” (There are many things that happened, this too shall pass) (Saule, 2006:144).

Noziqhamo thinks little of the men around her because of their actions and ideologies. She contends that men with Bantu’s character are rare to find. She asks herself at times where would she find a man of Bantu’s nature. Noziqhamo admires Bantu’s maturity. There are many other qualities that Bantu possesses that Noziqhamo loves (2006:150):

Wayemkhulu ngengqondo uBantu, enengqondo ngokudalwa, kodwa abo anabo babengeze bazive bebancinci. Wayekwazi ukuthi emntwini obhinqileyo, ‘uxolo’ xa onileyo kunjalo nje ingekokwakufuna ukulungelwa ngelo xesha, wayenyanisekile. Wayenothando olunzulu, engasokuze akucingele kakubi de abe wenze into ebangela ukuba acinge ngolo hlobo.

Bantu was mature, intelligent yet humble. He was able to apologize to a woman when he had wronged her, not because he wanted her to feel sorry for himself or to gain anything from her, sincerely. He loved deeply and never judged and he always gave people the benefit of the doubt.

Bantu on the other hand feels intimidated by Noziqhamo just like the other men in the novel. He once wanted to tell her that he had feelings for her but was afraid of her assertiveness.

4.4.3. Showcasing female resilience through the character, Sindiswa

Like most men in traditional African society, Bantu finds himself in a situation where two women win his heart. Besides Noziqhamo, there is also another woman in Bantu's life called Sindiswa, a magistrate judge. Sindiswa is beautiful and independent, and has had many men running after her, declaring their love for her but she has never responded to them (Saule, 2006:100).

Sindiswa is the first woman in her village to hold a law degree. She has never before approached a man first as her father taught her from an early age that "*akho ntombi izithethelelayo emfaneni*" (a woman does not approach a man first) (Saule, 2006:100). This is the premise by which many African cultures abide, where young girls are advised and prepared for marriage (Kwatsha, 2009:156).

When Sindiswa fell pregnant in high school, her father hurled insults at her mother for not grooming her the same way she had done with Sindiswa's three elder sisters who only fell pregnant after they got married (Saule, 2006:100). Sindiswa was taken to live with her aunt in another village, hiding the 'shame' and 'embarrassment' she had brought upon her family. However, Sindiswa's pregnancy did not come from consensual sexual pleasure, since she was raped.

Like many patriarchs, Sindiswa's father acted harshly and placed the blame on Sindiswa and her mother. He deliberately dismissed the fact that Sindiswa had been sexually abused. An injustice had occurred but she was punished. She was isolated from her family and her son was taken away from her and raised by her aunt. Her father's actions and those of the man who sexually forced himself on her, left her feeling bitter towards men and as a result she vowed to herself to never allow another man near her again (Saule, 2006:102). Sindiswa remained strong throughout the entire ordeal. She continued with her studies and went to university and eventually became a magistrate judge.

Even though she vowed not to allow a man in her life ever again, Sindiswa now finds herself having strong feelings for Bantu. Sindiswa heard that Bantu was selling his house and was interested. She tried to setup an appointment to meet with him but could not get ahold of home, therefore decided to visit him unannounced. However, found Bantu at a near death position resuscitated him. As a result, Sindiswa frequented Bantu's hospital bed. She realizes that she

has strong feelings for Bantu, therefore boldly takes the opportunity and flirts with him (Saule, 2006:114).

Sindiswa does not hide the way she feels about Bantu (Saule, 2006:114): “... *imana iphulula kancinci umthungo wengubo kaBantu, kukho umnwana omana ukukrweca isihlahla esi... uBantu wathi uyaqabuka yabe intombi seyimvale umlomo ngomlomo*” (She kept on rubbing on the thread of Bantu’s hospital blanket, one of her fingers kept on touching Bantu’s wrist... when Bantu realised what she was doing, Sindiswa was already kissing him).

Sindiswa’s resilience is portrayed here as she bravely does something she has never done before by making the first move on a man. She confidently takes the lead and shows Bantu that she wants more than friendship from him. Sindiswa also surprises herself by her actions. The confidence that she has in a court of law resonates even in her private life.

4.4.4. Feud between Noziqhamo and Sindiswa

Sindiswa subjects herself to something different in her life as she opens her heart to Bantu. Once Bantu is discharged from hospital, Noziqhamo realizes that Sindiswa has stolen Bantu’s heart. Previously, she thought Bantu and Sindiswa’s relationship to be temporary, but it seems serious now (Saule, 2006:150). Concern of losing Bantu to Sindiswa become so strong that Noziqhamo even asks herself (Saule, 2006:150), “*ndingaphinda ndimfumane phi omnye umntu onengqondo njengoThangana kula madoda azizibhanxa kangaka?*” (Where would I ever find another intelligent man again amongst these unintelligent men?).

The culture of having two or more partners seems to be normal in the township where Bantu lives as people did not find it peculiar when Noziqhamo visited Bantu and immediately afterwards Sindiswa arrived (Saule, 2006:152). According to Hunt (2005:396) having multiple partners in African societies more especially the townships is a popular culture. This is because amongst many other factors, having multiple partners is an ego booster for many men.

Traditionally, having many cattle and multiple wives was regarded by African men as a sign of wealth and therefore, a status booster (Hunt, 2005:392). With the decline of marriage in current years, men seek multiple romantic relationships and this culture has become the traditional norm (Hunt, 2005:397). Thus in the novel Bantu and others saw nothing wrong with the practice. It is complex however, as this practice creates deceit, jealousy and other bad feelings among women as it did between Noziqhamo and Sindiswa.

However, although Noziqhamo and Sindiswa are both strong and powerful, they are very different. It could be those differences that caused a feud between them. Sindiswa's daring personality makes her come across as though she is forward. For instance, when the paramedics rush Bantu to hospital, Sindiswa acts as though she and Bantu are friends or family by following the ambulance and at the hospital goes to the front desk and answers questions about Bantu, providing his personal information (Saule, 2006:93): *“intokazi engaziyekeleliyo uSindiswa zange athi hayi, naanko esiya kuma kulaa mfo ubhalisayo ephendula imibuzo efuna inkcukaca zikaBantu”* (Sindiswa confidently went to stand at reception and gave Bantu's personal details).

Sindiswa and Noziqhamo are both humble women as noted by Saule (2006:99): *“ngokuuziphatha nangentobeko ebefana kakhulu noNoziqhamo, emazi umntu omkhulu”* (the way Sindiswa conducted herself and her humility, she was the same as Noziqhamo, they both knew how to regard an elderly). However, Sindiswa is an opportunist, and when she realises her feelings for Bantu, she asserts herself in his life by constantly visiting him, ensuring that she leaves him gifts, she even made friends with the nurses (Saule, 2006:113), *“isibhedlele wayesijike wasenza esakhe, sekukho neenesi eziqhelanise nazo ngokukhawuleza, ayaleze uBantu kuzo xa ehamba”* (she had turned the hospital into her home, she made friends with the nurses and would ask them to look after Bantu for her). Noziqhamo, on the other hand, is reserved, she does not visit Bantu as often as Sindiswa and she is an introvert, therefore she kept her distance from the nurses.

Sindiswa made the first move on Bantu, drawing herself closer to him, she even initiated their first kiss (Saule, 2006:114). Sindiswa has a bold personality, and is easy to talk to because she is an extrovert. However, although Noziqhamo is quiet, her presence is always felt, as she has an intimidating aura (Saule, 2006:115): *“uyasinda ke lo mntwana wasemaGiqweni”* (this daughter of Giqwa is intimidating). Sindiswa is also very persuasive, controls Bantu, tells him what to do instead of making suggestions so that he can make his own decisions (Saule, 2006:117). Noziqhamo on the other hand, would suggest things to Bantu and allow him the space to decide for himself.

As much as Noziqhamo loves Bantu, she also understands that emotionally he is shattered and needs to heal first. She understands that he needs a friend more than anything else at the moment. Sindiswa's motive is to be romantically involved with Bantu, and that is her only agenda.

These women's differences lead to their heightened jealousy. Noziqhamo is irritated by Sindiswa's persuasive character. She is worried that Sindiswa is taking advantage of Bantu's vulnerable state. She is agitated because Sindiswa seems like she does not care about Bantu's wellbeing. Yet, Sindiswa is agitated by Noziqhamo's obsession with assisting Bantu solve Dora's murder case (Saule, 2006:125). Sindiswa insinuates that Noziqhamo is using this case as a way of luring Bantu into her life.

Bantu's indecisiveness does not assist the situation, he manages to turn two strong women against each other. The two women have become insecure and jealous of each other. However, Noziqhamo makes a bold move and straightforwardly asks Bantu if he is romantically involved with Sindiswa (Saule, 2006:152). Bantu cannot respond to the question and Noziqhamo realizes that Bantu is confused, as he is uncertain of which woman he really wants in his life (Saule, 2006:152): *"intliziyo yam Noziqhamo ndayivulela wena, mandiyithethe inyani yokuba, uSindiswa, ewe, wasindisa ubomi bam, kodwa ngoku sefuna ukubuthathela kuye ndahlukane nabo, andiyifuni ke loo nto"* (I opened my heart to you, let me tell the truth, Sindiswa saved my life, but it seems like she wants to control my life, I do not want that).

However, Sindiswa does not stop pushing. She is determined to steal Bantu's heart. Sindiswa courageously declares her love for Bantu and asks him to choose between Noziqhamo and herself (Saule, 2006:172). Bantu retaliates by telling her that Noziqhamo has not given him an ultimatum yet, meaning he would still like to continue with both of them.

There are periods where Bantu wants to tell Noziqhamo that he loves her but he realizes that he is afraid of her. She possesses a strong and intimidating aura (Saule, 2017:179), which is an element he does not get in Sindiswa's presence. In fact, he noticed that it is easy to do and say things to Sindiswa. For instance, it is easy to kiss Sindiswa because she initiates it but he seldom kisses Noziqhamo but when they did her lips would linger on his even after (Saule, 2006:179).

Noziqhamo encourages Bantu not to give up and to work at proving his innocence but Sindiswa advises him against investigating Dora's death, and allow it to pass. These two ambitious and strongly opinionated women do things differently to try revive Bantu's spirits (Saule, 2006:180).

Eventually, Sindiswa becomes agitated with Bantu's two-timing behaviour and brings out her bold character by ending things with him. She reaches this decision after realizing that she is unable to share Bantu and that she deserves someone who is able to provide her with his undivided attention.

4.4.5. Sub-Section Conclusion

Noziqhamo and Sindiswa are both hard working women, among the best in their respectable professional fields. They endure derogatory comments from men very often as their professional fields are dominated by men. However, they are able to handle criticism and are bold enough to retaliate when necessary.

Noziqhamo and Sindiswa face many challenges with men feeling intimidated by their education and status in the social hierarchy. Noziqhamo's relationships do not last, she is called 'The Iron Lady' and has to prove herself continuously. Sindiswa remains isolated from her family since childhood because of an injustice that was done against her.

People continuously question Noziqhamo's spinster status. The detectives and the lawyers think that she is bored of being single and that is why she opts to assist Bantu. Her unmarried status becomes everyone else's daily topic of conversation. Noziqhamo falls into the trap of becoming everyone's pet project. Hoza explains that "[b]y society's dictates, unwed single women who have reached their age of maturity, become the pet-projects of their families, colleagues and society despite their educational and social status" (2010:149).

It is as though a woman's life is incomplete when she remains unmarried and engages in partnerships, and every man that a woman is seen with is rumoured to be romantically involved with her. Hence, Noziqhamo, like Mtshazo (2000:54) explains, resists the conventional traditional institution of marriage. Even though Noziqhamo ends up in a relationship with Bantu, they do not get married but instead they enter into a partnership. Mtshazo (2000:55) argues that there are many things that fulfill a woman's life other than marriage.

Noziqhamo is not against having a man in her life, she just wants someone mature, intelligent and loving and Bantu possesses all these qualities. In essence, women seek men who are supportive of their careers, men who offer their shoulders when they are sad, men who view them as equal partners in all aspects and understand that respect is a two way stream (Mtshazo, 2000:54).

Men should also refrain from having multiple partners and wives by claiming that it is culturally accepted and a tradition. If such is fine then it should not be viewed taboo when women engage in multiple relationships too. Unlike men, women are victimized and labelled with derogatory terms when they are merely seen with different men.

Women sharing partners causes tension between women, dividing them. Whereas, to combat patriarchal beliefs, Ogundipe-Leslie (1994:210) argues that females should unite in order to assist each other. However, this is not possible when they are divided, resulting in further support of patriarchal goals.

4.5. Conclusion

In *Inkululeko Isentabeni* (2010) it is evident that traditional and cultural norms are patriarchal therefore, need to be revisited and evolve with the times. Marriage cannot be viewed as the most incredible victory for women, resulting in discrimination and prejudice that is put on those who are single and those who have children out of wedlock. Women should not be made to feel ashamed or embarrassed for raising their children as single mothers. Women should not feel obliged to remain in loveless and abusive marriages for the purpose of adhering to endurance and perseverance principles. Boniswa knows how to stand her ground and despite all the trials she goes through, she overcomes these obstacles as she faces them head on, empowering other women who face marital hardships to liberate themselves and take charge of their lives as no one else will do it for them.

The women in *Libambe Lingatshoni* (2017) portray resilience, indicating that women should not be underestimated as they are forces to be reckoned with. Thembeke is the epitome of a courageous woman as she escapes death many times through her daring character. Thembeke would rather die fighting to save her life than give up without trying. Nomvuzo's determination for education shows impeccable strength. After facing many obstacles, Nomvuzo still finds strength to continue with her life. She shows that everyone has their faults, however it takes a mature person to admit when they have done wrong, accept full responsibility for their actions and live with the consequences. Nosisana, interrogates tradition and its downfall when it comes to the bride's role in marriage. She shows that women can also be deputy parents and heads of their homes.

Noziqhamo and Sindiswa remind us that women in society are still largely marginalised even though they are educated and while some hold high posts, others are in professions that are dominated by men. These women are subjected to ridicule and are ostracised because they are women. Women work twice as hard as men and yet are still unrecognised and oppressed. Men are intimidated by educated, intelligent and independent women, as is visible with the case of Noziqhamo where men run away from her because of her professorship title. Sindiswa was raped while young and harshly punished for this even though it was not her fault, however she

lived with the consequences and ensured that she never became a victim again. Thus, she walks away when she notices that Bantu is preoccupied by another woman.

CHAPTER 5: GENERAL CONCLUSION

5.1. Introduction

This research study set out to examine the portrayal of female resilience in literature through characterization in three of Saule's novels, *Vuleka Mhlaba* (2006), *Inkululeko Isentabeni* (2010) and *Libambe Lingatshoni* (2017). It aimed to expose the courage, strength and determination women possess. It explained how African women in the past have stood amidst colonisation and how South African women have stood against the apartheid regime, fighting for the emancipation of black people. This indicates how strong women are and have been through the ages. It also indicates that modern women are capable of continuing where the first and second generation women left off the quest for female emancipation and equality.

In this concluding chapter, this study will focus on the findings and recommendations. In doing so, it will prove the ideology that literature mirrors reality, literature finds solutions by reflecting real life in order to transform the negative myths perceived by society about women. This chapter will also focus on recommending ways in which the status of women could be changed by offering positive narratives instead of negative narratives.

5.2. Findings and recommendations

This research study found that literature mirrors reality therefore, as Dubey (2013:84) argues, societal norms and beliefs are replicated in literature and literary works of all genres can be used as life lessons. "Human society," notes Dubey, "as observed is characterised by the patterns of relationship between individuals who share cultures, traditions, beliefs and values" (2013:84). These cultures and traditions are manipulated for personal gain by the dominating group, resulting in the oppression, abuse and discrimination of the minority group. Thus, minorities such as women and children are largely marginalised.

Africa is rich in culture and traditions. These cultures and traditions are manipulated for personal gain by male-dominated societies, resulting in patriarchal infiltrations within the norms and beliefs of societies. Through colonisation, African cultural and traditional practices were greatly influenced by the colonisers to enhance their quest of conquering Africa and its people as Kolawole (1998:95) alludes that patriarchy in African societies was non-existent before the colonisers arrived in Africa. This study recommends that culture and tradition need to transform and adapt to modern developments in order for them to remain relevant and essential so that societies continue to abide by them. Women need to be recognised through

these traditions for their efforts and the role they play within society and stop being deemed invisible and in the shadow of men.

The study also found that writings by men about women prior the rise of female writers, has been biased, based on patriarchal views with only a few writings that portray women in a positive light in a society dominated by male opinion whose only concerns are political and general. The birth of first and second generation African female writers brought about a change in the depiction of women in literature. The third-generation female writers engage more with the injustices women face on a daily basis and they base their writings on their actual experiences. They emphasise the need for women to be portrayed as daring and independent beings (Nadaswaran, 2011:32).

The study found that there is a need for an increase in both men and women writings about resilience instead of narratives that portray women as victims. Women are survivors, therefore, need to be depicted as heroes who have conquered a great deal and that are still fighting for their total liberation. Indeed, while women are changing their narratives from being portrayed as victims, and they have changed the narrative to display themselves as empowered survivors, however, a great deal still needs to be done. Women need to break the silence and use their plight as motivation to fight patriarchal bondage.

African feminisms are vital in this quest for African women emancipation as its values are the same, they focus on eradicating the plight of African women, by incorporating their history and experiences as the basis of forming their manifesto to empower and attempt to transform African traditions and cultures. African feminisms realise that change will only come about for women when cultural and traditional practices and norms are revisited and developed.

African womanism and Walker's womanism both advocate for and promote the elevation and recognition of women without marginalising and discriminating men. Womanism also opens room for development, allowing other African women scholars to add on to its values to increase and expand female empowerment. African womanism urges women to use all the resources at their disposal to narrate their side of the story. For the longest time, men have been giving a false narrative of women, arguing that women are incapable of telling their side of the story.

Stiwanism is another branch of African feminisms which emerged after African womanism; it envisages similar principles to those of womanism. Stiwanism recommends that women and men work together to combat the issues that they face on a daily basis. Ogundipe-Leslie (1994)

emphasises the need for women to accept their responsibilities and that they should ensure that they are capable of looking after themselves. This is to ensure that the false male dependency narrative displayed is eradicated. This is visible in all three of Saule's chosen novels. Nomvuzo in *Libambe Lingatshoni* (2017) is educated, with her own money, and as a result when she leaves her husband, she buys herself a house and financially takes care of all her needs. Thembeke is also independent with her own house and car. Although Nosisana is not well educated, she takes good care of herself and is able to look after her siblings and nieces and nephews as well. Boniswa is independent. Although her husband, Afrika, buys groceries and maintains their family home, Boniswa is capable of doing all these things herself, given the opportunity she would gladly do all these herself.

The women mentioned above display great resilience. This study found that even with their daring characters, women also have faults which can be interpreted as weaknesses. This is fundamental as men need to understand that just like everyone women also have weaknesses but that does not mean that they are weak. As is the case with men, however, they tend not to admit their shortcomings as they view them as a feminine trait.

In *Inkululeko Isentabeni* (2010) Nomvuzo realises that she overreacted to the picture Dideka had given her of the woman and child she claimed to be Zithembile's. Nomvuzo further realises that she acted irrationally by leaving her marriage and her son. As a result, Nomvuzo felt guilty for her actions and therefore, found ways to visit her son. However, she was embarrassed by how Zithembile would react to her sudden remorse (Saule, 2017:84). Nevertheless, Nomvuzo tried but her efforts failed at the time. In the end things worked out for her and she finally sees her son. After everything she went through, Nomvuzo reunited with her family. Her character shows that women are able to show remorse for their actions. Even with pride, they strive to rebuild themselves, focusing on correcting their past transgressions, rare quality in a man. This is displayed in *Vuleka Mhlaba* (2006) with Jolela, who shows no remorse for killing Dora, instead he blames the murder on Bantu. Another example is found in *Inkululeko Isentabeni* (2010) where Afrika does not regret selling his friend Buyile out. Afrika shows no remorse for all his actions.

In *Inkululeko Isentabeni* (2010) Boniswa realises that she made a mistake by marrying Afrika and eventually goes back to Buyile. She also feels guilty for keeping her son's paternity a secret but eventually tells all the relevant parties the truth. Generally, women are not afraid of admitting to their mistakes, they are brave enough to portray their vulnerability thus, they are

able to bounce back and turn something negative into something positive. With these findings, it is important to emphasize that men should not use this as an attack on women's characteristics as it occurs with both males and females, however most men are unable to accept their weaknesses and reveal vulnerability to the world. Therefore, Saule's *Vuleka Mhlaba* (2006) becomes a great example for men, where Bantu displays his weaknesses and is not afraid of becoming vulnerable.

Stiwanism acknowledges that women also have shortcomings, with women on women hatred, women who become jealous of others and who speak ill of others. Ogundipe-Leslie (1994:72) further states that there are also women who continuously want to become the burden of men, depend on men for everything and do not want to take responsibility for their actions and well-being. She appeals to women to stop this behaviour as it further sharpens patriarchal reasoning for their negative perceptions of women. Stiwanism and womanism try to eradicate such behaviour by empowering women to enjoy independence and to show love and respect for other women.

Saule's texts also indicate that greatness can be achieved when men and women work together. In *Inkululeko Isentabeni* (2010) this union is depicted through Buyile and Boniswa. Boniswa continuously warns Buyile about Afrika. Although Boniswa was uncertain of what Afrika was planning against his friend, Buyile, Boniswa could sense that Afrika was planning something and that he disliked his friend. Eventually, Afrika reveals his evil side and turns against Buyile.

In *Libambe Lingatshoni* (2017) Zithembile and Thembeke work together to ensure that their forefathers' land is returned to their descendants. Thembeke entrusts Zithembile with the most valuable item she owns, which is the key to the safety deposit box where the papers that prove the amaXhosa bought their land back from the British. Zithembile also obliges to keep the key and its secret for Thembeke. Both parties unite and find a solution that will benefit all the amaXhosa clans that are involved in this situation.

Zithembile and Nosisana also work well together in keeping their family home and their parents' dignity. Even though Zithembile owns more than Nosisana, he still respects her as his eldest sister and trusts her. Nosisana becomes Zithembile's comforter and pillar of strength when he finds himself in a dark place. Zithembile confides in Nosisana and when there are ceremonies or rituals to be performed at their parents' house, Zithembile consults Nosisana and they discuss it together first before reaching a decision.

The same thing occurs in *Vuleka Mhlaba* (2006). Noziqhamo and Bantu work relentlessly together to solve the murder of Dora, Bantu's wife. Noziqhamo believes that Bantu did not murder Dora and she does her best to ensure that he is acquitted of the crime. When Bantu loses hope, Noziqhamo becomes his beacon of hope, encouraging him not to give up. Throughout the novel, these two parties work together and in the end their efforts count as they manage to find the real murderer and the case is solved.

This research also found that education is the best tool that women can equip themselves with to liberate them as it gains them respect, allows them to be independent and at times places them in the same professional fields as men, performing the same tasks at the same level. This is visible in *Inkululeko Isentabeni* (2010) where educated Boniswa is financially comfortable enough to divorce Afrika, fully aware that she can take care of her needs and her son's needs without help from Afrika. Afrika also knows that Boniswa is unlike other uneducated women in that she can speak her mind and is not afraid to be daring.

In *Libambe Lingatshoni* (2017) Nomvuzo educates herself. She is able to leave Zithembile and start a new life for herself with her own money, knowing that she has a good job with benefits. Nomvuzo spoils herself every now and then; she is able to go as she pleases to hotels paying for herself. Her independence stems from being educating and holding a proper professional position.

In *Vuleka Mhlaba* (2006) both Sindiswa and Noziqhamo are powerful women in their respective professions because of education. They are bold enough to voice their opinions and are not afraid to call out negligence and stupidity. These women live their own lives without depending on anyone. Sindiswa used education as a tool of empowering herself from the past transgressions she faced. Indeed, through education she became the daring woman she is. Noziqhamo understands that women are marginalised in many African societies therefore, used education as a tool to voice her opinions without being silenced because of her gender. Women are perceived to be clueless until they are educated. Thus, women have to equip themselves through education. As much as they are still undermined and oppressed even when educated, women are able to eradicate these challenges using education as their weapon, through writing, empowering others and addressing these challenges in learning institutions.

The researcher further found that in most instances educated men regard women as their equals, more especially educated women. This is visible in *Vuleka Mhlaba* (2006) where educated

Bantu thinks highly of women. Zithembile also values the women in his life, he even encourages Nomvuzo to continue with her studies. He is not embarrassed to raise his son on his own, even when societal conformities frown upon men who raise their children as single fathers. Zithembile did not have issues providing for his immediate family when Nomvuzo was around and had no issues with providing for his siblings and their children.

Buyile also had no issues with Boniswa and treated her as his equal as they both are educators at the same school. However, when compared to Afrika, who did not study further after matric but works for the government, Afrika has no respect for women and thinks he is above everyone because of the high position he holds without qualifications.

It is evident that traditional and cultural values and practices embody patriarchal beliefs and thus this study finds it pivotal for these structures to be revisited and developed to suit new experiences and ideologies. Women cannot be told to prepare themselves for marriage or that they need to conduct themselves in a certain manner in order to be someone's wife or be made to feel unworthy if they remain single. Marriage should not be perceived as the only great achievement that women should aspire to. Women should not be made to feel less when they fall pregnant while single, they should not be ashamed or embarrassed. African feminisms values uphold that this mentality of perceiving marriage as the ultimate achievement and mocking women who fall pregnant while single divides women. Some married women perceive themselves as better than unmarried women.

Women like Boniswa would rather enter into loveless and abusive marriages for the sake of not being labelled as loose, having children out of wedlock and so forth. This results in heartache and pain within the marriage, as is the case with Boniswa. She thought she was saving herself and her family from embarrassment but instead caused massive damage to her image as there were women like her friend, Welekazi who did not understand why she subjected herself to such torture. Other women did not understand why she remained married to Afrika for a lengthy period, claiming that her actions would influence their husbands.

The above suggests that women are beginning to see marriage for what it is, a patriarchal institution that undermines, abuses and oppresses women. Thus, the other teachers at Boniswa's school disapproved of Afrika's behaviour and were upset with the manner in which Boniswa handled the situation at first. Women empowerment is at play here, as the women stand together trying to correct traditional injustices against their gender.

Saule's women portray resilience, displaying womanist values which demonstrate that women are the driving forces in society. Thembeke, Noziqhamo and Sindiswa are the epitome of courageous women. Although all the female characters found in the literary texts discussed in this study are resilient, the researcher wishes to draw more attention on the three women mentioned above. Thembeke suffers tremendously under the hands of her ex-husband, Zondani, yet she does not give up and continues fighting for what she believes in. She does not allow Zondani to get the best of her by repeatedly bouncing back after each traumatic experience she undergoes. Thembeke had told herself that even though the men who abducted her had more power since there were four of them and only one of her, she told herself that she would fight them off even if it meant that she died in the process as long as she dies fighting. Thembeke had to turn her back on her son, even though it is the hardest thing for her to do to ensure that he learns from his mistakes and does away with his evil ways. She endures immense hardships but her endurance is not one where she awaits some form of saving grace, she becomes her own rescuer and fighter.

Noziqhamo's boldness is different in the sense that although she is an introvert, her presence is felt. Her strong personality resonates in her silence. Noziqhamo is more of a doer than a speaker, but men are intimidated by her brilliance so they resort to mocking her. They know she is a force to be reckoned with, hence their judgments and demeaning comments about her. Noziqhamo knows her worth and therefore chooses with whom to associate. While the men in the novel insinuate that she is at Bantu's side for marriage, Noziqhamo instead opts for a partnership finally. Noziqhamo sees men for who they are as she realises that there are a few brilliant men, who are brave enough to display a true reflection of themselves. She does what she wants audaciously without allowing demeaning comments from men to drag her down.

Sindiswa is also different in the sense that her past experiences made her the person she is. She uses her past to ensure that no man ever ill-treats her. She prides herself in knowing her worth and walks away from situations and people that disrespect, abuse and mistreat her. Sindiswa even decides to stop communication with Bantu when she realises that he is indecisive. She is not prepared to share a man with another woman, and when she notices that Bantu will never be able to grant her the undivided attention she wants from a man, her solution is to walk away, thus espousing womanist values. As Walker (1983) avers, women should be loved whole heartedly and sincerely.

5.3. Conclusion

Saule's female characters portray their audaciousness in every situation they face. Their determination to always be ahead and to perform tasks eloquently yet with dignity indicates intelligence. The women are the survivors of patriarchal subjugation that is perpetrated by men. However, Saule indicates that men are not the only perpetrators of patriarchy; women can also be the perpetrators. This is the case in *Libambe Lingatshoni* (2017) with Nomvuzo, where she is emotionally abused demeaned by Dideka, her husband's sister. Stiwanism also warns against women who think they are above other women, constantly inflicting pain on other women yet forgetting that all women still experience marginalisation, oppression and abuse. Therefore, women should rather unite to fight against such hegemonic powers.

There are many factors that influence patriarchy; two of the biggest factors being culture and tradition. Other factors include jealousy and intimidation, where men who see women occupying higher positions feel intimidated and as a result they retaliate by mocking and antagonising them. As mentioned before, women also play a role in escalating patriarchy by at times feeling comfortable and allowing men to ill-treat them. Others award men the respect they want and depend upon these men. At times women are silent about their grievances and this allows men to walk all over them.

This research study pleads for the unity and empowerment of all women to stand against patriarchy and its ill-treatment of women. Women's resilience, boldness and independency need to be actioned. Men need to join women in their quest for gender equality, as South African black people did during the apartheid era, they need to unite again and stand in one accord to fight gender inequalities. Women and men also need to work together to evolve and transform cultures and traditions so that women are represented better in societies and in turn awareness about their daring characters should be portrayed in African literature written by both men and women.

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