



A Decolonial Feminist Investigation of Gender Representation in IsiZulu Literature
in the Further Education and Training Phase

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MASTER OF EDUCATION
in Social Justice Education

by

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DECLARATION

I, Nomonde Cele, declare that:

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this thesis to my son, Seko Cele, for generously lending me his time. Your little hands that held me through. Your unprovoked “*You’re the best mommy in the whole world*” kept me constant. But most of all, your unwavering love that made us sing *This Girl is on Fire* as we danced through the pages.

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ABSTRACT

Literature is considered an essential educational resource in South Africa to edify teaching and learning. Learners can also learn about society's ideals through literary works. The paucity of knowledge on the kinds of texts that are recommended and the underlying ideologies that these teach learners is noteworthy. It is important because little is known about the kinds of recommended texts and the underlying beliefs that these teach learners. From this perspective, it is important to determine if gender representation in literature promotes gender equality. Therefore, this study aims to understand how gender is represented in isiZulu literature prescribed to educators and learners in the Further Education and Training (FET) phase in South Africa. This qualitative study is located in the decolonial paradigm and engages the tenets of feminist critical discourse analysis as its primary analytical framework. A purposive sample of two setwork isiZulu literature was selected to investigate the phenomenon of gender representation.

The results revealed that the selected texts perpetuate negative stereotypes of both men and women. The investigation found that patriarchy, heterosexuality, socialization, and cultural manifestations of society that often picture women negatively all play significant roles in how characters are portrayed in isiZulu literature. The literary works depict scenarios in which men dominate and control women under the pretext of heterosexuality, normalised gender relations, and cultural customs. The results show that representations in the literary works are gender-biased and gender-insensitive. A critical approach to the selection of literature is required as it is concerning that these representations are being taught to learners in schools. Key stakeholders in the education department have a lot of work ahead of them to ensure that South African isiZulu-prescribed literature incorporates gender inclusion.

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ACRONYMS

CAPS	Curriculum Assessment Policy Statement
CDA	Critical Discourse Analysis
DBE	Department of Basic Education
DOE	Department of Education
FCDA	Feminist Critical Discourse Analysis
FET	Further Education and Training
CGE	Commission on Gender Equality
LTSM	Learning and Teaching Support Materials
RSA	Republic of South Africa
SASA	South African Schools Act

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

As a point of departure, it is imperative to highlight literature as essential to teaching and learning in any classroom. The Department of Basic Education (DBE) considers learning and teaching support materials (LTSM) as a vital and integral part of every education system for ensuring the delivery of quality education per section 21 of the South African Schools Act (SASA) 84 of 1996 (Republic of South Africa, 1996a). As a core of LTSM, literature is prescribed for each grade and subject according to the National Curriculum and Assessment Policy Statements (CAPS). Thus, learners in South African schools follow prescribed texts each year.

Akhter (2020), Gumede (2018a) and Hartono et al. (2021) argue that literature is a mirror of society and an intellectual imitator of life, shaped by literary ideas and views of dominant groups through which the reader views the world. Similarly, Liao and Wang (2020) believe that literature can be perceived as conduct books using traditional moral norms in texts that pressure the reader to conform to the expected gender images, traits, and behaviours. Consequently, literature plays a critical role in constructing gender roles and representing the worldview images of gender (Hickman, 1989; Nkosi, 2013). From this perspective, how gender is represented in literature influences how learners perceive gender and shapes their attitudes and ideologies about gender. This points to the importance of research on gender representation in prescribed school literature to determine whether it promotes gender equality in the post-apartheid curriculum or impedes it through the perpetuation of specific value systems and worldviews, such as patriarchy, hierarchy, and masculinity.

The purpose of this chapter is to provide the background and significance of the study. An outline of the problem under investigation will be presented, followed by a discussion of the focus, rationale, aims and objectives. In addition, the chapter will present the study's key research questions. Additionally, the study's research design and methodology approach will be discussed, followed by a summary of the study's conceptual underpinnings. The chapter will conclude by providing a synopsis of the chapters of this dissertation.

1.2 Background of the study

The post-apartheid curriculum was set to dismantle the inequalities embedded in the apartheid education system by transforming the racial and gender-biased curriculum (Department of Education [DoE], 1999). The Commission of Gender Equality [CGE] (2007) states that the apartheid government promoted an education system that was discriminatory, sexist, and served the needs of the apartheid government. Moreover, the gendered nature of the apartheid curriculum was used to socialise learners into gender-specific roles, thereby reinforcing gender stereotypes. The CGE states that in efforts to serve apartheid capitalism and maintain the segregated workforce for economic and political reasons, the apartheid education system directed women to gender-specific professions, norms, and stereotypes. Hence, literary texts portrayed women as homemakers and child-bearers, whilst men were depicted as leading and with heroic roles (Commission of Gender Equality, 2013).

The need for transformation was to promote equality in South Africa and commit to redressing past inequalities by eliminating all forms of discrimination and promoting gender equality. Literature is a core element of the curriculum and can provide insights into how gender is represented in, for example, the post-apartheid curriculum. It is this backdrop that has triggered interest in how gender is represented in isiZulu literature and if these representations promote gender equality as envisioned by the White Paper on Education and Training (Department of Education, 1995), the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (Republic of South Africa, 1996) and the *Education 2030 Agenda* of UNESCO (2017).

In addition to the above policy mandates, the Department of Basic Education has published the Action Plan 2014: Towards the Realisation of Schooling 2025 to guide the sector in improving the key areas, including learner performance, by reintroducing LTSM as central resources for teaching and learning. The LTSM policy's guiding principles include social cohesiveness, which means that the LTSM must contribute to community development and social capital, representing the culture and values of schools and communities. LTSM aims to provide schools with various curricular resources that expose learners to diverse ideas and experiences required to foster respect for diversity and democracy. The policy further states that these resources must

be age-appropriate, current and relevant. Amid other guiding principles, the National Curriculum Statement is based on social transformation and the redress of inequalities of the past. This includes the idea that values of human rights, inclusivity, and social justice must be infused within teaching and learning. It further states that the National Curriculum Statement must be sensitive to various diversities, including race, language, disability, and gender (Department of Basic Education, 2011). These policy mandates suggest that the Department of Basic Education has ambitious goals regarding equity and equality; however, an investigation into supporting evidence regarding the basic education sector's achievements is required.

Learning materials, as elucidated by Widodo et al. (2021), serve as instructional guides facilitating learner engagement with value-laden texts. These materials contribute to acquiring appropriate behaviours, thoughts, values, actions, and ways of being in the world. Hickman (1989) emphasises that language, the medium through which literature is expressed, is inherently non-neutral, reflecting the ideas, ideals, thoughts, and traditions shaping social structures. Furthermore, Nkosi (2013) highlights literature's pivotal role in shaping gender roles, norms, and the representation of gender images. This influence significantly develops learners' perceptions and their associated societal roles. Adding to this perspective, Liao and Wang (2020) and Jick and Nkweteyim (2016) argue that literary texts expose readers to socially constructed gender norms, often rooted in male perspectives within male-dominated societies. In this context, men define gender roles and expectations, employing them as tools to enforce hierarchical systems that discipline women. The interconnected analyses from these scholars build a comprehensive argument on the influential role of literature in shaping societal perceptions and reinforcing dominant gender norms.

Jick and Nkweteyim (2016) disparage patriarchy, arguing that its ability to provide a context in which sexism and gender inequalities are normalised can be harmful. Jick and Nkweteyim (2016) argue that patriarchal and masculine worldviews oppose the 21st-century woman's shift from subservient roles to positions of prominence traditionally reserved for men. To redress equality and achieve democratic values, the Department of Basic Education must prescribe literature reflecting societies' conditions in which 21st-century learners exist. The portrayal of gender in school literature, often reinforcing patriarchy and sexism, needs to change. It should embrace

positive and meaningful representations that foster equality and value the voices of marginalised learners (Gumede, 2018a; Jick & Nkweteyim, 2016).

1.3 Problem statement

In his study, Gumede (2018b) observed that authors of isiZulu literature actively endorse traditional morality through their deliberate choice of language, emphasising and exemplifying traditional value systems. Gumede (2018b) further argues that literature serves as a conduit through which biased attitudes and stereotypes of females are not only perpetuated but also constructed by authors operating within patriarchal cultures. This insight underscores the dual role of literature in reinforcing established norms while presenting as a platform for creating biased narratives (Gumede, 2018b).

Jick and Nkweteyim (2016) assert that literature lacking gender sensitivity has the potential to impede the achievement of gender equality and transformation goals in South African schooling. Additionally, the presence of gender-marked, sexist, and stereotypical language in literature contributes to the perpetuation of gender disparities. It is crucial that prescribed literature, which learners are required to read, actively promotes gender equality, upholds democratic values, and ensures the representation of all learners. According to Jick and Nkweteyim (2016), some studies reveal gender biases and stereotypical portrayals in literary texts, encompassing content, language, and illustrations. Such representations may adversely impact female learners, fostering feelings of inferiority, subjugation, or passivity. Consequently, gender representation within literature can influence learners' gender identities. Recognising this, the Department of Basic Education must ensure that prescribed literature is gender-sensitive and actively fosters and promotes gender equality in alignment with its mandate.

1.4 Rational of the study

The motivation for undertaking this study emanates from personal experiences in my teaching career, where I engaged with learners grappling with diverse gender identifications, roles, and norms. These interactions showed that these learners sought acceptance and accommodation from their peers and society. Notably, as Black learners, predominantly of Zulu descent, there was a palpable desire among them to

find reflections of their own experiences in the stories and poems assigned for study. Witnessing these learners attempting to situate themselves within the literature and their broader society as Zulu girls and boys underscored the significance of investigating gender representation in isiZulu literature. The primary objective of this study is to ascertain whether the Department of Education is actively fostering gender equality in the curriculum through its literature selections.

For me as a Black female educator, I found gender imbalances embedded in isiZulu literature troubling due to the risk of reinforcing and perpetuating gender ideologies. Learners must encounter reflections of themselves in the prescribed literary texts, aligning with the democratic principles of South Africa, which include a commitment to gender equality. Hartono et al. (2021) emphasise the profound influence of language, extensively employed in literature, on our perceptions of the social environment, interpersonal relationships, and the construction of our identities.

Extensive reading on gender representation in literature has underscored the pivotal role of literature in shaping identity, fostering democratic values, and cultivating respect for diversity. The global prominence of gender issues reflects the evolving dynamics of gender roles and norms in the contemporary world. Notably, Jick and Nkweteyim (2016) observe a growing concern among African writers for gender issues, indicating a shift towards gender-sensitive works that challenge patriarchal dominance and sexism in their writings. Motivated by these insights, this research investigates gender representation in prescribed literature, specifically in isiZulu, to assess whether the Department of Education is actively fostering gender equality by promoting gender-sensitive literature. The aim is to identify representations of relevant gender roles and the encouragement of gender diversity within these texts.

As a teacher, I initiated this study recognising the significant impact of gender representation on learners' socialisation and identity formation. Therefore, this analysis of isiZulu-prescribed literature aims to shed light on how gender is portrayed, directly influencing learners' positioning and participation in society. Through this examination, the study seeks to contribute valuable insights into the role of literature in shaping gender perceptions and fostering inclusivity in educational contexts.

1.5 Aims and objectives

This research sought to probe the contributions made by literature as a fundamental aspect of the curriculum in either perpetuating or impeding gender equality. Using decolonial feminist theory, the study focused on how gender is represented in IsiZulu-prescribed literature. The study, thus, investigated how gender representation in selected isiZulu-prescribed literature in the Further Education and Training (FET) Phase (i.e. Grades 10-12) promotes or inhibits gender equality.

The study objectives were to:

- Investigate how gender is represented in isiZulu-prescribed literature in the FET Phase.
- To investigate if gender representation in isiZulu-prescribed literature in the FET Phase promotes or impedes gender equality.

1.6 Research questions

To analyse and understand the representation of gender in isiZulu-prescribed literature in the FET Phase, this study set out to answer the following key research questions:

- How is gender represented in isiZulu-prescribed literature in the FET Phase?
- Does the representation of gender in the isiZulu-prescribed literature in the FET Phase promote or impede gender equality?

1.7 Conceptual framework

In examining gender representation in isiZulu literature within the FET Phase of South Africa's schooling system, this study employs Africana Womanism and decolonial feminist theory as guiding frameworks. The adoption of these frameworks is motivated by the insights of Al-Harbi (2017) and Hudson-Weems (2019), who assert the critical importance of Black theoretical frameworks in assessing African literature and dismantling colonial representations of African experiences and cultures. Hudson-Weems (2019) advocates explicitly for an Afrocentric perspective on Africana issues, positioning Africa at the core of the lives and concepts of Africans. This approach examines and elucidates the myriad of interpretations inherent in African experiences. Africana Womanism, as advocated by Hudson-Weems (1997), calls for a Pan-African

viewpoint on the lives of Africana women, encompassing their historical, present, and future interactions within their communities and with their male counterparts. By incorporating these theoretical frameworks, the study seeks to provide a nuanced and culturally grounded analysis of gender representation in isiZulu literature, moving beyond colonial perspectives and emphasising the importance of African-centred frameworks in evaluating literature.

Lugones (2008) argues that understanding modernity/coloniality necessitates acknowledging its construction through race, class, gender, and sexuality, all intricately interconnected. Emphasising the importance of considering these constructs, she advocates for re-evaluating modernity/coloniality, urging a nuanced understanding of the categories that have emerged within this framework. In line with this perspective, Mendez (2015) asserts that when employing gender for critical analyses of oppression and power, it is imperative to incorporate the historically racialised power relations that imbue gender with meaning. These conceptual frameworks provide the researcher with a foundation to assess and analyse African literature through an African-centred lens while concurrently examining gender as a colonial construct, as discussed by Lugones (2008, 2010) and Mendez (2015). This approach facilitates a comprehensive examination considering the complex interplay of race, class, gender, and sexuality within modernity/coloniality.

1.8 Research design and methodology

Positioned within the decolonial paradigm and drawing on Africana Womanism and decolonial feminist theory, this study seeks to challenge racial and gender hierarchies by adopting anti-colonial premises. Desai and Sanya (2016) assert that decolonial theoretical paradigms, rooted in anti-colonial thought, promote epistemic disobedience, deliberately disengaging from modern epistemologies (Mignolo, 2009). The research employs a qualitative design involving the systematic collection, organisation, description, and interpretation of textual data, focusing on Grade 11 prescribed isiZulu literature from 2023, selected through purposive sampling.

Feminist critical discourse analysis (FCDA) is the chosen methodology to generate and analyse data. Derived from critical discourse analysis (CDA), FCDA examines

social inequalities and injustices through an intentionally gendered lens (Lazar, 2005; Lehonten, 2007; Sunderland & Litosseliti, 2002). The study analyses data using Fairclough's (2015) three-dimensional model – comprising description, interpretation, and explanation. These stages are valuable tools for investigating power relations and ideologies embedded in texts, contributing to a comprehensive exploration of gender representation in isiZulu literature within a decolonial framework.

1.9 Limitations

My gender introduces a potential constraint, as my identity as a female researcher may inadvertently introduce biases without the inclusion of a male perspective. In light of this, ethical considerations for this study underscore the importance of my ability to recognise their analytical agenda and necessitate critical self-reflexivity, as Lazaar (2007) advocates. This highlights the necessity for me to engage in reflexivity, being attuned to how their role in the investigation may influence the research and subject their interpretations to self-critique, as Cohen et al. (2018) emphasised. Such conscientious self-awareness became essential in mitigating potential biases and ensuring the integrity of the research process.

1.10 Structure of the thesis

The structure of the thesis is as follows:

Chapter 1: This chapter provides an introduction and background, presenting the aims and objectives of the study, including the key research questions.

Chapter 2: This chapter reviews empirical studies on gender representation. The review begins with examining international literature, followed by a focus on African and South African literature. The review aims to highlight fundamental differences and commonalities across these contexts.

Chapter 3: The conceptual framework adopted in this study is discussed in this chapter. The chapter begins with discussing gender, presenting the concept of gender, and discussing decolonial feminism as the analytical tool used in this study.

Chapter 4: The research design and methodological considerations of the study are presented in this chapter. As part of this, this chapter discusses the location of the study within a qualitative decolonial paradigm, purposive sampling, which was used to select the participants, and feminist critical discourse, which was used to analyse, interpret and understand the data and findings.

Chapter 5: Chapter five presents the key findings generated from the sample of two isiZulu FET Phase literary texts. The chapter critically discusses these findings using the decolonial feminist conceptual framework.

Chapter 6: This chapter provides concluding remarks, the limitations of the study, and recommendations for further research.

1.11 Conclusion

This chapter outlined the study's background, rationale, problem statement, and aims and objectives. It also briefly outlined the theoretical framework, research design, and methodology.

The next chapter reviews relevant literature and outlines the theoretical framework of the study.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

According to Nwaukoni and Anukwu (2022), there are three different periods in African literature: colonial, post-colonial, and contemporary, and each reflects the context of its time. African literature began with pre-colonial and colonial writing, in which African authors expressed their experiences with colonisation. Colonial literature, like Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* (1958) and Aluko's *One Man, One Wife* (1959), was anti-colonial protest literature that concentrated on Africa's humiliation and hardships during colonialism. This was followed by the post-colonial period, which began when most African countries gained independence. African writers considered it illogical to continue writing about Africa's suffering during colonialism and shifted focus to current issues and reflections on Africa's independence. Some writings of the postcolonial period were set in the distant past to span both the pre-colonial, colonial, and postcolonial periods to trace the link between Africa's history and the present to explain the continent's social and political difficulties. Finally, this research examines literature from the contemporary period, which focuses on characters' dilemmas, the lived experiences of African people, and neo-colonialism. During this time, the focus has switched from politics towards everyday socioeconomic arrangements, diseases, religion, culture, and gender theories such as homosexuality and minority concerns (Nwaukoni & Anukwu, 2022).

This chapter will review empirical research which focuses on gender representation in contemporary literature internationally and locally to establish the body of knowledge that already exists about the topic. Themes from international studies reviewed will be discussed first and compared with African and South African literature. The chapter will end with a brief discussion of the literature's implications to conclude the chapter.

2.2 Review of relevant empirical studies

2.2.1 Gender in international literature

The review of international studies on gender representation in literary works reveals common themes of gender stereotyping and the underrepresentation of women. Durrani and Halai (2018) conducted a large-scale study in Pakistan, employing a

feminist political philosophy to analyse the relationship between education and gender justice. The study found that school curriculum literary texts perpetuated gender injustice by emphasising femininity and reinforcing a gendered national representation where males lead, while females support, normalising existing power disparities. The texts were identified as deploying an 'exclusivist discourse' and a gendered representation of citizenship, contributing to recognitive injustice against females.

Similarly, a critical discourse analysis on gender representation in Saudi Arabian language textbooks by Aljuaythin (2018) revealed gender imbalances favouring males, depicting females as marginalised and stereotypical figures. Arfiandhani (2019) investigated gender representation in English language textbooks in Indonesia, identifying a prominent portrayal of gender bias against females despite an equitable representation of both genders. Males were consistently portrayed as authoritative figures in leading roles, while females assumed passive submissive roles.

Wijayanti et al. (2022) examined visual images in textbooks for teaching English and found manifestations of gender inequalities in the form of male firstness and gender stereotyping. The visual texts consistently positioned masculine imagery first, relegating female roles to secondary positions. El Shaban (2017) conducted a critical multicultural analysis of children's literature, revealing gender stereotypes and cultural depictions in fantasy fairy tales. The analysis uncovered the prevalence of stereotypical imagery and language, emphasising female beauty as a reward associated with goodness and ugliness with evil.

A content analysis case study by Kojoyan and Aghakhanyan (2020) on Armenian primary school English textbooks revealed a systematic presentation of traditional gender roles and stereotypes. Often, men were portrayed as physically strong, successful in their professions, heads of households, providers, and independent actors who had to be heterosexual and sexually active. This study highlighted gender bias as a mechanism for sustaining patriarchy and control. Akhter (2020) investigated gender inequality in fictional global works, revealing a prevalence of male dominance and female suppression, with women playing secondary roles to their male counterparts.

The above suggests that the literature from various international regions is replete with the pervasive existence of gender inequalities perpetuated through fictional and school-prescribed literature. This aligns with the arguments to ensure that the envisioned 2030 education for sustainable development, as expressed in Goal 5, prioritises gender equality and female empowerment (UNESCO, 2016).

2.2.2 Gender in African Literature

Examining gender portrayal in African literary works underscores the adoption of anti-patriarchal values evident in characterisations within African literature. Jick and Nkweteyim (2016) explore alternative visions of gender issues in modern African literature, drawing inspiration from the dramaturgy of Bole Butake. Despite Butake's significant contributions to African literature, particularly his sensitive treatment of issues concerning African and Cameroonian women, the study unveils a misrepresentation of female roles that diverge from women's expectations.

The research findings also shed light on the nuanced sensitivity of some African male and female writers to gender issues in their works. This sensitivity reflects an alternative vision that delves into forms of feminism counter to patriarchal norms, actively challenging prevailing systems of domination. The comprehensive study reviews a diverse array of African literature, featuring works by notable authors such as Flora Nwapa's (1986) *Women are Different*, Buchi Emecheta's (1980) *The Joys of Motherhood*, Ama Ata Aidoo's (1986) *Anoma*, Elechi Amadi's (1986) *Estrangement*, and Bole Butake's (1986) *Lake God*. These selected works collectively contribute to exploring gender dynamics and feminist perspectives in African literature, capturing a rich tapestry of voices and experiences that challenge and redefine conventional norms.

These selected literary works provide contextual and relevant female characters who survived the odds in a society that devalued and denied them fair representation. In this regard, Chukwuma (1990 cited in Jick & Nkweteyim, 2016) says:

“The identification of male positive disposition to the cause of women is a healthy development for African Literature. Firstly, it underscores the

validity of women's complaints of subjugation and negative exposure. Secondly, it complements and advances literature from the continent. With such unison of voice, the real essence of African Literature is brought to the fore and appreciated” (p. 15).

Ayyildiz (2017) examined Buchi Emecheta's *Second Class Citizen* (1974), aiming to reflect on how Emecheta employs strong and resilient female characterisations to underscore the suffering of women. The study recognises the post-colonial trend among African writers to rewrite and reinterpret texts about their nations for a more accurate account than colonial literary texts provided. Focused on the protagonist's intersecting identities as a Black woman in London, the novel portrays her journey towards independence as a Black mother in a colonial society, showcasing a bold and defiant character challenging societal norms. Emecheta's work explores African women's roles, subjugation, and marginalisation in patriarchal societies while delving into the complexities of immigrant identity loss in foreign countries and the clash between tradition and post-coloniality (Ayyildiz, 2017).

Amma Darko's portrayal of females in her African literary works has been extensively scrutinized, with praise for her feminist agendas and exploration of gender inequalities in the Ghanaian tradition (Oseghale & Ohiwerei, 2019; Sam, 2021; Ugwanyi, 2017). Ugwanyi (2017) employs a feminist reading of Darko's novels to debunk complexities in Ghanaian women's lived experiences, emphasising cultural and gender-related reflections. Darko's works encourage a collective stand against patriarchal ideologies and offer philosophical reflections on the predicaments faced by women in postcolonial Ghana. Oseghale and Ohiwerei (2019) extend this exploration to Darko's novel *Beyond the Horizon*, addressing the social ills of exploitation, racial and sexual abuse, violence, and subordination faced by African immigrants in European countries. The sociological perspective highlights Darko's efforts to educate young Africans on the challenges and discrimination faced by African migrants in European nations, shedding light on their dehumanisation, exploitation, and loss of identity.

Sam's (2021) character analysis of Amma Darko's literary works, drawing on postcolonial feminism, contends that Darko's portrayal of women is retaliatory and counters traditional depictions by providing a different voice favouring sexual politics.

The representation of women in Darko's works challenges patriarchal norms, offering counter-patriarchal narratives that speak against patriarchy and modernity.

Musaka (2017) contributes to the discourse by examining how men are portrayed in African literature, utilising African-centered and masculinity theoretical frameworks. Focusing on selected Kenyan fiction, the study concludes that masculinity within the literary works is deeply rooted in traditional African patriarchy and reflects modern masculinity influenced by Christianity and Western ideologies. The portrayal of traditional, modern, and Christian masculinity establishes the subordination of females, depicting them as weak and in need of male protection, discipline, and guidance. Musaka's exploration adds a nuanced perspective to the gender representations in postcolonial literature, revealing the prevalent theme of counter-patriarchal works by African authors.

In a recent study, Rubaya (2022) investigates the literary representation of African motherhood in Southern African literature, employing the postcolonial theoretical framework of African Feminism. The study reveals a shift in the portrayal of motherhood from patriarchal normativity, presenting strong, independent women who defy stereotypes, reinforcing the increasing dominance of African female authors in characterising women. This challenges patriarchal stereotypes that position males as superior and women as weak.

A review of African literature compares the themes that emerged from a review of international literature discussed in the previous section. The studies from African literature reviewed suggest that modern African literary works, especially those by female authors, have challenged oppressive systems of patriarchy and male domination. This is in sharp contrast to the findings from a review of local literature, which revealed themes of gender stereotyping and propagation of patriarchal worldviews, which will be discussed in the section below.

2.2.3 Gender in South African literature

A review of contemporary South African literature suggests a consistent reproduction of gender inequality through stereotypical gender depictions, aligning with global

patterns identified in existing studies. Gumede (2002) employed content analysis, utilising feminist theory, to examine the portrayal of females in selected isiZulu texts. Despite instances of female characters challenging traditional norms by seeking financial freedom and sexual liberation, the analysis revealed persistent sexist language and the perpetuation of gender subjugation. Gumede's (2002) study concluded that the selected literary works, while exploring new societal roles for women, still manifested the subjugation, sexualisation, and devaluation of females' social participation.

Mzoneli-Makhwaza (2016) conducted a textual analysis using African feminism and feminist literary criticism frameworks to explore African male voices' representation of female images in isiZulu literature. The findings indicated that despite socio-political transformations, isiZulu literature retained the effects of apartheid and patriarchy. For instance, female characters were often portrayed as helpless victims unable to break free from male domination, reinforcing gender inequalities and reflecting little transformation in alignment with the current political and social order.

Gumede (2018a) conducted a feminist literary study to analyse the portrayal of female characters in selected Zulu texts, revealing power imbalances, gender inequalities, and the marginalisation of women. The study concluded that sexist language perpetuated negative representations of female characters, reinforcing the notion of women's subjugation and reflecting patriarchal influences in isiZulu literature. In a counter-patriarchal reading of *Ikhiwane Elihle* (1985), Gumede (2018b) explored modern issues in relationships between African women and men, identifying a common thread of sexist language that maintained gender classification. The language in isiZulu literary texts tended to reinforce socially constructed gender norms, depicting females as submissive nurturers and men as assertive dominators aligned with patriarchal interests.

Gumede and Mathonsi (2019) conducted a feminist discourse analysis of the liberated women in the Zulu novel *Umshado*, revealing that the female protagonist's defiance against societal norms was deemed un-African concerning traditional expectations. Despite the author being female, patriarchal stereotypes persisted in the novel, hindering the representation of females in a post-apartheid context. On the other hand,

Shabalala (2019) employed an Africana womanist approach, highlighting gender bias in the portrayal of females in IsiZulu literature post-2000. Female characters were defined concerning men and depicted as caricatures fulfilling patriarchal ideology, emphasising industriousness, submissiveness, tolerance, and humility as ideal traits in a patriarchal setting.

Phakathi (2021) adopted an African feminist approach to investigate the representation of women in isiZulu literature, finding that females were not portrayed as equal to men. For instance, stereotypical views persisted, depicting females as weak, overly sensitive, vulnerable, and fascinated with love and marriage. The findings of the study elevated the importance of language in the decolonisation process, aligning with Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o's (2013) advocacy for using African languages in academic writing to reclaim Africa as a producer of authentic knowledge.

2.3 Implications of the literature review

Jick and Nkweteyim (2016) have highlighted the significant contributions of African authors, such as Chinua Achebe, Buchi Emecheta, Flora Nwapa, Ifeoma Okoye, Tess Onwueme, and Zaynab Alkali, who have addressed bold and complex topics during both colonial and post-colonial periods. These literary works portray females in diverse societal roles, depicting them as victims, survivors, and intellectuals challenging domination and patriarchy through revolutionary feminism. However, Sam (2021) contends that earlier postcolonial African literary works by authors such as Buchi Emecheta, Flora Nwapa, and Tsitsi Dangarembga present female characters as victims of patriarchal systems, emphasising their mistreatment and enslavement. This perspective raises concerns about the obscured portrayal of African women's lived experiences, hindering a nuanced understanding of their realities.

Newell (2017) argues that African literature and popular representation contain culturally specific constructions of gender, both male and female. Female African authors and woman-centred theorists deviate from traditional writing by interrogating and reformulating inherited gender norms and stereotypes. They introduce concepts like womanism, motherism, and femalism, focusing on how society treats the female body and challenging gender stereotypes. In contrast to static symbols like Mother

Africa, their literary works feature dynamic portrayals of women that challenge, fracture and rewrite gender norms (Newell, 2017; Rubaya, 2022).

However, an examination of local literature, specifically isiZulu literature, reveals persistent gender inequalities, often characterised by negative stereotyping of females and the preservation of patriarchal ideals in literary works. Female representation in isiZulu literature has been biased, often using sexist language to reinforce patriarchal ideologies. Past research suggests that isiZulu literature generally lacks gender sensitivity and thus inadequately promotes gender equality, consistently subjugating and marginalising female characters and embracing patriarchal societal ideologies. This study is crucial for expanding the knowledge base on the topic and evaluating whether gender representation in isiZulu literature aligns with the democratic values of South African education.

2.4 Conclusion

This chapter reviewed empirical studies on gender representation. The review began with an examination of international literature, followed by a focus on African and South African literature. The review intended to highlight fundamental differences and commonalities across these contexts.

The next chapter will discuss the conceptual framework adopted for this study.

CHAPTER THREE: THE CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

3.1 Introduction

Drawing on the work of Nigerian decolonial feminist scholar Oyèrónké Oyěwùmí and Hudson-Weems' theory of Africana womanism, this chapter presents the conceptual framework that informs the investigation of gender representation in isiZulu literature in the FET Phase of the schooling system. The decision to utilise African theoretical frameworks in constructing a conceptual framework is rooted in recognising their significance for evaluating African literature and challenging colonial representations of African experiences and culture. Scholars like Al-Harbi (2017) and Hudson-Weems (2019) emphasise incorporating African theoretical perspectives to foster a more authentic understanding of African literature. This approach aims to dismantle colonial distortions and provide a nuanced interpretation of African experiences and culture within the literary context. Hudson-Weems (2019) argues for an Afrocentric viewpoint on Africana issues, which places Africa at the centre of the lives of Africans. In this regard, she calls for a Pan-African view of Africana women's lives, including their historical, present, and future interactions with their community, including their male counterparts (Hudson-Weems, 1997).

The conceptual framework begins with a conceptualisation of gender, drawing on the work of Oyěwùmí (1997), *The Invention of Women: Making an African Sense of Western Gender Discourse*. It presents her examination of the relationship between gender and colonialism and her argument that gender was a colonial imposition on Africans. In addition, it briefly presents the theory of Africana Womanism as the study's methodological approach based on the assumptions that underpin this theory. Finally, the theory of decolonial feminism is presented, which introduces two key concepts: the coloniality of power and the coloniality of gender.

3.2 Conceptualising gender

In her book, *The Invention of Women: Making an African Sense of Western Gender Discourse*, Oyěwùmí (1997) posits that the conceptualisation of gender is a product of Western society. She argues that Western culture relies on biological characteristics as markers for social order, forming the basis for defining gender categories. Western

discourse predominantly views gender as a binary biological category, serving as the groundwork for establishing social hierarchies. Oyěwùmí (1997) explains that a person's physical attributes in Western societies are crucial for determining their social status, with specific body parts linked to distinct advantages or disadvantages. Oyěwùmí's (1997) argument is this structure propagates and sustains male domination.

Oyěwùmí (1997) contends that concepts are integral components of ideological tools. Despite feminist scholars acknowledging this, they often fall into the ideological trap they critique by treating the term “women” as a given rather than recognising it as part of the broader “ideological apparatus” (p.78). The global dissemination of feminist thought is one manifestation of advancing Western norms and values. The feminist movement, in its pursuit to elevate the status of women, tends to eradicate various local and regional categories, essentially imposing Western cultural norms by universalising categories of analysis. The dominance of Western epistemologies and ideologies facilitates this imperialistic process of global gender creation.

Oyěwùmí (2016b) argues that the conceptualisation, constitution, and expression of gender are intricately linked to Western culture, rooted in the biological foundationalism inherent in Western thinking and social categories. She contends that one of the initial triumphs of the colonial state was categorising women as a distinct group. This categorisation and exclusion of women from state structures contributed to the transformation of state power into male-gender power, albeit partially. In contrast, the Yoruba state system did not allocate power based on gender.

Oyěwùmí (2016b) asserts that Western ideology tends to undervalue and misrepresent African cultures, social structures, and experiences. From her perspective, gender is a product of historical and social construction, challenging the prevailing Western narrative that imposes gendered corporeality as a universal cultural discourse. Notably, she emphasises that this dominant Western narrative should not be uncritically applied to analyse other cultures, urging a contextual examination of African studies within their unique frameworks (Oyěwùmí, 2016b).

Oyěwùmí (1997) challenges the notion that the social category “woman” was inherent in the Yoruba frame of reference, asserting that such a category did not exist during that period. She contends that assuming the “woman question a priori” is an unfounded imposition of the Western model, thus elevating the Western perspective without merit. In her argument, Oyěwùmí (1997) maintains that gender is not an inherent, universally applicable concept but has social and historical roots. Although she acknowledges the relevance of gender as an analytical tool in specific temporal and cultural contexts, she emphasises that precolonial Yoruba culture did not recognise gender in the same manner. To theorise gender, even for those eras, it must be contextualised within the broader framework of local and global cultural systems, considering its historical evolution and diverse articulations, as with other components of social systems (Oyěwùmí, 1997).

3.3 Gender and colonialism

According to anti-colonial theorists like Frantz Fanon and Albert Memmi, the world, shaped by colonialism, can be characterised as Manichaeian, resulting in the creation of two distinct groups: the coloniser (settler) and the colonised (native) (Oyěwùmí, 1997). Oyěwùmí (1997) emphasises that their distinction extends beyond skin colour to encompass mentality. Notably, the colonisers and colonised are generally assumed to be men, a shared characteristic often overlooked. The portrayal of women in the histories of both the colonised and the colonisers tends to be from a male perspective, relegating women to incidental roles when included. While studies from this perspective are not inherently devoid of value in understanding native females, it is crucial to recognise that colonialism had similar and distinct impacts on both males and females. Colonial customs and practices, as Oyěwùmí (1997) asserts, were rooted in “a world view which believes in the absolute superiority of the human over the nonhuman and the subhuman, the masculine over the feminine... and the modern or progressive over the traditional or the savage” (Oyěwùmí, 1997, p.121).

Feminist scholars have recently attempted to address the masculine bias in colonialism discourses by emphasising women. This work led to the development of a key concept, which holds that African women experienced ‘double colonisation’— one from European dominance and the other from African males imposing traditional customs.

The concept of “doubling” encapsulates the depth of African women’s colonial experience, yet there is a divergence of opinions regarding what exactly is being doubled. Oyěwùmí (1997) contends that the outcomes of colonialism manifest as specific forms of oppression imposed on native women rather than constituting two distinct forms of colonisation. This perspective arises from the acknowledgement that both types of oppression share their origins in the hierarchical race/gender relations inherent in colonisation.

Consequently, this means that positing the existence of two separate colonialisms may be inaccurate. This is because colonialists subjected African women to colonisation both as Africans and as African women. In tandem with African males, African women underwent subjugation, exploitation, and dehumanisation as Africans. Simultaneously, African women encountered unique forms of marginalisation and dehumanisation in the colonial context (Oyěwùmí, 1997).

The relationships between African men and women during this time cannot be characterised as a kind of colonisation or as apart from the colonial situation, regardless of the status of indigenous practices, especially when African males were also subjects. African women’s racial and gender oppressions should, therefore, not be viewed in conjunction, as if they were placed on top of one another. In this regard, Oyěwùmí (1997) argues that “how one form of oppression is experienced is influenced by and influences how another form is experienced” (p. 123). Therefore, while it is essential to talk about how colonialism has affected certain groups of people, gender relations in any culture are inherently bound. Consequently, it is ultimately impossible to separate how colonisation has affected women from how it has affected males. While it is essential to interrogate how colonialism has affected certain groups of people, gender relations in any culture are inherently linked. Therefore, distinguishing the impact of colonisation on women from its influence on males may be a highly challenging endeavour (Oyěwùmí, 1997).

Oyěwùmí (1997) contends that the enduring impact of European colonial dominance in Africa lies in establishing the European state system, complete with its legal and bureaucratic structures. She argues that the contemporary international nation-state structure manifests the widespread dissemination of European political and economic

norms (Oyěwùmí, 1997). During this period, one notable custom introduced to Africa was excluding women from the newly formed colonial public sphere. Gender and colonialism intertwine significantly in politics, as access to state power and governance in Britain was inherently gender-based. While African women and men were barred from higher echelons of colonial state institutions as subjugated individuals, African men found representation at lower governance levels under the British colonial government's indirect rule system. Notably, female chiefs were entirely disregarded. This exclusion effectively kept women out of all colonial governmental structures.

The precise mechanism through which females were categorised, reduced to the generic label 'women', and deemed unsuitable for leadership roles exemplifies how the colonial state systematically excluded women from the political sphere—a realm in which they had previously participated. This categorisation, grounded in their biology, marked a recent development in Yoruba society. The imposition of a patriarchal colonial state played a pivotal role in defining women as a distinct group, characterised by their anatomy and submissive role to males in all circumstances. 'Racial inferiorisation' and gender subordination emerged as concurrent processes of colonialism, shaping the experiences of women. In conclusion, Oyěwùmí (1997) rejects the notion that women, or any other colonised group, benefited under colonial rule, emphasising that such claims lack a factual basis.

3.4 Africana Womanism

Hudson-Weems (2019) states that Africana Womanism is not just a theory but a method with unique African considerations and a concept that considers ethnicity and gender. In this regard, the overarching objective of Africana Womanism is to establish comprehensive criteria for evaluating the multifaceted realities experienced by African women, encompassing both their cognitive frameworks and practical engagements in various aspects of life (Hudson-Weems, 2019; Oyěwùmí, 1997). Africana Womanism, as elucidated by Hudson-Weems, thus positions itself as a dynamic framework that goes beyond theoretical contemplation. It offers a methodological lens that considers the nuanced intersections of ethnicity and gender within the African context.

Africana Womanism was established by Hudson-Weems (1980) to provide a paradigm for women of African descent to challenge the Eurocentric status quo and assume an anticolonial stance, as represented by decolonial feminism. African feminist theorists, including Alice Walker (1993), Ama Ata Aidoo (1998), Anne McClintock (1995), Oyěwùmí (2005), and Mekgwe (2006), share common ground with Hudson-Weems. They criticise hegemonic feminism for its Western-centric focus, highlighting its failure to address the distinct needs of African women. This critique underscores the necessity for a paradigm rooted in African culture, considering *herstory*, culture, race, class, gender, and other social identities. Such a framework offers a contextualised understanding of African women's experiences and perspectives (Lindsay-Dennis, 2015). Africana Womanism seeks to correct the shortcomings of Black and African feminism by moving away from their alignment with feminism rooted in Western ideology (Hudson-Weems, 2019). Hudson-Weems (2019) contends that Africana Womanism was developed specifically for African women. Because of its roots in African culture, Africana Womanism must focus on African women's distinct experiences and needs.

Africana Womanism stands apart from White, Black, and African feminism, asserting the distinctive agenda that sets it apart. Central to this perspective is the acknowledgement that the experiences of African women entail a triple oppression, encompassing gender, race, and class. In this framework, Hudson-Weems (2019) emphasises the critical need to prioritise the interconnected dynamics of race, class, and gender, particularly in the ongoing struggle against racial dominance.

Al-Harbi (2017) articulates that Africana Womanism, distinct from Western ideologies, places a strong emphasis on family, prioritises race, class, and gender, and addresses the unique oppression faced by Black women due to racial prejudice. This perspective contends that the marginalisation of African women is deeply rooted in the intersections of race, social class, and gender (Oyěwùmí, 1997; Lugones, 2010; Hudson-Weems, 2019). The foundational principles of Africana Womanism align closely with the framework of decolonial feminist theory, which posits that understanding gender requires an examination of its intersectionality with various social identities, leading to diverse levels of oppression. Notably, Africana Womanism distinguishes itself from Western theories by challenging prevalent notions of racism

and sexism, unveiling the unique experiences of African women hidden by these constructs, and acknowledging the layered nature of their oppression (Hudson-Weems, 2019).

3.5 Decolonial feminism

3.5.1 *Decolonisation*

Decolonisation is a crucial concept in decolonial feminism and Africana Womanism, providing a critical link between the theoretical frameworks underpinning this study. Decolonisation aims to eradicate asymmetrical power dynamics, challenge dominant Western epistemologies, and dismantle the enduring structures of knowledge, existence, and relationships established during colonialism. It embodies a multidimensional struggle involving resistance, critical reflection, and transformative action across cultural, social, economic, and political domains (Hudson-Weems, 2019; Mignolo, 2007; Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2013; Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o, 1994). Furthermore, Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o (1994) posits that decolonisation represents a journey towards “rehumanizing the world” (p. 28), encompassing both political and existential dimensions. This journey entails dismantling gender and racial hierarchies and introducing alternative modes of thought, logic, and cognition to emancipate previously subjugated minds (Mignolo, 2007).

“Decoloniality seeks to unmask, unveil, and reveal coloniality as an underside of modernity that coexisted with the rhetoric of progress, equality, fraternity, and liberty. It is a particular kind of critical intellectual theory as well as a political project that seeks to disentangle previously colonised parts of the world from global coloniality” (Mignolo, 2011, p. 5).

Espinoza Miñoso (2017) asserts that decolonial feminism theory stands as a crucial instrument for dismantling the intertwined racist and sexist dimensions of the coloniality/modernity project. Positioned as an episteme intrinsic to the decolonisation process, this theory disrupts prevailing societal constructs, challenging established norms of social organisation (p. 98). Specifically addressing the *coloniality of gender*, it provides a theoretical and practical framework to reevaluate how gender is conceptualised and situated within colonial relations. Lugones (2010) underlines the

interconnectedness of the *coloniality of gender* with other facets such as power, knowledge, existence, nature, and language, emphasising their interdependence in shaping gender dynamics in colonial contexts. In essence, decolonial feminism theory serves as a transformative lens that enables researchers to critically engage with the analytical units essential for understanding the multifaceted aspects of gender within the broader colonial matrix.

3.5.2 *The coloniality of power*

Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o (1986) describes the *coloniality of power* as being embedded in modernity/coloniality and proliferates itself through thingi-fication (*coloniality of being*) and epistemic death of the colonised (*coloniality of knowledge*). Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o (1986) refers to the *coloniality of being* as the dislocation and non-representation of identity, indigenous knowledges, traditions, and culture. It propagates a loss of social identity, including heritage, traditions, culture, and language, which Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o (1986) argues inevitably results in the loss of self, self-identity, and self-concept. Santos (2014) contends that the struggle for social justice is inseparable from cognitive justice and the acknowledgement of epistemic diversity. For Santos (2014), the consistent delegitimisation of African epistemologies as *epistemicide* or *the murder of knowledge*, stating that:

“Unequal exchanges among cultures have always implied the death of the knowledge of the subordinated culture, hence the death of the social groups that possessed it. In most extreme cases, such as that of European expansion, epistemicide was one of the conditions of genocide” (Santos, 2014, p.92).

Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o (1986) contends that language is crucial to knowledge production and that the *coloniality of knowledge* is reproduced through language, stating that the imposition of language constitutes the imposition of culture. In this regard, Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o (1986) calls for the decoloniality of knowledge, which challenges Eurocentrism and allows for the re-interpretation of African knowledges, restoring African epistemologies and repositioning our identities and ways of being in the world. Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o (1986) further argues that any decolonial approach and critique to

these automatically confronts the *coloniality of power* through which the *coloniality of knowledge* and *being* is realised.

Quijano (2000) theorises the *coloniality of power* as co-constitutive with coloniality and comprising interconnected forms of control, including racism, sexism, capitalism, and imperialism, which inform how people experience the world. Quijano (2000) contends that *coloniality of power* engenders all forms of modernity/coloniality. It propagates Western imperialism, affording Western traditions and cultures, knowledges and epistemologies, structures and systems, superior status and power (Quijano, 2000). Decolonial feminism is rooted in decolonial theory, founded by critiquing modernity/coloniality and centring decolonial thought and practice (Manning, 2021). In this regard, decolonial feminism adopts an alternative stance and roots its beliefs on antiracist, anti-capitalist, and anti-imperialist narratives. Decolonial feminism, therefore, includes objectives such as social and environmental justice, indigenous people's rights, and the decolonisation of knowledge (Martínez-Cairo & Buscemi, 2021; Mignolo, 2007; Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o, 1986). This means it offers a new framework that values all knowledge and lived experiences as equal to its theoretical foundation and presents itself as a worldview, a perspective on the world, and a method of thinking and comprehending gender that comes from oppressed women.

Lugones's (2010) foundational work on gender as a colonial construct, intricately linked to violent power relations shaped for modernity, lays the groundwork for the framework of decolonial feminism. According to her analysis, the classifications of gender established through colonialism inherently introduce a hierarchy of genders, intertwining various hierarchies such as race and class into gender relations. Lugones (2020) defines decolonial feminism as an active endeavour to eradicate the coloniality of gender, framing it as an examination of racialised and capitalist gender oppression. When contrasted with colonial feminism, decolonial feminism places significant emphasis on the intersectionalities of race, class, and gender, ensuring the inclusion of women previously omitted, subjugated, silenced, and *othered*. This approach seeks to illuminate the colonial categorisation of women by amplifying the voices of marginalised women who have fallen victim to gender simplification. The simplification process results from the systematic misappropriation of the experiences, identities, figures, and images of oppressed women, portraying them solely through

the lens of femininity, bound by sexuality, and emphasising characteristics such as ignorance, poverty, illiteracy, traditionalism, domestication, and victimisation (Lugones, 2020).

As a theoretical framework, decolonial feminism is a critical reflexive instrument with a triple benefit. First, it criticises capitalism, sexism, and colonialism. Second, it examines the perspectives and experiences of marginalised women and represents a method of thought that identifies oneself with the social and economic difficulties of the *othered*. Additionally, decolonial feminism promotes an epistemic move to a plurality of knowledges in which diverse cultural epistemologies can be equal (Manning, 2021). Thus, it strengthens the epistemic foundations for understanding the problems of women from the global South by recognising and legitimising the indigenous ways of knowing in our homelands and encouraging the exchange of indigenous knowledges (Espinosa Miñoso et al., 2022).

Mathonsi (2002) has argued that the political discourse necessary for dismantling coloniality and Western hegemony is the only context in which African-language literature can be discussed. This study aims to analyse gender representation in isiZulu literary texts. In this regard, decolonial feminism can help the researcher scrutinise and contest the portrayal of oppressed women. Instead of depicting them solely as powerless victims, decolonial feminism allows for the recognition of women as individuals with unique histories and voices. Moreover, it acknowledges them as knowledge producers vested with epistemic authority (Espinosa-Miñoso, 2009; Lugones, 2007, 2008; Manning, 2020; Espinosa-Miñoso et al., 2022).

3.5.3 *The coloniality of gender and violence*

In conceptualising the *coloniality of gender*, Lugones (2007) uses Anibal Quijano's analysis of the capitalist world system, which hypothesises the *coloniality of power*. Lugones (2010) claims that using the term coloniality concerning gender encompasses the process of the active subjugation and dehumanisation of people to fit into categories, and this process of subjectification turned the colonised into non-beings. Moreover, the colonial imposition of a gender and a gendered system led to the establishment of modern gender categories where none had previously existed. The

colonial gender system views gender and sexuality as being linked; gender indicates sexuality; in contrast, in the past, social and sexual roles in Africa were seen as being distinct, as demonstrated by Oyěwùmí ethnographic study of Yoruba people in Nigeria. Using these works, Lugones (2007) contends that before the process of colonisation, gender was not used as an organising element of society, nor did it assign power nor give or deny access in indigenous cultures. Instead, seniority and other principles were used for authority and power, but these differed from the social construction of gender. Hence, Lugones understands gender as a colonial construct forged for the colonality of power, just as race was a Western imposition. Colonised bodies were not only racialised, but they were also sexualised, as gender was used as a tool for the domination of colonised bodies to advance capitalism.

The *coloniality of power* depended on establishing superiority, domination, and division of labour through the construction of race to control productivity, for the exploitation and control of labour to further Western imperialism and capitalism. The coloniality was power and, therefore, manifested itself through race, the control of labour, the domination of subjects through gender construction, and the control of knowledges (Lugones, 2007; 2010). She further argues that hierarchical distinctions were established to advance Western supremacy, and only the advanced (through modernity) are human, and the colonised are non-human, animalistic, non-gendered, hypersexual, and sinful, thus deeming them the mythical others. These ‘others’ had no gender as gender was reversed for civilised men and women; it was a characteristic associated with humanity, and the colonised were animalised, denying them the gender category of woman/man; the colonised were characterised as not having gender but sex (Lugones, 2010). The imposition of gender was intertwined with the control of subjects – the colonised – territory, resources and capital.

Gender was, therefore, a system that orders the bodies, lives, sexualities, spiritualities, and beings into hierarchical and binary structures. This is a system that was violently imposed on the colonised people through colonisation. Colonisation established the construction of gender systems that determined the frameworks of humanity contained within normative heterosexuality that denied access to the othered. According to Lugones (2010), “the gender system is not just hierarchical but racially differentiated, and the racial differentiation denies humanity and thus gender to the colonized” (p.

748). She contends that in the Global South, modernity and the *coloniality of gender* permeated every area of social existence and led to the emergence of new social and geo-historic/cultural identities, producing both gendered and racial identities.

3.5.4 *The light and dark side of the modern/colonial gender system*

By the former, Lugones' (2007; 2010) examination of the coloniality of gender invites decolonial feminism thinkers to consider gender categories as historically situated and embody the experiences of women subjected to modernity/coloniality and forced into the modern gendered system. The understanding of gender, race and class as social categories that were imposed through colonisation and dehumanisation allows us to consider gender as historically situated. Gender is then exposed as a Western ideology, a colonial structure with historical and geographical rooting of subjugation rather than a universal inherent category. Lugones' examination of the coloniality of gender allows us to understand gender as historically situated and a movement towards the imposition of a global Eurocentric capitalist heterosexual order that permeates modernity. The latter attributes to the light side of the gender system, which constructs gender and its relations hegemonically and is heterosexually driven as heterosexuality protects racialised patriarchal control over subjects and labour, authority, and production of knowledges.

Espinosa-Miñoso et al. (2022) state:

“The coloniality of gender is about violence against the body, mind, soul, heart, spirit. Because the *coloniality of gender* is the violence of poverty for non-white women... The violence of land dispossession, the violence of disruption of peoples and communities, of ignoring, de-authorizing, destroying the people's knowledges, including ritual knowledge, because of its complexity that weaves capitalism, racism, colonialism and hatred of non-white women, the *coloniality of gender* endured” (p. xv).

The dark side of the modern/colonial gender system is far more pervasive, and Lugones characterises it as the systemic violence against colonised bodies from both the colonisers and their indigenous counterparts. This violence was seen through the

reduction of anamales and anafemales and other genders from their previously present participation in economics, and politics, to animality, rape, and labour exploitation; and in modernity through systemic racialised gendered violence (Lugones, 2010; Mendoza, 2016; Espinosa Miñoso, 2017). In the process of colonisation, gender was used as a tool to break the social bonds between the colonised by isolating men and women and planting resentment between them. Gender constructs in Europe brought in internal hierarchies that challenged the solidarity between Indigenous men and women, destroying their earlier relationships based on mutual respect. Western imposition portrayed men and women as adversaries. The colonists used gender to reduce indigenous people's human status through sexual assault, exploitation, and marital institutions, and establishing new hierarchies for the advancement of coloniality (Lugones, 2007; 2010; Mendoza, 2016; Espinosa Miñoso, 2017). Mendoza (2015) says that:

“The colonizers used gender to break the will of indigenous men and women, imposing new hierarchies that were institutionalized with colonialism. The bodies of women became the terrain on which indigenous men negotiated survival under new colonial social struggles and coloniality of gender conditions ... systemic sexual violence the dark side of modern/colonial gender system still present to this day” (p. 116).

In North America and the Caribbean, pervasive colonial practices actively contribute to the spread of ignorance about “the histories and contemporary relations of colonialism” (Vimalassery et al., 2016, p.1). In addition to the persistence of colonial violence, colonial ignorance has made the consequences of colonial power relations incomprehensible and given a definitive mark to colonialism and dispossession (Vimalassery et al., 2016; Vimalassery et al., 2017). Beyond identifying violence resulting from colonial legacies, a commitment to decolonisation within analytical practice necessitates actively striving to decolonise current power systems in postcolonial contexts (Mack & Na’puti, 2019).

A decolonial feminist approach not only draws attention to how gendered violence not only constitutes colonial violence but also centres dissident epistemologies that arise from the embodied knowledge of resistant subjectivities at the colonial difference to

resist colonial logics (Ghabra & Calafell, 2019; Lugones, 2010; Veronelli, 2016). Building a decolonial feminist project, according to Lugones (2010), requires intersubjective coalitional involvement in colonial differences (Ghabra & Calafell, 2019; Veronelli, 2016).

Feminists have primarily understood gendered violence as arising from binary gendered power relations that are approved by patriarchal institutions (Hernandez & De Los Santos-Upton, 2018; Mack et al., 2018). These methods give preference to White Western feminist conceptions of power structures while disregarding decades of research by indigenous, Black, Chicana, postcolonial, and decolonial feminists, which contend that gendered violence is a complicated social issue that perpetuates capitalist logic, heteronormativity, white supremacy, and patriarchy – often in seemingly contradictory ways and at different intersections. (Crenshaw, 2018; Deer, 2015; Dougherty & Calafell, 2019; Goeman, 2017; Lugones, 2010; Mack et al., 2018).

In South Africa, one woman is sexually assaulted every three hours (Govender, 2023). With 10 818 rape cases registered in the first quarter of 2022, South Africa is regarded as the rape capital of the world. This nation has five times the worldwide average for the number of women killed by intimate partners. Gender-based violence (GBV) in SA is pervasive and frequently occurs in families, workplaces, communities, and traditions. Due to the uneven power dynamics between the sexes, this epidemic has far-reaching ramifications that extend beyond the actual violence. Intimate partners, co-workers, strangers, and even institutions can inflict physical, emotional, psychological, financial, or structural harm as manifestations of gender-based violence (Govender, 2023). According to Taylor (2009), there is an increased rate of violence against people who identify as gender non-conforming. This means that two-spirited people may be in ‘triple jeopardy’ due to the intersections of homophobic, racist, and transphobic violence, which includes systemic violence and discrimination from those in positions of power (Taylor, 2009, p. 5).

However, although a significant contributing element, gendered violence cannot be solely attributed to colonialism. Kuokkanen (2015) argues that analysis will fail to acknowledge indigenous women as survivors of violence inside their communities if gendered violence is only recognised because of the history of colonialism of

indigenous peoples in general. Rejecting colonial discourses “that construct male violence as a reflection of their victimhood and loss of status or externalise responsibility for gendered violence” can also put Indigenous women in difficult situations and make it more likely that they would not report gendered violence committed by men in their communities (Kuokkanen, 2015, p. 272). The “interconnectedness of surviving colonization and surviving rape” must thus be investigated, as political and personal sovereignty are essential to this survival (Deer, 2015, p. xiv).

Mack and Na’puti (2019) explain that pervasive colonial practices actively contribute to the spread of ignorance about both historical and contemporary colonial relations. They explain that even if colonial violence is still occurring, colonial ignorance makes the consequences of colonial power relations incomprehensible and gives a definitive mark to colonialism and dispossession. They argue that beyond just identifying violence resulting from colonial legacies, a commitment to decolonisation within analytical practice necessitates actively striving to decolonise current power systems in postcolonial contexts.

3.6 Conclusion

The basis for adopting these frameworks in this study is aligned with Oyěwùmí (1997), Hudson-Weems (2019), Mendoza (2015), and Al-Harbi (2017), who make a call for African researchers to utilise Black theoretical frameworks that are crucial for evaluating African literature and dismantling the colonial representation of African experiences and culture. Mendez (2015) concurs and says that gender should also be used to dismantle oppressive power relations and move towards anti-racism and decoloniality to prevent gender from being a neo-colonising force. These frameworks are founded on Afrocentric theory to empower Black women rather than adopt foreign theories in addressing Black experiences. Lugones’ (2010) alternative through decolonial feminism methodologies is a discursive criticism of the numerous ways in which gender functions as a system that is inextricably linked to capitalism, racism, and the state, among other domains of modern/colonial power (Lugones, 2007; 2010; Espinosa-Miñoso et al., 2022). Coloniality incorporates gender as a control mechanism, and decolonisation, in turn, does not only encompass gender equality but

also the abolition of coloniality and the gender system itself. Decolonial feminism also seeks to address the issue of current institutions' dominance over historical representations of the world and the role of feminism in sustaining it (Espinosa-Miñoso et al., 2022).

The subject of research, knowledge production methods, and the relationship between the academy and local knowledges has been an essential theme in decolonial feminism thinking. This entailed a revision of feminist epistemology, which is part of a critical analysis of the reproduction of the *coloniality of knowledge* and the construction of truth based on the imposition of ideologies of minority women with race and class privilege (Espinosa-Miñoso et al., 2022). The epistemic validity and importance of knowledge produced by Black and Indigenous peoples are acknowledged by decolonial feminist approaches. Lugones stresses the necessity of African women in academic settings doing research based on decolonial analytical thinking that pushes other African women to read and expand their heritage. Moreover, she advocates that scholars and activists whose work seeks to address issues and concerns that are important to Black, Indigenous, and Third World peoples, such as this research, which aims to analyse if gender representation in literature promotes gender equality critically, must consider decolonial feminist methodologies (Espinosa-Miñoso et al., 2022).

CHAPTER FOUR: RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

4.1 Introduction

The purpose of this chapter is to describe the research design and methodology used to conduct this investigation. The study's research paradigm and design will be discussed in the first section, followed by the study's sampling technique. The study's methodology, Feminist Critical Discourse Analysis (FCDA), which draws on Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA), will also be presented concerning the research process. After that, Fairclough's (2015) three-dimensional model of analysis will be discussed as an analytical tool used to analyse the representations of gender in the selected literary works. A discussion on researcher reflexivity will follow this, and the chapter concludes with a discussion of credibility and trustworthiness.

4.2 Research paradigm

Located within the decolonial paradigm, this study draws epistemologically and ontologically on the philosophies of Africana womanism and decolonial feminism to investigate representations of gender in selected isiZulu literature prescribed for grade eleven.

4.2.1 Africana womanism presuppositions

According to Schiele (2016), as African academics started to use traditional African ideology to combat racism and became more culturally aware, they contended that Eurocentric philosophy was insufficient to answer the sociocultural and political-economic needs of African people, which led to the early development of Africana womanism. To support the former, Oyěwùmí (1997) contends that Western paradigms of reality and knowledge production have dominated African studies in the modern era. The main issue, according to the African theorist, is how Western knowledge is created and preserved in educational institutions, how theories and concepts are developed from Western experiences, how fundamental research questions are generated, and how academics are required to work within disciplines that were created to maintain Western dominance over Africa. As a result, indigenous knowledge systems are killed, silenced, destroyed, and devalued at the expense of domineering colonial knowledge systems, a phenomenon Santos (2005) terms

epistemicide. Africana womanism theorist Hudson-Weems refers to the 20th-century racial violence that prompted the development of the Africana womanism paradigm to debunk racial oppression. To build a paradigm relevant to traditional Africana women, this paradigm would consider race, class, and gender concerning African women and be based on the principles of sisterhood, family, and black survival. Hence, following the Afrocentric theoretical framework, Hudson-Weems (1993) adopts its main tenants in theorising this paradigm. According to the theorist, Africana Womanism is a philosophy developed specifically for all women of African heritage. Its roots in African culture compel an emphasis on the distinctive experiences, difficulties, wants, and desires of Africana women.

The ontological position taken by Africana womanism, comparable to the transformative paradigm, is characterised by historical/social realism in that social, political, cultural, economic, ethnic, and gender values impact reality. Africana womanism sees gender reality as socially constructed and constantly vulnerable to internal influence. This is also clear from the epistemological stance taken by the Africana womanism paradigm of subjectivity related to the societal ideology on how patriarchy, heterosexuality, and modernity/coloniality shape gender (Hudson-Weems, 2019). For these reasons, this study employs the philosophical presuppositions of Africana womanism, which are Afrocentric, allowing the researcher to continually draw on its anti-colonial, anti-patriarchal, anti-racist, and anti-sexist viewing points about gender to enhance the investigation of gender representation in isiZulu literature. Hudson-Weems (1997) reaffirms:

“As we approach the last hour leading up to the next millennium, I cannot stress enough the critical need today for Africana scholars throughout the world to create our own paradigms and theoretical frameworks for assessing our works. We need our own Africana theorists, not scholars who duplicate or use theories created by others in analyzing Africana texts” (p. 79).

4.2.2 *Decolonial feminism presuppositions*

Quijano (2007) discusses how colonialism is related to ideologies that are firmly ingrained in Western domination and that take race, humanity, and cultural conceptions for granted while viewing non-Western civilisations as primitive. According to Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o (1986), coloniality is a universal problem that should be resolved by *decolonising the mind*, which refers to the abolition of Western epistemic domination. Decolonial thinking attempts to completely dismantle the unequal power relations that coloniality has fostered rather than just critiquing them. The goal of decolonial thought is to validate alternative modes of existence and modes of knowledge production. Its primary criticism stems from disapproval of ideologies that universalise their realities. The decolonial turn, therefore, advocates for the decolonisation of knowledge by establishing intellectual spaces that transcend Eurocentric notions of knowledge production and legitimacy (Maldonado-Torres, 2011; Mignolo, 2009). Decolonial research paradigms, methods, and methodology aim to teach indigenous ways of knowing, use them in research, and value them equally to Western ways of knowing and producing knowledge.

This entailed creating research paradigms that are respectful of cultural diversity and give priority to indigenous knowledge. This was done to negate the use of *non-Western beings* as data sources, making the West the hub of information and theory producers concerning *others* (Mignolo, 2011), thereby adopting an emancipatory and liberatory position. Thus, locating power within indigenous communities is the foundation for the decolonial paradigm's research techniques, ontologies, and epistemologies. Its relativistic and relational ontology holds that various realities have been shaped by society and history. Its ontologies and epistemologies are identical in that both are premised on intersubjective relationality because knowledge is thought to be relational and built on many relations (Held, 2019). Overlapping with Africana womanism, the decolonial feminist paradigm is ontologically and epistemologically based on varied socially created realities, intersubjective and experiential and based on the value of emancipation and social justice. The decolonial paradigm prioritises the centring indigenous methodologies within indigenous paradigms distinguished by values of relationality and methodology that is participative, liberating, relational, and transformative (Held, 2019).

The decolonial epistemic framework supports the notion advanced by Africana womanism that phenomena cannot be analysed without context. Asante (2003) and Mazama (2001) contend that it is crucial to consider each environment's diversity and various intricate realities to understand and analyse lived experiences and situate them within their historical context. This centrality necessitates positionality of place, which exposes the privileged positions of theories, paradigms, and discourses that universalise and dominate academics but fall short in their ability to comprehend African experiences and culture.

Considering the adverse effects of centuries of *epistemic violence* on non-Western knowledges and knowledge production and the marginalisation of non-Western knowledges, the use of a decolonial paradigm with an African focus responds to this *epistemicide* (Santos, 2005; Quijano, 2010). Utilising the philosophical presuppositions of Africana womanism and the decolonial feminist theory allowed the researcher to present contextually relevant research findings that prioritise social justice, liberation and emancipation through the textual analysis of gender representation, power and socio-politics.

4.2.3 Why an African Centred, Decolonial Epistemology?

Rethinking the practices and techniques of knowledge creation that are represented in our research is necessary for the process of decolonisation to avoid reproducing colonial logic and relations (Ghabra & Calafell, 2019; Gutierrez-Perez, 2019; Sholock, 2012; Veronelli, 2016; Yep, 2010). Western feminisms have been heavily criticised for perpetuating racialisation, gender classification, and heterosexuality in theories or histories by reasserting White colonial logic and emphasising American experiences (Calafell, 2014; Ghabra & Calafell, 2019; Lugones, 2010; Veronelli, 2016). Because the term “feminist” has historically been associated with settler colonial Whiteness, many Native and Indigenous peoples prefer not to identify as such (Arvin, Tuck & Morrill, 2013; Smith & Kauanui, 2008). Trask (1996) refers to the “feminist failure of vision” as the inability of Western feminists to identify and actively participate in decentering Whiteness and colonial epistemologies in otherwise “progressive” feminist endeavours.

According to Trask (1996), white feminists frequently narrow their examination of the contents of the human world to be grounded solely in their perceptions of oppressive structures and then generalise or make those experiences universal because they have “an outright insensibility to the vastness of the human world” (p. 911). It is not unexpected that this “failure of vision” happens when mainstream feminist ethics and logic are deployed in the American public sphere to confront social problems like sexual assault, given that it also appears in feminist literature and thinking.

Scholars researching gendered violence must aggressively investigate North American nation-states, such as the United States and Canada, as settler colonial nation-states that persist in using violence against Native women and Two-Spirit people without consequence to advance toward decolonisation. In national narratives about the United States, the alleged progress toward justice often serves to mask the systemic oppression of Indigenous populations. In women's and ethnic studies, Arvin et al. (2013) contend that “too often the consideration of Indigenous peoples remains rooted in understanding colonialism (like state-sanctioned slavery) as a historical point in time away from which our society has progressed” (p.9). Suppose colonialism is primarily regarded as something that happened “in the past”. In that case, it will not be considered a system that has to be consistently questioned and attacked in the here and now.

4.3 Research design

A qualitative research design is appropriate for this study because representation cannot be measured but instead depends on meaning-making, which is accomplished through qualitative data. Creswell and Creswell (2018) say qualitative research analyses data using meaning-based methods and relies on text and image data, in contrast to quantitative research, which relies on numerical data. This is relevant to this study that aims to understand gender representation in isiZulu literature and make meaning that will be represented in words rather than in numerical data.

The core of qualitative research is the epistemological notion that social processes are too intimately linked to be reduced to simple variables. Creswell and Creswell (2018) emphasise the value of qualitative research approaches when data cannot fully explain

and provide context for a phenomenon. They further state that the researcher is instrumental to the study as they gather and interpret; this approach also recognises the importance of participants' experiences. The data is what the researcher of this study did. Using this approach enabled the researcher to analyse data on gender representation in selected literary work inductively and provide a holistic account of the data gathered.

4.4 Sampling method

A novel and a short story written in isiZulu were chosen as the study's primary sources through purposive sampling. In contrast to random sampling, purposeful sampling is called judgmental sampling since it is chosen depending on whether it exhibits characteristics relevant to the research (Cohen et al., 2018). To better understand developing theories and concepts, qualitative research approaches use purposeful sampling to choose samples that offer the most pertinent insight into the research question (Cohen et al., 2018; Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

The two literary works were purposefully selected to provide relevant insights into gender representation in isiZulu literature as they are isiZulu literary works, and the DBE prescribes them in the current year. The novel is prescribed for isiZulu Grade 8 Home Language (HL), and Grade 11 FAL indicates that most isiZulu subject learners have explored its content. Given that this study employs a qualitative research design, the sample size is irrelevant because the study's objective is to obtain an in-depth understanding of the research topic. Thus, the researchers' choice was limited to two literary works.

The selected texts were published after 1994 when apartheid and other racially discriminatory laws were abolished. The researcher anticipated that post-2000 writings would reflect democratic values, gender equality, and inclusion as envisioned in The Constitution (Chapter 2) and the National Education Policy (Republic of South Africa, 1996; 1996) and aimed to investigate if these values are reflected in isiZulu-prescribed literature.

YEAR PUBLISHED	GENRE	TITLE	AUTHOR	PUBLISHER
2000	Short Story	Usihawu Nesihawu	NE Mbesa	Shuter & Shooter (Pty) Ltd Pietermaritzburg
2013	Novel	Amanyala Enyoka	B Chili M Ndlovu	Shuter & Shooter (Pty) Ltd Pietermaritzburg

Table 4.1: Textbooks selected for analysis

4.5 Research methodology

The methodology for generating and analysing data in this study is feminist CDA. FCDA is a derivative of critical discourse analysis; it intersects feminist studies and critical discourse analysis to advance rich and detailed analyses of the complex ways power and ideology operate in discourse to maintain hierarchically gendered social orders (Lazar, 2007). In contrast to CDA, FCDA views gender relations as one of several interrelated forms of social oppression. With gender as a critical factor in social oppression, FCDA seeks to understand how social power, domination, and inequality are created, maintained, and opposed. One of FCDA's objectives is to debunk the interrelationships of gender, power, and ideology inherent in conversation and text. It also considers how much language contributes to and maintains a patriarchal gendered social order (Lazar, 2005). Since FCDA adopts the central tenets of CDA, it is important to briefly discuss this as these serve as the foundation of the principles of FCDA.

4.5.1 Key premises of CDA

According to Fairclough (2013), CDA is an interdisciplinary approach to the study of discourse that emphasises how text and talk sustain social and political dominance and considers language a social practice. Put differently, language is seen as a social construct and something “socially shaped” (Fairclough & Wodak, 1997). The foundation of CDA is a critical examination of language, which acknowledges that language incorporates social practice and power relations. As a method of inquiry, CDA critically examines how language and society are related. Moreover, the difference between CDA and the more traditional discourse analysis methodology is that the latter examines language use within historical, social, cultural, and political contexts instead of dividing language use into discrete parts for analysis without considering such context (Fairclough, 2013).

According to Machin and Mayr (2012), CDA was developed by academics concerned with examining fundamental social challenges, such as the discursive reproduction of unjust dominance. The concept of critical analysis within CDA inextricably ties the social and the political in its purpose to look at how language use communicates, indicates, forms, and legitimises social inequality in discourse (Fairclough, 2013; Wodak, 2002). The central tenet of CDA is that language, thought, and society are all intimately connected because every instance of language use makes its small contribution to reproducing and transforming society and culture, including power relations (Fairclough & Wodak, 1997). Thus, CDA scholars are concerned with how texts can be representations of ideologies and contribute to social relations of power and domination.

4.5.2 Language, ideology, and power in CDA

Ideology is a crucial component of CDA inquiry and is mainly related to power issues. In the words of Van Dijk (2001), “If there is one notion often related to ideology, it is that of power” (p. 25). The assumption here is that the reader lacks power and agency to concerning the author's influence because the primary purpose of writing is to impart information through a structured interaction between the reader and the author. Power is then exercised through ideology, a process by which the socio-political arrangements are preserved and strengthened, and language plays a vital role. Additionally, ideology describes the ideas used to justify the economic dominance of specific classes. Briefly, ideology may be defined as a system of ideas that give people in a culture a framework for thinking about social issues and their environment. Therefore, how texts can serve as symbols of ideologies and support social hierarchies of power and dominance is a fundamental concern in CDA (Fairclough, 2013). The author asserts that:

“A primary focus of CDA is on the effects of power relations and inequalities in producing social wrongs and in particular on discursive aspects of power relations and inequality: on dialectical relations between discourse and power, and the effects on other relations within social processes and their elements. This includes questions of ideology,

understanding of ideologies to be meaning in the service of power... and contribute to establishing or sustaining unequal power relations” (Fairclough, 2013, p. 93).

This is further exacerbated by hegemony, which is a term that describes how dominant groups can maintain dominance whilst having the support of the subordinate group. Hegemony is also established when power is established through norms, habits, and consensus.

4.5.3 *Towards feminist CDA*

The field of critical discourse analysis has recently seen the emergence of FCDA. The need for a FCDA, according to Lazar (2005), arose due to the critique that critical CDA theorists (such as Fairclough and Van Dijk) were not interested in gender analysis and that it was necessary to combine existing feminist-focused studies into already established methods of critical discourse analysis. Fairclough (1989) defines an approach that seeks to show connections hidden from people, such as the connections between language, power, and ideology, as critical. Feminist discourse analysts have coined this term as ‘demystification’ or ‘denaturalisation’ and maintain that one of FCDA's goals is to demystify taken-for-granted or common-sense assumptions of gender by demonstrating that these assumptions are ideological and contain power differences (Lazar, 2005; Sunderland & Litosseliti, 2002). These procedures are predicated on the poststructuralist tenet that language and discourses are ideological, serve as “sites of struggles” for gendered ideologies and presumptions, and help produce and maintain uneven power relations among social groups. As an emancipatory critical approach dedicated to contributing to social change through critical discourse analysis, FCDA is thus overtly political (Lazar, 2005). Being upfront about one's political agenda is not just a choice but also necessary. Critical discourse analysts “explicitly acknowledge the impossibility of impartial observation, for all analytical approaches”, as their language choices and positions are also influenced by sociological and ideological factors (Sunderland & Litosseliti, 2002, p. 21).

FCDA differs from CDA in that it has produced a more nuanced theory of gender. Third-wave feminist and post-structuralist ideas have changed how the concept of

gender in FCDA is understood. Gender is viewed as a flexible and multifaceted concept that constantly constructs a variety of femininities and masculinities both inside and between members of the same biological sex. Hence, the discourse has a role in influencing these identities. Moreover, gender is not discursively enacted in the same way for women and men everywhere since gender is socially and personally created (Sunderland & Litosseliti 2002). The gender framework used in this study is complemented by the conceptualisation of gender by FCDA. FCDA's critical perspective on gender corresponds with Oyěwùmí (1997) and Lugones (2010), who state that gender is socially constructed and imposed as modernity. It also recognises the interconnectedness of gender with other dimensions of social positionings, such as race, ethnicity, class and sexuality (Lazar, 2005; Sunderland & Litosseliti, 2002). Instead of attempting to offer a comprehensive theory of gender, FCDA places a strong emphasis on empirical research and how gender is created in real texts and contexts (Lazar, 2005; Sunderland & Litosseliti, 2002). While FCDA does not view gender as solely a by-product of discourse, its main area of interest is how gender is generated discursively. Since gender is context-dependent, gender representations and gendered power relations in particular texts and their specific contexts are relevant in analysis (Lazar 2005).

Therefore, the term discourse in feminist critical discourse analysis is understood both in the linguistic sense of language that communicates meaning in a context and in the social theoretical sense of being a form of social practice, which means that language is used to construct identity, including gender, from a specific ideological perspective (Sunderland & Litosseliti, 2002). The objective of FCDA is to link gender representations or gendered discourses in the text with the social and cultural context, which is the focus and aim of this study. Adopting this methodology enables an investigation of gender represented in isiZulu literature by thoroughly interrogating and analysing cultural messages, discourses of power, and the discursive strategies used in isiZulu literature. Moreover, it will help unpack common sense and hegemonic ideologies that deny, justify, and legitimise inequality and structures of dominance concerning gender to examine whether gender representation in isiZulu-prescribed literature promotes or impedes gender equality.

4.6 Data analysis

Discourse analysis can be used in various ways. Still, this study employed Fairclough's three-dimensional CDA model, focusing primarily on how language is connected to social power (Fairclough, 2015). The fundamental tenet of FCDA is that it relies on traditional linguistic approaches like CDA's critical linguistics, which is an approach to studying language that emphasises the connection between language structures and social structures (Lehonten, 2007). The researcher embraced the key concepts and analytical techniques of CDA and interpreted them from the viewpoint of FCDA, which uses a gendered lens. The three-dimensional CDA model developed by Fairclough (2015) was used to analyse textual data by describing, interpreting, and explaining it. The linguistic items in the text are described in the *description* stage. The purpose of the second stage is to *interpret* how these language items are used, and the final stage, *explanation*, aims to analyse the data from the previous stages in the context of the social and cultural setting. Thus, description is concerned with texts, interpretation is only concerned with the social environment, and explanation is more concerned with a broader social scope.

Using Fairclough's (2015) model, the researcher first read the texts without analysing them. The researcher then reread the writings critically, presented questions about them, and identified viable alternative constructions utilising the research questions. The next stage was to search for the viewpoint being expressed; this process is known as framing the details into a comprehensible whole. Finally, the researcher carefully examined sentences, phrases, and words, searching for language that communicated power relations, insinuations, and ideologies, among other things.

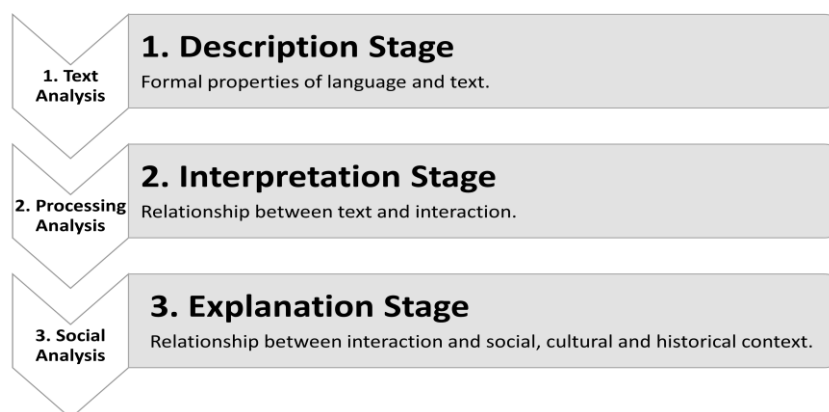


Figure 4.1: Three dimensions of CDA (Source: Critical Discourse Analysis, Fairclough, 2000)

Open coding, a method of dissecting, analysing, comparing, conceptualising, and categorising data, was used to identify themes and patterns in the data. In qualitative research, coding is the act of assembling, categorising, and thematically sorting acquired data to create a structured framework for the development of meaning (Williams & Moser, 2019). Line-by-line coding compelled the researcher to confirm and thoroughly cover all relevant categories, reduce the likelihood of overlooking one, and ensure that the data categories were grounded in reality rather than merely subjective. As a result, there is a certainty that nothing has been overlooked and a rich, complex theory is produced. Additionally, it corrects the forcing of ideas and subthemes unless an emerging fit exists. Williams and Moser (2019) assert that to meet the validity and reliability requirements specific to qualitative research, it is essential to ensure that coding techniques are well-defined, exacting, and implemented consistently.

The open coding procedure begins with the researcher reading the chapters to understand the information. After that, they reread the chapters to find units of meaning within the texts. Once codes had been created, they were assigned to the various 'units of meaning' following how the data had been evaluated. Then, the associated codes were grouped into categories that created the topics that would be reported as the study's findings. Therefore, open coding was used to generate themes and meanings and to enhance the comprehension of the data in a thorough examination that may produce more than one possible interpretation of that data (Williams & Moser, 2019).

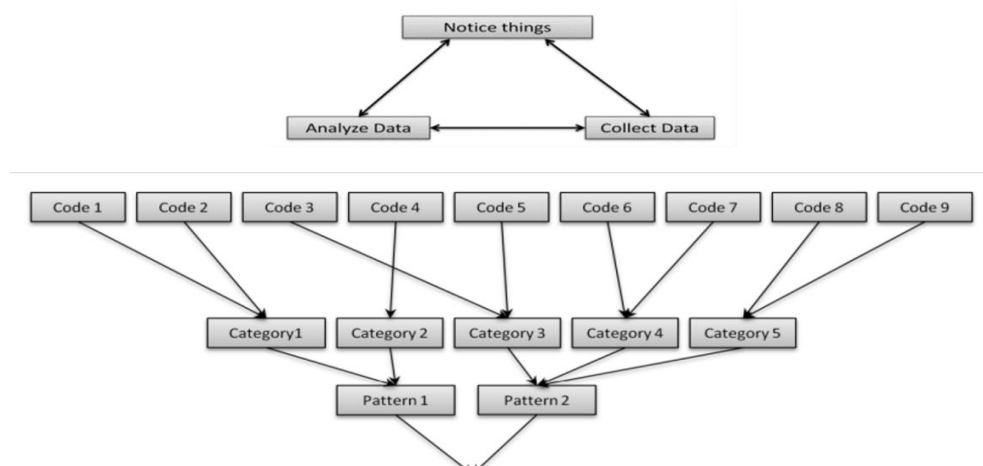


Figure 4.2: Open Coding Flowchart (Source: Basics of Qualitative Research, Strauss & Corbin, 1990)

4.7 Researchers' positionality and reflexivity

Since one of the main goals of FCDA is to expose power struggles between social groups and provide a voice to the oppressed and underrepresented, it is seen as a very ethical research method. According to Fairclough (2015), conducting CDA is a moral undertaking and reveals forms of power relations and ideologies and how they are propagated in discourse. Hence, it offers a multitude of ethical advantages by locating and exposing ideologies and power dynamics in discourse. Although conventional unethical concerns about participants raised by other approaches, such as surveys or focus groups, may not apply to CDA, it is crucial to remember that certain ethical considerations are still involved, even with the best intentions. The researcher's capacity to admit her analytical agenda is the study's most important ethical consideration. Lazaar (2010) cautions FCDA practitioners to be cognisant of their role in qualitative research and that their work is motivated by social, economic, and political agendas. Therefore, considering that FCDA findings depend on the researcher, the researcher must be open about their positionality and analytical goals in the study.

Positionality is the term used to characterise both a person's worldview and the stance they have taken in a particular research study. Creswell and Creswell (2018) and Lazaar (2010) highlight the importance of researchers reflecting on their role in the study, their positionality, including their background, experiences, and culture, shape their interpretation and how they select and ascribe data. As a result, the researchers' views on the study, the methodologies they adopt, and how they interpret the results may all be influenced by their social positions and experiences informed by their positionality. This highlights the necessity for the researcher to situate her work within an understanding of the concept of reflexivity, whereby she not only submits her understandings to (self)-critical scrutiny but is also conscious that her past experiences will influence how she interprets the present.

Therefore, the researcher must disclose that she is female and has experience as an isiZulu educator and learner. In addition, she wants to question the gender hegemony and beliefs that are inherent in isiZulu literature. The researcher can guarantee solid, moral outcomes by being forthright and openly acknowledging this analytical agenda.

By outlining their positionality and incorporating reflexivity, the researcher can accomplish two key goals: to recognise the inherent subjectivity of any research stance while preventing an excessive amount of their subjectivity from permeating this study and remind readers that discourse is not neutral but rather a political agenda, which must be continuously and reflexively acknowledged for research to resonate in a meaningful way (Lazaar, 2010).

4.8 Trustworthiness

In qualitative research, validity is synonymous with authenticity, meaning that the results are valid from the perspective of the study's participants and audience. According to Yilmaz (2013), reliability is correlated with the auditability of the study being consistent over time across several researchers and various methodologies. Open coding, which is the act of exploring data and establishing units of analysis by studying, contrasting, and thematically categorising data for an in-depth examination of texts, was used in the study to ensure validity. The researcher further submitted a summary of the texts studied and coded and asked their supervisor as a critical reviewer to use this to audit the researcher's analysis and interpretation of the data and critically assess the research conclusions. This ensured the validity of the study.

4.9 Limitations of the study

The study will only analyse isiZulu-prescribed literature in the FET phase; therefore, the research findings will not be suitable for generalisation. Moreover, the study uses a single observation of texts, which (Neuman, 2011) states does not include all the factors of research. Larger-scale studies, including different observations and more isiZulu literature, would broaden our understanding of gender representation in isiZulu literature. However, other researchers can use research findings as a framework for further studies of gender representation in isiZulu literature. The study can also provide insight into the power of discourse in constructing reality and offer an in-depth understanding of gender representation in isiZulu literature to contribute to greater social awareness.

4.10 Conclusion

The design and technique for the study were provided in this chapter. An in-depth understanding of how gender is portrayed in isiZulu FET literature is the primary goal of this feminist critical study, which adopts a qualitative methodology. Using a deliberately gendered perspective and CDA as a model, FCDA was used to collect and analyse data. Fairclough (2015) and Machin and Mayr (2012) inspired the CDA tools. One isiZulu FAL novel was selected purposefully in the FET phase for the data analysis. This chapter also covers the research limits to address the factors that may undermine the study's validity. Additionally, the trustworthiness of the study and how ethical considerations were addressed through reflexivity were examined to ensure credibility.

CHAPTER FIVE: PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

5.1 Introduction

A review of previous studies revealed that isiZulu literature is tainted by cultural expressions, patriarchy, gendered stereotyping, heterosexism and negative portrayal of women in texts (Gumede, 2018; Gumede & Mathonsi, 2019; Phakathi, 2019; Shabalala, 2019). Texts are powerful tools for upholding dominant ideologies and social structures, as explained in the language, ideology, and power section. I examined how gendered ideology and power relations are produced, reproduced, contested and resisted through the social relations and social practices depicted in the two selected texts through a decolonial feminist lens (Lazar, 2005). Using critical feminist discourse analysis of selected prescribed Grade 11 isiZulu literature, this chapter presents the key findings that emerged in response to the research questions below:

1. How is gender represented in isiZulu-prescribed literature in the Further Education and Training phase?
2. Does the representation of gender in the isiZulu-prescribed literature in the Further Education and Training phase promote or impede gender equality?

This study examined how gender is represented in the literature as a foundational teaching resource and whether such representation advances gender equality. This chapter analysed data from the selected literary works using the feminist CDA technique (See Chapter Three). In this regard, I examined the texts to understand if and how patriarchal ideologies are reproduced or challenged concerning gendered social relations (Lazaar, 2007).

In the analysis, I begin with a synopsis of each literary work. I then present the key findings concerning gender representation in each text by analysing the characterisation of the protagonists and other characters. I draw on the conceptual framework to discuss the key findings and the discussion thereof. The discussion is integrated with the presentation of findings.

5.2 Synopsis of the selected literary works

5.2.1 *Amanyal' Enyoka* (2013)

The central figures in the novel '*Amanyal' Enyoka*' are the newlyweds Pat and Sindi, entangled in a troublesome situation. Their wedding planner, Thiza, becomes distressed as they have not fully paid him due to unsatisfactory services. Thiza, in response, threatens to pursue the remaining payment and enlists the help of his friend, Teboho, to coerce the couple. Unbeknownst to Pat and Sindi, Teboho harbours personal motives to sow discord in their marriage and rekindle a past romance with Sindi. As Thiza and Teboho execute their plan, Pat and Sindi experience marital strife, leading both to engage in extramarital affairs.

The dissolution of Pat and Sindi's marriage unfolds rapidly, precipitated by Sindi's departure to Johannesburg alongside her former fiancé, Teboho. Pat, burdened by recurrent extortion attempts, grapples with financial hardship, resulting in the loss of her mansion and a return to her familial home. The title of the book, '*Amanyal' Enyoka*', aptly captures the essence of their marital breakdown. This title symbolises the couple's treatment of each other as snakes (*inyoka*) and their involvement in dishonourable behaviours (*amanyala*), elucidating the destructive nature of their actions on the once-unified relationship.

5.2.2 *USihawu nesihawu* (2000)

The story commences with the protagonist struggling with internal conflict following a medical examination that discloses his sterility. In an unconventional move, the protagonist's father, the king, decrees that the first of his sons to produce an heir will inherit the throne, deviating from the customary practice where the eldest son assumes the role. This unconventional decree threatens Sihawu's future as the first-born son, traditionally in line for the throne. Consequently, any of his younger brothers now stand the chance of succeeding their father as the ruler.

Sihawu, faced with confusion and distress, finds himself by a riverbank, where he encounters a girl. Unfortunately, he engages in a reprehensible act, chasing and raping her in the bushes. Overwhelmed by shame for his actions, Sihawu seeks redemption by proposing marriage to the girl, Bathobile, who surprisingly accepts. Despite the

dark origins of their relationship, they move forward, building a family together and finding happiness in their shared life.

5.3 Characterisation in *Amanyal' Enyoka*

5.3.1 *UPat ongumfana-ntombazane*

The book introduces the protagonist, Pat (Phathekile Nhlapo), through the author's narration, portraying her as a black woman hailing from the Free State province. As the central character, Pat serves as a lens through which we witness the development of other characters. From her interactions and experiences, it becomes apparent that Pat exhibited unconventional behaviour from a young age. Described as behaving like a boy, dressing in a masculine manner, and participating in activities traditionally associated with boys, Pat was eventually recognised as a tomboy or a boy-girl (*umfana-ntombazane*) within her community.

“Wayekhule ngendlela engaqondakali njengoba isikhathi esiningi wayesichitha ngokudlala nabafana. Wayebhukuda, edlala ibhola kanye neminye imidlalo konke ekwenza ndawonye nabafana. Nezingubi ayezigqoka imbala kwakungezabafana. Wagcina usumamukele umphakathi wangakubo ukuthi ungumfana ntombazane” (p. 24). (She grew up strangely as she spent most of her time playing with boys. She swims and plays soccer and other sports for boys. Even the colours of the clothes she wore were boys' colours. Her community eventually accepted that she was a boy-girl).

Pat lacks femininity consistent with the gendered social order of acceptable female behaviour in her community. To illustrate this, the text explains that:

“Eseyijongosana wahlosa amabele njengawo wonke amantombazane. Yilapho-ke iningi lakholelwa ukuthi hhiya ngempela le ngane iyintombazane ngokugcwele. Naphezu kwalokhu akenzanga okuningi okwenziwa yizingane zamantombazane. Baqoma ontanga bakhe kodwa lutho yena” (p. 24). (When she was a teenager, she developed breasts like all other girls. That is when everyone was convinced that she was entirely

a girl. Although she still did not do what other girls were doing. They started dating boys, but she did not).

Pat was aware of her strong attraction to women from her early years. Despite this, she entered a relationship with a man named Mthunzi, who not only impregnated her but also contested the paternity and abandoned her. This was a profound emotional blow to Pat, as Mthunzi had been her only experience with a man, and she faced the challenge of raising their son, Lindokuhle, on her own. When Mthunzi faced legal trouble for fraud and was arrested, Pat decided to leave the Free State, leaving behind her mother and son to forge a new path. Settling in Pietermaritzburg, she began dating women and became involved with a Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer (LGBTQ) non-profit group, eventually taking on a leadership role. Now depicted as middle-class and financially stable, Pat indulges in luxury goods, resides in an impressive home, and drives a high-end vehicle. Through her involvement in the organisation, she crosses paths with Sindi, whom she ultimately marries. In their marriage, Pat assumes a more masculine role as the primary breadwinner, identifying herself as the husband in the relationship. This is demonstrated in texts that read:

“Waphuma ebhushuzela wasithela ekhishini eshiya umnyeni wakhe ezitika ngobuhle bendalo” (p. 16). (Pat’s wife, Sindi, walked away and sashayed into the kitchen, leaving her husband, Pat, admiring her beautiful body).

Sindi, Pat’s wife, also refers to Pat as the man of the house and calls Pat her husband, and when questioned about their same-sex marriage, she responds:

“UPat indoda yami mina ngingumkakhe and sashada emini libalele, finish and klaar” (p. 64). (Pat is my husband, I am her wife, and we married publicly, that is that).

Pat's conformity to traditional gender roles becomes increasingly evident as her marriage faces challenges arising from their wedding planner, Thiza. The difficulties Thiza encounters and the police he employs to extort money from the couple prompt Pat to resort to heavy drinking, physical aggression, and a forceful assertion of her role as the dominant figure in the household. Seeking to address the ongoing harassment

from the hired police, which resulted in her wife being physically assaulted, Pat reluctantly engages in a coerced affair with Thula, one of the officers enlisted by Thiza. Thula had demanded sexual relations with Pat as a means of shielding her from further torment. Despite the coerced nature of the affair, Pat develops genuine affection for Thula. Complications arise when Mthunzi, Pat's son's father, is released from prison and discovers Pat in a same-sex marriage. He hopes to revive their relationship and co-parent their son, Lindokuhle. Mthunzi is taken aback to find Pat involved in an affair with Thula. Financial difficulties and house repossession compound Pat's challenges in less than a year of marriage. Fearing for her life, especially with Mthunzi's return and Sindi's departure with another man, Pat returns to the Free State.

5.3.2 *USindi uphuma langa sikhothe*

Sindi Ngema is presented as the supporting protagonist in the novel, and like Pat, we see the plot of the story revolving around her and the development of other characters through her interactions. Sindi is a young black female from Soweto, Johannesburg, who moved to Pietermaritzburg to complete her Social Science studies at the University of KwaZulu-Natal. Sindi is described as a beautiful young lady with a stunning full-figured body and perfect skin like the beach sands:

“Muhle nangu umuntu wesifazane unguphuma langa sikhothe. Uthe klwi ulingene ngomzimba wase wathi ukuzotha ngebala. Unesikhumba esihle esibushalelezi esiphuphuzela uboya kancane” (p. 17). (What a gorgeous woman, beautiful like the sunrise. She is slender, tall and light-skinned. She has dazzlingly smooth skin covered with hair).

Throughout the text, Sindi's beauty and body precede all references to her character, and her beauty is described as alluring and seductive, as demonstrated in the following texts:

- Enguphuma langa sikothe (*She is a sunrise*).
- Uma enqunu umzimba wakhe ubushalelezi okwamadwala asemfuleni (*Naked, her body is as smooth as rocks in the river*).
- Ubuhle bendalo (*The beauty of nature*).

- Iphimbo lakhe elimtoti qede kuthi faca ezihlathini (*Her sweet voice with dimples on her cheeks*).
- Amabele amancanyana angabhekile enhlabathini (*Small, upright breasts*).
- Isiphalaphala esihle esiyisibutubutu (*An attractive, hot woman*).
- Umzimba obumbeke kamnandi (*A well-shaped body*).
- Wayemuhle ekhuluma, ethule, ehleka ngisho ediniwe imbala. (*She was beautiful when she was talking, quiet, laughing and even when she was angry*).

Sindi's decision to change universities is prompted by the abandonment of her fiancé, Teboho, who impregnated her and then disappeared. Opting for an abortion rather than facing single parenthood, Sindi seeks a fresh start in Pietermaritzburg after the profound disappointment caused by Teboho's departure. This experience fuels a deep-seated resentment towards men, leading Sindi to develop an interest in women. Joining an LGBTQ organisation, she eventually becomes its chairperson and meets her future wife, Pat. Drawn to Sindi's beauty, Pat swiftly proposes, and the couple, portrayed as happy and enjoying a luxurious lifestyle, gets married. Their blissful existence is disrupted when Teboho resurfaces, seeking to rekindle his relationship with Sindi. Teboho, shocked to find Sindi married to a woman, adamantly refuses to forfeit his *lobolo* (bride price), particularly to another woman.

“Uthanda ungathandi wena usengowami. Ungenza inyoni ungikhipha ngentombazane. Awulethe leyo ndoda mbumbulu yakho ngiyixwayise ukuthi ayikuyeke phansi... Kumele azi loyo Pat wakho ukuthi wathatha izinto zabantu. Uyena owabasa umlilo. Wayeqondeni ngokushada nenye intombazane?” (p. 23). (Whether you like it or not, you belong to me. You are making me a fool, leaving me for a woman. Bring that fake man of yours so I can warn them to leave you alone. That Pat of yours must know they took someone else's belongings. She started this fire. What was her motive for marrying another woman).

Sindi assumes the traditional feminine role and identifies as the wife in their marriage. Her spouse takes on the role of the breadwinner and caretaker of Pat and the household. However, as issues arise between Pat and Sindi, Pat becomes abusive, prompting Sindi

to seek solace in an affair with Teboho. Their encounters involve playful activities, drinking, and intimate moments, often taking place in Sindi's marital home. On one occasion, Sindi brings Teboho into the house while Pat is inebriated in the adjacent room. The story suggests that Sindi's attachment to Pat is not rooted in love but in their shared lifestyle. Sindi, not identifying as homosexual, acknowledges being with Pat as a response to the emotional wounds inflicted by Teboho.

“Indlela ayesemkhonze ngayo yileyo efana nayekhonze ngayo udadewabo. Wayengenalo kwanhlobo uthando lwakhe kodwa wayenothando lwemali yakhe... Wayengakaze amthande; kuSindi ubudlelwano babo babufana nobabangani noma obezingane zandawonye. Intukuthelo yakhe ngokuphoxwa nguTeboho, yiyo eyayimenza ukuthi ashintshe ukuqalaza. Wayengene kulempilo ngoba enenzondo ngabantu besilisa; hhayi ngoba engasophinde abenothando lwabo” (p. 49). (How she loved her was the same as how she loved her sister. She had no love for her, but she had a love for her money. She had never loved her. To Sindi, their relationship was like friends or siblings. Her anger at being humiliated by Teboho made her change her mind. She had entered this life because she hated men, not because she would never love them again).

While Pat tries to resolve the issues with the police, Pat's son, Lindokuhle, visits them during his university holidays. Sindi and Lindokuhle are the same age, and Sindi is described as attempting to seduce Lindokuhle, her stepson, who is also smitten by her beauty. However, before Sindi succeeds, Teboho convinces her to marry him and return to Johannesburg. Sindi agrees to this and runs away with Teboho, which leads to the end of her marriage with Pat.

5.3.3 The male antagonists

The four male characters in the book, namely Mthunzi, Thiza, Thula, and Tebogo, hail from Pietermaritzburg and Johannesburg and identify as black heterosexual men. The novel portrays them as exhibiting homophobic, violent, and abusive tendencies in their treatment of Pat and Sindi and their disapproval of same-sex marriage. Each character harbours distinct motives and actively works towards the failure of Pat and Sindi's

union, collaborating to devise a scheme to destroy their marriage. Even following the disruption of Pat and Sindi's wedding, Thiza Thusi, their wedding planner, remains unwavering in his pursuit of receiving his full fee. Interestingly, Thiza is friends with Teboho Baloyi, and together, they exploit their acquaintance Thula, a corrupt police captain, to extort money from the newlyweds.

Mthunzi Mthethwa and Teboho, the former partners of the couple, are depicted as morally deficient individuals who shirk paternal responsibilities after impregnating their respective partners. Teboho abandons Sindi during her pregnancy, only to resurface years later upon learning of her marriage. Motivated by the bride's price money, he endeavours to disrupt Sindi's marriage and reclaim her. Mthunzi, who met Pat at the University of Free State and is the father of Pat's son, proves to be an apathetic and narcissistic character, disavowing his paternity and disappearing, leaving Pat to raise their son, Lindokuhle, on her own. Mthunzi later engages in embezzlement while working for a municipality in KwaZulu-Natal, resulting in a 20-year sentence. Upon his release, he seeks out Pat, aiming to rekindle their relationship and play a role in raising their son.

5.4 Characterisation in uSihawu nesihawu

5.4.1 *USihawu indlalifa yasebukhosini*

The central figure in the short story is Sihawu Luthuli, a young and educated black man and the eldest son of the King of Swayimani. Due to his royal lineage, Sihawu was compelled to pursue studies in agriculture at university. In a notable difference, Sihawu's closest friend, Zweli Ngcolosi, who had recently shared the results of his fertility tests with him, had chosen to pursue a course of study in medicine. "*Njengendodana yenkosi, uSihawu wayofundela ezokufuya... yena-ke uZwakele wakwaNgcolosi waya kofundela ubudokotela*" (p. 1). (As the king's son, Sihawu went to study animal husbandry... and Zwakele went to study medicine). The narrative opens with a distressed Sihawu sitting by a river, reflecting on the test results that revealed he was sterile. These results threatened his future as the first-born son set to inherit kingship because his king's father broke tradition and informed the family that any of his sons to bear the heir first would succeed him.

“Ubaba wakhe ukubeke kwakhanya kwathi bha lapho ephangalalayo ukuthi ifa lakhe liyothathwa yileyo ndodana eyozala indlalifa phakathi kwakhe nomfowabo” (p. 1). (His father had made it clear that, when he died, his inheritance would be taken by the sons who would bear an heir between him and his brother).

The narrator provides the reader with context, explaining that the current King's choice is influenced by the historical fertility issues within the King's bloodline. This information sheds light on the revelation that neither the present king nor his predecessors were genuinely of royal blood. *“Kuze kubuse uyise kaSihawu nje, kwase kudlule izizukulwane ezintathu indlalifa ingazalwa kwaLuthuli”* (p. 1). (Until Sihawu's father became the king, three generations had passed without an heir being born to Luthulis).

Sihawu found himself deeply troubled by the test results, unable to comprehend how he, a man who considered himself robust and healthy, could be deemed sterile.

“Uchaza ukuthini, Dokotela? Mina eyami imizwa ayinalutho. Angizenyezi mina ngobudoda bami. Pho kusho insizwa yakwabo esukile yawushiya lo mhlaba. Ayiyinhle suka wena! Yinsizwa ziphelele. Noma besakhula oZwakele yayingekho insizwa enhle njengoSihawu” (p. 2). (What do you mean, doctor? There is nothing wrong with my hormones. I have no reservations about my manhood. So said the young man, who was tall and bold. He was handsome! A man among men. Even when Zwakele was still young, there was no handsome young man like Sihawu).

Sihawu was sitting and reflecting when he heard rustling by the riverside. He looks up to see the most gorgeous girl he has ever seen. He sexually assaults the girl out of rage and lust but later regrets it when he realises the negative consequences it will have for him as the king's son. To cover up his embarrassment, Sihawu asks the girl, Bathobile, to marry him in exchange for her keeping the rape a secret.

5.4.2 UBathobile omuhle noma esekhala

Bathobile Shandu, hailing from Maqhilika, is a distressed young black girl who has recently experienced the loss of her mother, with whom she lived and took care. Despite her challenges, Bathobile is characterised as a beautiful young girl, so much so that Sihawu regards her as the most beautiful he has ever seen. “*Athi lapho eyibheka, athole ukuthi yinhle ngendlela angakaze ayibone. Iyamangalisa*” (p. 3). (When he looks at her, he finds her attractive in a way he has never seen. She was terrific). Bathobile was so beautiful; she was gorgeous even when she was crying:

“Nanxa isikhale kwaze kwadumba amehlo, isalokhu iyinhle njalo nje... Yize ikhala ungafunga uthi iyamamatheka” (p. 3). (Even though she had cried her eyes out, she was as beautiful as ever ... Even when she was crying, you would swear she was smiling).

Following the passing of Bathobile's mother, she assumes her mother's role as a maid despite being underage for legal employment. However, after enduring the job for a few weeks, Bathobile resigns, finding it unbearable. This choice leaves her in a precarious situation – unable to sustain herself, facing difficulties in paying rent, and ultimately finding herself without a place to live.

“Ukusebenzela leliya Ndiya likamama kungehlulile...Aphendule ugogo, Hawu! Umntanomnatanami useze wavuvuka amehlo ukukhala, njengoba usemncane kangaka ubusuzosebenza kuze kube nini” (p. 6). (I have found working for Mom's Indian employer unbearable. Granny responds, my granddaughter's eyes are swollen from crying; since you are so young, how long were you going to work?).

Bathobile, facing a desperate situation after her mother's passing, reluctantly heads to her uncle's house in search of shelter and assistance, despite knowing that her uncle's wife dislikes her. On her way, she meets Sihawu, who chases and sexually assaults her in the forest. Following the assault, Sihawu professes his love for Bathobile and proposes marriage, offering his watch as a token until he returns weeks later to pay her *lobolo*. Due to her dire circumstances, Bathobile accepts Sihawu's proposal, as she has

no job and cannot stay with her uncle and grandmother due to her uncle's wife's dislike of her. True to his word, Sihawu marries her. The story then fast-forwards ten years, revealing a seemingly content Sihawu and Bathobile raising triplets. While the triplets do not physically resemble their father, they exhibit his traits, and their mother's beauty is evident in their features.

5.5 Analysis of the literary works

5.5.1 *The socialised concept of gender*

The socialised concept of gender is rooted in a patriarchal societal framework that is traditional, archaic, and systematically hierarchical (Oyěwùmí, 1997; Lugones, 2008; Lazaar, 2010). Official and informal social structures socialise their members to promote traditional gender norms that distinguish women and men. According to Lazaar (2010), social practices have a gendered aspect, and gender serves as an interpretive category that enables members of a society to understand and organise their social practices. Building on the work of Oyěwùmí (1997), Lugones (2007) elevates the relevance of sexual dimorphism in exercising patriarchy at economic, political, cultural, and cognitive levels as part of the colonisation process. Similar to race theory, sexual dimorphism relies on physical traits to reinforce and perpetrate polarity and inferiority. In addition to highlighting the importance of phenotypical attributes to colonial practices, Lugones (2007) contends that contemporary scientific techniques of assigning gender based on physical characteristics naturalise Eurocentric social constructs of civilised females and males. In this regard, Unger (2020) contends that gender serves as a social control mechanism, along with race, class, and other social categories, which denies gender its comprehensive cultural and systemic meaning and prevents it from being identified as a variable.

Pat, who is characterised as homosexual and masculine, does not subscribe to the normative concept of gender, as she typically does not fit the normative description of a girl or the associated characteristics and ascribed societal roles, and as a result, finds her being an object of inspection growing up. The text illustrates how patriarchal societies reject, marginalise and undermine gender non-conforming individuals in how the male characters interact with Pat. Pat is frequently questioned about why she identifies as a man when female. Teboho says to Pat:

Ngichazele kahle phela ukuthi ungubaba walapha ekhaya kanjani ngoba mina ngikubona ungumuntu wesifazane” (p. 19). (Explain to me how you are the father of this house because I see you as a woman).

Moreover, the text reveals that because of Pat’s gender non-conformity, she is often called names and labelled using her sexual orientation, as shown in Table 5.1 below.

LABELS GIVEN TO LESBIANS WITHIN THE TEXT		
CHARACTER	LABEL	TRANSLATION
Teboho, Thula, Thiza	Umfana-ntombazane	A boy-girl
Teboho	Intokazi ezenza insizwa	A lady pretending to be a young man
Teboho, Thula, Thiza	Indoda mbumbulu	A fake man
Thula	Umyeni wakho onamabele	Your husband with boobs
Sindi, Thula	Umfazindoda	Woman-man
Teboho, Thula, Thiza, Mthunzi	Ubaba-mbumbulu	Fake father
Teboho	Usisi-bhuthi	Sister-brother

Table 5.1: Labels given to homosexuals

Due to the influence of gendered socialisation, rooted in the belief system that only two acceptable gender categories exist – female and male – Pat and Sindi locate and confine their understandings of marital roles within this binary framework. This perspective frequently raises tensions between them as they grapple with societal expectations and norms associated with traditional gender roles. In a brawl between the newlyweds, Sindi shouts at Pat and says, “*Yeyi wena mfazi ndini!*” (p.32). (Hey, you bloody woman!). Pat asks: If I am a woman, what are you? Pat asks Sindi if she is now oblivious to her being her man, to which Sindi replies:

“Mina anginayo indoda enamabele njengami engenantshebe... Umfazi uwena, uyezwa? Mina angiyena umfazi, ngiwumfazindoda” (p.33). (I do not have a man with breasts, who does not have a beard like me... You are a woman. Do you understand? I am not a woman; I am a woman-man).

Unger (2020) contends that *femaleness* and *maleness*, gender, and sex are social constructs that are validated by sexual characteristics, self-presentation, social roles, and statuses, maintained for consistency, identification, and the desire for individuals to behave in societally conforming ways.

5.5.2 *Heterosexuality as the only norm*

The texts reveal instances of women who challenge dominant ideologies of sexuality and define themselves differently. The text presents Sindi as a free character who has had an abortion twice, which represents a pro-choice narrative. Pat is a leader of the *Gays and Lesbians Network*, which believes in marrying whomever they choose. Nevertheless, they still regularly encounter heterosexism, sexism, and sexual violence because of the multiple social positions they occupy as black, homosexual, and female. Although gender has often been legally and socially divided into two categories, Lorber (2000) and Crenshaw (1991) argue that gender is not a binary status for people as it overlaps with other important social identities such as race, ethnicity, class, religion, and sexual orientation. Our social identities are, in this regard, built on interrelated systems influenced by our positionality and mediated by all our other identities (Crenshaw, 1991; Hudson-Weems, 2019; Núñez et al., 2019). To further articulate the former, our multiple identities experienced in different social settings during particular social and cultural contexts within interlocking systems of advantage and oppression describe the intersectionality of our identities (Núñez et al., 2019).

Belonging to the dominant middle-class social group, Pat and Sindi held cultural capital, a concept articulated by Bourdieu (1986) to denote acquired capital through education rather than inheritance. This cultural capital played a crucial role in enabling them to negotiate improved life positions. However, their complex positionality as black, homosexual, and female minorities within their specific historical, cultural, and social context exposed them to triple jeopardy. Membership in these targeted groups compounded their challenges, emphasising the intersectionality of their identities and the unique obstacles posed by their simultaneous inclusion in multiple marginalised categories. In this regard, Mack and Na’puti (2019) state that “Gender-nonconforming people experience heightened levels of violence, and the intersecting concerns of homophobic, racist, and transphobic violence may place them in ‘triple jeopardy’ as they experience systemic violence and discrimination by individuals in positions of power” (p. 351).

When Pat is arrested under false pretence for Thiza to extort money from her, the texts reveal that her sexual orientation mainly propels her experience of this event. For example, Thula threatens Pat with her sexuality and says:

“Ngifuna ukukuvalela namanye amadoda ngoba nawe uyindoda... Hhawu phela ngeke sikwazi ukufaka nesifazane lo. Indoda enomkayo singayifaka kanjani nabantu besifazane” (p. 51). (I want to lock you up with other men because you are also a man... After all, we cannot put you with other women. A man who has a wife, how can we put him with women).

Pat's experience is uniquely shaped by her race and sexual orientation. The prospect of being confined by men due to her identity as a woman compels her to relinquish all her financial resources. Exploiting his position of power, Thula, a police officer, abuses his authority to intimidate Pat, repeatedly intruding into her home to extort money until she is left destitute and compelled to return to her hometown. These incidents underscore the systematic oppression, repression, and lack of equitable legal protection faced by black homosexual women during this specific political and socioeconomic era in South Africa. The narrative reveals a stark reality where Pat is unable to seek legal recourse or protection, as the law itself becomes an instrument of exploitation and torment against her. Adding weight to this narrative, Sindi also highlights in the text her inability to find legal protection after Pat subjected her to a brutal assault.

“We amaphoyisa, my love, angiwacabangi! Angisazikhathazi mina ngokulokhu ngibikela amaphoyisa uma ngishaywe nguPat. Uma ngike ngawabikela ngigcina sengiyinhlekisa futhi sengihlukumezeke kakhulu. A vele angibuze emehlweni ukuthi mina ngangishadelani nomunye umuntu wesifazane nami ngingowesifazane. Loyo mbuzo uvele ungicike ngoba basuke bebuza into engeke isakwazi ubuyela emuva” (p. 87). (Oh no! I do not consider the police, my love. I do not bother myself with reporting to the police when Pat physically assaults me. When I report, I end up being a joke and humiliated. The police asked me why I married another woman when I was also a woman. That question defeats me because they ask something I can't take back).

Throughout the novel, the male characters discourage and mock Pat and Sindi's same-sex marriage. When other corrupt police officers, who are part of Thula's team that Thiza hires, invade the couple's home and learn that they are in a same-sex marriage, they tell Sindi, "They are not here for jokes". The narrator adds that during this encounter, the thieves were so astonished by this union that they questioned whether it was true or if Sindi was joking.

Wahleka uTeboho wabheka phansi wanikina ikhanda. Wayezibuza eziphendula ukuthi kungabe udukile noma nje uhlangane nosomahlaya wentokazi ezenza insizwa" (p. 18). (Teboho laughed, looked down and shook his head. He wondered whether he had lost his way or had just met a clown of a woman pretending to be a young man).

The police continue to laugh at the couple and go on to call their union a sin, "*Miningi imikhuba eninayo lapha ekhaya. Nithandana nodwa, nilumisa abantu ngezinja. Yonke nje imigilingwane ibuzwa kinina*" (p. 45). (You have many habits here. You are homosexuals; you let your dogs out to bite people. You are into all sorts of pranks). Frustrated by the necessity of paying to avoid being incarcerated with males once more, Pat turns to a brief prayer, seeking divine assistance. Thula, finding amusement in the notion of a lesbian praying, takes the opportunity to assert that homosexuality is a sin, contending that Pat is deemed unfit to pray to God while living in what he perceives as a state of sin.

This study employs Maria Lugones' (2003) essay on '*Heterosexualism and the Colonial/Modern Gender System*' for a comprehensive decolonial feminist analysis, aiming to debunk heterosexism within the context of the textual analysis. Lugones (2003) argues that examining knowledge about sex, gender, and sexuality within the frameworks of modernity and coloniality expands theoretical approaches to confronting the gendered dynamics inherent in colonialism. Positioned as a critical framework, heterosexualism underscores the foundational role of gender, sex, and sexuality in modernity and coloniality. Lugones (2003) advocates for the utilisation of heterosexualism as a theoretical foundation for challenging, deconstructing, and resisting the contemporary gendered system. She encourages its application in collective actions against hegemony and to critique race, colonialism, and heterosexual

gender oppression through lived transformation. Lugones (2003) asserts that this framework is instrumental in investigating the specificity and multiplicity of knowledge related to sexuality and gender while challenging the enduring influence of colonial power on gender dynamics (Lugones, 2003).

Heterosexualism, according to Lugones (2007), is inexorably linked to coloniality. Sexual dimorphism, patriarchy, and heterosexuality serve as the foundations of the colonial gender system, which is also racialised. Race and racial differences are articulated through gender and sexuality, and heterosexualism racialises both. Gendered and racialised violence against indigenous women and queer and transgender peoples stems from heterosexuality, and relationships between indigenous people continue to be harmed by the colonial categorisation of people along a strict binary of sexual difference and according to gendered hierarchy. Thus, heterosexuality is a gendered and racialised dynamic not only between colonised peoples and colonisers but also between colonised people (Lugones, 2007). To further articulate the latter, the hegemonic gender system that colonialism imposed reinforced hierarchical relationships among colonised people, creating hostile social relations between colonised women and men.

Lugones (2003) contends Eurocentric thinking is so universalised that it constructs humanity and relationships as intrinsically hierarchical and categoric. Even though constructs of race, gender and sexuality have been naturalised and made ubiquitous, she maintains that these are colonial ideas seeking to dehumanise and dispossess colonised people. She calls on decolonial thinkers to challenge and deconstruct these categorisations as temporally, culturally and geographically specific rather than universal and unchangeable (Lugones, 2003).

5.5.3 *Sexual violence towards Black females and homosexuals*

Sexualised violence towards females and gender non-conforming people as a theme that emerged from the analysis of the texts echoes the arguments raised in previous sections. A decolonial feminist perspective understands gendered violence, such as sexual assault, as part of colonial violence (Fanon, 1952), underlining that it is a social issue which, at various intersections, reinforces white supremacy, patriarchy,

heterosexuality, gender binarity, and capitalism. Hence, gender construction, race, and heteronormativity in modernity contribute to gendered violence (Crenshaw, 2018; Lugones, 2007; 2010; Mack et al., 2018). Gendered violence is a dominant theme that emerged prominently from the analysed texts. The entire novel is filled with passages exposing sexual harassment towards Pat and Sindi, who are also presented as excessively sexual and constantly objectified.

Pat is not only a victim of extortion but must deal with Thula's demand for sex as a condition for her release. When Thula takes Pat in, claiming to take her to prison, he instead drives her to a deserted area, removes his tie and shoes, unbuckles his belt and makes unwarranted advances. Thula asserts that Pat's exceptional beauty should not be wasted on a relationship with another woman, contending that he can only secure her release from imprisonment if she agrees to have sex with him. He manipulatively offers Pat his protection from imprisonment on false accusations in exchange for sexual favours. This coercive proposal culminates in an unwelcome hug and kisses from Thula, leaving Pat in a distressing situation. Thula responds sternly as she attempts to wipe her lips in protest, compelling Pat to comply by licking her lips instead.

“Ungakhohlwa ukuthi mina ngisiza wena. Umuntu osenkingeni nguwena, hhayi mina. Kunzima kabi ukusiza umuntu ele kude kwenhliziyo yakho. Ukuze ngizwelane nawe kumele nawe uzwelane nami” (p. 57). (Do not forget I am helping you. The person in trouble is you, not me. It is tough to help someone who is far from your heart. For me to sympathise with you, you must sympathise with me).

Despite having no intention of ever accepting Thula's coercive proposal, Pat finds herself compelled to acquiesce due to the relentless visits from the police. The situation is exacerbated by the fact that the police have also assaulted her wife. Faced with limited options and a desperate need for protection, Pat reluctantly accepts Thula, believing that aligning herself with him may provide a semblance of security in the face of continued harassment and violence.

The narrative unfolds the lived experiences of Pat and Sindi, both middle-class black female homosexuals, emphasising how the intersections of these identities shape their experiences with gendered violence as depicted in the book. Drawing on insights from Lugones (2010) and Figueroa (2020), a decolonial feminist framework is applied to illuminate the interconnectedness of identities in the lived experiences of African individuals. This framework seeks to expose how target identities contribute to racialised gender and sexual violence, phenomena deeply rooted in the legacy of colonisation. Decolonial feminism recognises that black and colonised women face distinct forms of sexual and gender-based violence in varied ways. To comprehend the systematic violence endured by these women, an examination of the intersections of race, class, gender, and sexuality is necessary (Lugones, 2007; Orozco, 2019).

Lugones (2007, 2010) contends that within a patriarchal modern/colonial society where gendered violence is normalised, acts of violence against black and colonised women, along with other gender non-conforming individuals, serve as affirmations of masculinity. Gendered violence is, from a decolonial feminist perspective, therefore, an aspect of colonial violence. Given that colonised women must navigate interrelated systems of oppression, an analysis of gendered violence must consider the intertwined processes of heteronormativity, racialisation, and gender binaries within modernity/coloniality (Lugones, 2007; 2010; Mack et al., 2018).

The depiction of female characters in the selected texts often implies their victimisation through acts of violence tied to their physical attributes. Thula explicitly suggests that Pat's attractiveness renders her unfit for marriage to another woman, insisting that she must engage in sexual intercourse with him for him to offer assistance. This underscores the troubling narrative of coercion and violence inflicted upon these characters based on societal expectations and prejudiced views regarding their appearance and sexual orientation. According to the narrator, Pat is reminded that she is a woman from birth and is flattered to hear that she is “*indoni yamanzi*” (a beautiful dark-skinned woman) who deserves to be with a handsome man who will treat her well and show her things. The reader is given the impression that Pat is smitten by her assailant and the concept of exchanging sexual intercourse for her freedom.

Similarly, the narrative in *USihawu nesihawu* seems to rationalise Bathobile's being sexually assaulted by Sihawu. Sihawu is faced with the dilemma of infertility, which jeopardises his claim to his birthright without an heir. The narrator rationalises Sihawu's actions by attributing raping Bathobile to an apparent internal conflict, citing her irresistible nature as a temptation to which Sihawu succumbed:

“Nansi intombazane enhle ngendlela emangalisayo; nansi inkanuko; nansi impi elwayo ngaphakathi enhliziyweni yakhe. Ilwisana nenkulumo kadokotela ekuseni. Inkanuko nentukuthelo kumnqobe uSihawu” (p. 3). (Here is a gorgeous woman; here is lust; here is the war raging inside his heart, fighting the doctor's speech in the morning. Lust and anger overcame Sihawu).

As the narrative above explains, Bathobile's beauty, similar to Pat's, implicated her in being sexually assaulted. This justification within the narrative further complicates the portrayal of sexual violence and underscores the deeply ingrained gender norms and expectations that contribute to such incidents.

The passage goes on to detail the sexual assault Bathobile encounters in the forest:

“Yintombazane... iyabaleka, futhi ayigijimi, ishiya isithunzi sayo. Kuthi ngoba eyindoda ayifice ayibambe ngqi ngengalo. Izabalaze intombazane ikhale ubumayemaye. Lobu buhle bayo bugcinelwe bani? Iyakhala izama ukuphunyuka, kodwa ayinqobe uSihawu” (p. 3). (It is a girl...she is running, she is running so fast she leaves her shadow behind. But because he is a man, he catches her and holds her firmly by the arm. She struggled and cried out. For whom is this beauty reserved? She cries and tries to escape, but Sihawu overpowers her).

This text exposes not only the harrowing experiences of abuse that African women must endure but also the ways that toxic masculinity and entrenched patriarchal beliefs contribute to a sense of vindication or justification for unacceptable male behaviours. The explanation that Sihawu sexually assaulted Bathobile because her beauty enamoured him implies a disturbing notion that her attractiveness somehow justified

the assault. This narrative further highlight how men's wants and feelings, such as Sihawu feeling anger and lust, are elevated above those of their female counterparts in a patriarchal society, providing a pretext for the perpetuation of gendered violence.

The short story also presents how Sihawu perceived his barbaric act and the consequences he faced for violating Bathobile. Upon realising the gravity of his actions, Sihawu's primary concern is the shame this would bring to his royal family instead of the pain and suffering to which this will subject Bathobile. As the king's son, Sihawu reflects on his actions and compares himself to a dog, revealing the broader societal implications associated with his royal lineage:

"Ibuye ingqondo kuSihawu. Kodwa ngempela le ngane yabantu yenzeni? Kanti kuliqiniso ukuthi umuntu wesilisa uyafana nenja?" (Sihawu's mind returned. But, what did this girl do? And is it true that a man is like a dog?)

Sihawu reflects on his standing as the next in line for kingship. However, as can be discerned from the above, his contemplation is not based on remorse for his actions, but on the impact this incident might have on his personal reputation and the overall image of his family.

"Leli hlazo asezifake kulona? Khona manje lisu lini elingamkhipha kula manyala? Luthi alumqede uvalo ukuthi le ntombazane iyamazi. Pho enzenjani? Habe! Konje angase aboshwe ngalesi senzo? Lona izwe lizothini uma lizwa ihlazo elingaka alenzile? Enzenjani?" (p. 4). (This shame he has put himself in. Now, what is the strategy that can get him out of this obscenity? He gets paralysed with fear when he remembers that this girl knows him. So, what should he do? My goodness! he may be arrested for this act? What will the Kingdom say when they learn of the abomination he has committed? What must he do?).

Sihawu, the son of a king, has the advantage of marrying Bathobile and avoiding the repercussions of his conduct. He proposes to Bathobile, who unfortunately does not enjoy the same privileges as him, believing that this will save him from the consequences of his actions. Bathobile, who is a minor with no parents and no current

prospects, agrees to this proposal even after Sihawu has raped her. As narrated, Bathobile consoles herself with the fact that every cloud has a silver lining and how the wealth of marrying the son of a king might make her aunt like her better.

“Uma esefika nale ndaba yokuthi useyogana ebukhosini, mhlawumbe umalumekazi wakhe uzomamukela kangcono, nakhu phela useza nengcebo” (p. 5). (When she arrives with the news that she is to marry into royalty, maybe her uncle’s wife will accept her better; she will bring wealth to the family).

Rape has been used historically and now by colonialists as a means of control over and against Indigenous peoples’ bodies to eradicate their sovereignty and way of life (Lugones, 2007; Deer, 2015). Hence, from a decolonial feminist perspective, gendered violence could be regarded as an expression of colonialism (Mack et al., 2018). Drawing on Quijano's idea of the *coloniality of power*, Lugones (2010) contends that colonial epistemologies normalise colonial relations of power, not just across racial and economic boundaries but also regarding gender and sexuality. Gender dichotomisation is thus a colonial tool and control tactic that is used to inscribe dominant gender configurations on indigenous bodies. (Lugones, 2007). In this regard, Deer (2015) contends that recognising rape as a political construct and a by-product of colonialism is necessary for developing an authentic anti-rape movement that challenges *colonial violence*.

The narrative opens with a detailed explanation of the king’s choice to have whichever of his sons have an heir to succeed him because there had been issues with conceiving in the Luthuli family for the past three generations. As is customary in isiZulu culture, once the older women in the family notice a problem of conception between newlyweds, they accost the husband’s brother to follow the bride when she goes woodcutting to impregnate her to continue the family monarchy covertly.

“Kwayona inkosi ekhotheme sengathi yavela ngoba izalukazi sezikhulume nomfowabo wenkosi ongesiye owasendlunkulu. Wayalwa ukuthi axazulule lesisimo ngokuphelezela indlunkulu yomnewabo lapho iyotheza. Lelo usiko lokuzalela umfowenu lapho sekubonakala ukuthi akazali” (p. 2).

(Even the previous king was born after the older women had accosted his brother, who was not born of the same wife. He was requested to resolve the situation by following the queen, when she was going to fetch wood. That was the tradition to assist your brother to have children when it is apparent that he cannot bear his children).

Although not explicitly stated, this explanation implies that a wife is often forced to have sex with her brother-in-law to bear a child for her husband. In this regard, the burden of continuing the bloodline is placed on the woman, even if it means that she must have sex with her brother-in-law. The story concludes with Bathobile and Sihawu enjoying a happy ten-year marriage and having triplets, who resemble Sihawu but take after his mannerisms to emphasise to the reader that Bathobile has followed tradition and becomes impregnated by her brother-in-law and carries on the family lineage.

Rubaya (2022) argues that the subjugation and discrimination that most women have experienced have been in real life as well as in literary representations. Historically, literature has been placed in the same category as other superstructures of society, such as religion, culture, the media, and other sources of hegemony that males have exploited to continue controlling women (Rubaya, 2022). Men and women have frequently been portrayed in literature, especially by male authors, in ways that mirror the disparities seen in patriarchal ideology (Nwapa, 1998). According to Oyewole and Omowunmi (2013), the narratives of the past, constructed and authored by men, are narrow-minded and prejudiced against women. Moreover, male authors have diminished the roles and characters of women by projecting their own prejudices and cultural realities as an intrinsic reality under the pretext of fictional writing. Men usually have dominant roles and identities characterised by intuition, self-determination, power, and free will, among many other positive identities. Women's characterisations are frequently 'edited' to conform to the passivity and domestication that patriarchal societies expect of women (Rubaya, 2022).

5.6 Conclusion

The analysis of the selected literature reveals a predominant influence of socialised concepts of gender and sexuality, including heterosexuality, patriarchy, and cultural

expressions of society, which often result in unfavourable representations of women. Nayar's (2006) concept of representation incorporates conventions of meaning-generating behaviours, where ideological dominance, selective marginalisation, and power are intricately linked to the portrayal of characters. According to Nayar (2006), representations of women and minorities draw from normalised societal or cultural conceptions of these subjects, emphasising that character portrayal should not be taken at face value. Instead, it should be understood concerning prevailing societal perceptions of gender.

In this context, women's roles and characters emerge as objects subject to control and possession for masculine dominance within the cultural framework from which the literary works originate. Most texts analysed depict scenarios where males exert dominance and control over women, justified under the pretext of normalised gender relations, heterosexuality, and culture. This perpetuates gender inequalities through literary works.

The study further identifies that the portrayal of gender in the selected literary texts and the characterisation of individuals actively contribute to gender inequality. These texts illuminate instances of gendered violence against women and gender non-conforming individuals, as well as manifestations of sexism, toxic masculinity, homophobia, and other patriarchal attitudes deemed socially acceptable within the prescribed isiZulu literature. Overall, the literary landscape examined serves as a reflective mirror of societal norms and values, underscoring the urgent need for critical examination and transformation of these ingrained gender dynamics.

CHAPTER SIX: CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 Introduction

This chapter serves as the conclusion to the dissertation, with the primary objective of presenting key arguments and summarising the conclusions drawn from the research. A recap of the findings discussed in Chapter Five is provided. Subsequently, attention is directed towards discussing the limitations inherent in the study, followed by providing ideas and recommendations for future research. The chapter culminates with a concise conclusion, effectively tying together the main points and elevating critical issues that emerged from the study.

6.2 Summary of findings

The post-apartheid educational framework in South Africa, established by The Bill of Rights and the National Education Policy Act 27 of 1996, was designed to eradicate historical inequalities and foster the democratic values of the nation. A critical aspect of this transformation was the promotion of gender equality, a principle absent in the prior apartheid schooling system known for its sexism, discrimination, and injustice (DoE, 1999; GCE, 2007). To expose learners to a broad spectrum of concepts and experiences, Learning and Teaching Support Materials (LTSMs) were intended to promote diversity and democracy within classrooms.

In this specific context, the focus of the study was to assess the alignment of gender representation with principles of gender equality and the objectives outlined in the national curriculum policy statement. By examining a predetermined set of isiZulu literary works, the research sought to understand the representations of gender within the framework of the post-apartheid curriculum. This study examined how selected literary materials contributed to or deviated from the intended goals of fostering gender equality and democratic values within the educational landscape.

Examining empirical studies on gender representation in literature has brought to light a significant concern. The findings indicate a prevalent issue of gender stereotyping that contributes to the perpetuation of gender inequalities. However, a closer look at studies focusing on African literary works reveals a more nuanced picture. Some

African authors demonstrated a sensitivity to gender issues in their writings, actively challenging patriarchal norms by portraying bold female characters who defied societal norms and resisted oppressive systems. Despite these positive examples, the scrutiny of international and South African literature unveiled the persistent presence of gender disparities. These disparities were particularly noticeable in works employing sexist language and endorsing patriarchal ideologies, highlighting the ongoing challenges in achieving gender equality within the literary landscape.

The application of Feminist Critical Discourse Analysis (FCDA) to thoroughly examine the texts within the chosen conceptual framework revealed notable findings. The literary works were found to harbour socialised conceptions of gender that actively promoted stereotypical portrayals of both men and women. Within the narratives, heterosexism manifested in various forms, including homophobia and the exertion of dominance and control over female bodies. Disturbingly, instances of sexual violence against gender non-conforming individuals and Black females were present in both books, depicting a troubling pattern of abuse, exploitation, and harassment directed at these individuals based on factors such as ethnicity, sexual orientation, location, and social status.

Furthermore, the representations within the literature implicated culture as an oppressive structure that reinforced heterosexism and perpetuated patriarchal beliefs. Men were consistently depicted as being homophobic, sexist, and leveraging their positions of authority to exert control and engage in sexual abuse against women. This analysis uncovered a complex web of gendered injustices within the literary works, shedding light on the multifaceted ways in which socialised conceptions of gender, heterosexism, and patriarchal norms are perpetuated and reinforced within the narrative fabric of these texts.

Based on these results, I contend that the novel's author exposes gender disparities by using bold characterisations that disrupt gendered expectations and by developing female characters who reflect the modern realities of financially independent, self-sufficient women free to live their lives. However, these women face sexism, homophobia, and sexual assault because of their race, sexual orientation, and socioeconomic status. The author reveals how women who challenge social and

cultural norms are victimised, oppressed, and subjugated through characters, settings, and storylines in their works. The author highlights the brutality that is inflicted upon Black women who identify as homosexual, as well as how homophobia fuels gendered violence. The texts also highlight the harsh treatment of women who identify as homosexual by some enforcement officers who exploit, take advantage of, and rape women. The author illustrates the painful realities of the lived experiences of Black women in South Africa and shows how contemporary society has not progressed to be inclusive of all people.

In contrast, based on the findings of the short story, I argue that this work reinforces gender inequality by promoting patriarchy as reflected through cultural norms. The narrative is based on an instance of sexual assault of a woman by a king's son. The king's son bears no consequences for raping the woman but instead uses his social status to make her a wife. The king's son, instead of being concerned about the pain and suffering his actions will subject the woman to, he is concerned about how his actions will impact his family's reputation. In this regard, this text suggests the romanticisation of sexual violence and how cultural observations might legitimise rape. The story conceals violence against women by elevating men's fragility and subjecting women to subordinate social positions – and reproducing and perpetrating toxic masculinities and gender inequality and inequity.

6.3 Limitations of the study

Like any research endeavour, this study is not without its inherent limitations. Acknowledging and discussing these limitations is crucial to provide a comprehensive understanding of the scope and applicability of the research findings. The primary limitations identified in this study are discussed below.

Firstly, the study analysed only two literary works out of the four genres prescribed for the FET Phase. While this decision was made for practical reasons, it inherently restricts the diversity and breadth of the analysed material. Consequently, the findings may not fully capture the range of perspectives and themes in the broader spectrum of isiZulu literature.

Secondly, the sample was confined to Grade 11 networks within the FET Phase. This narrow focus on a specific grade level limits the generalisability of the study's results. The experiences and representations of gender within other grades or phases of education may differ significantly, rendering the findings less applicable to the entirety of isiZulu literature in the South African educational context.

Thirdly, given the study's specific sample and scope, caution must be exercised in generalising the findings to represent all prescribed isiZulu literature in South Africa. The unique characteristics of different genres, grades, and phases may contribute to variations in the portrayal of gender, thereby necessitating a more comprehensive and diverse sample for a broader understanding.

Lastly, the deployment of Feminist Critical Discourse Analysis (FCDA) to generate and analyse data introduces the possibility of bias. The researcher's subjective interpretation, informed by personal biases or preconceptions, could influence the analysis and interpretation of the gendered lens. It is essential to acknowledge this inherent subjectivity and interpret the findings with a recognition of potential researcher bias.

Considering these limitations, readers and researchers must approach the study's findings with a cautious understanding of its constraints. The outcomes should be considered within the specific context of the chosen sample and methodology, and caution should be exercised in extrapolating the findings to broader contexts or populations. Additionally, future research endeavours must address these limitations by incorporating more diverse samples and employing complementary research methodologies to enhance the comprehensiveness and reliability of the findings.

6.4 Recommendations for future research

The exploration of gender representation in isiZulu literature offers valuable insights, and avenues for future research in this field can be identified to enhance the comprehensiveness and applicability of findings. The following ideas and recommendations are proposed for future studies:

- **Extend analysis across FET Phase Grades:** While the current study focuses on Grade 11 isiZulu literature, the FET Phase comprises three grades, namely, Grades 10, 11, and 12. To obtain a comprehensive understanding of gender representation and its implications on gender equality, future research is recommended to extend the analysis to include isiZulu literature in Grade 10 and Grade 12. This expansion would contribute to a more nuanced exploration of how gender is represented in literary works across the FET Phase.
- **Incorporate all genres of networks:** The networks in the FET Phase consist of four genres, namely novels, poetry, drama, and short stories. Future studies should consider including texts from all genres to obtain richer and more comprehensive results. Analysing gender representation across diverse literary forms will provide a more holistic view of how gender roles and identities are depicted within isiZulu literature.
- **Cross-linguistic comparative analyses:** Extending the investigation beyond isiZulu literature, future research can explore gender representation in literature from other official languages offered in the FET Phase. Comparative analyses across languages can shed light on whether similar biases and patterns exist in representations of gender, contributing to a more in-depth understanding of the cultural and linguistic dimensions of gender portrayal in literature.
- **Exploration of alternative Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) methodologies:** While this study employed Fairclough's Three-Dimensional Model (2015) for analysis, future research could explore alternative CDA methodologies. Recommendations include considering Gee's CDA model (2005) or Huckin's model of framing and analyses (1997) to analyse gender representations in literary works. Employing different CDA methodologies will bring diverse perspectives and analytical approaches to the study of gender representation, enriching the depth and credibility of findings.

These proposed avenues for future research seek to broaden the scope and depth of the inquiry into gender representations in isiZulu literature. By exploring different grades, genres, languages, and methodological approaches, subsequent studies can contribute to a more nuanced and comprehensive understanding of how literature shapes and reflects societal perceptions of gender.

6.5 Conclusion

In conclusion, the findings from this study underscore the presence of gender bias within isiZulu literary works prescribed for the FET Phase, prompting a critical reflection on the success of the Department of Education's efforts to instil democratic values in South African classrooms through literature. The analysis of the examined literary texts reveals a hindrance to gender equality within the educational context. Contrary to the National Curriculum Statement's (NCS) mandate to provide equitable and fair education, it becomes evident that gender, as a potent form of social construction, has not been fully acknowledged in the pursuit of advancing modernity/coloniality.

As articulated in the conceptual framework, discourse plays a pivotal role in perpetuating the modern/colonial gender system, inherently racial and hierarchical. The literature under scrutiny aligns with and reinforces these ideologies, emphasising the critical need to examine curricular materials. The curricula in schools must be meticulously curated to ensure the implementation of equitable pedagogy within the South African education system. This demands a deliberate selection of literary works that reflect the diverse experiences and perspectives of all learners and actively contribute to challenging and dismantling existing gender biases within the educational landscape.

In this regard, this research calls for a reconsideration of the curricular choices made in the pursuit of equitable education, emphasising the influential role literature plays in shaping societal norms and perceptions of gender. By addressing and rectifying gender biases within educational materials, there is an opportunity to contribute positively to fostering a more inclusive and equitable educational environment aligned with the democratic values of South Africa.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A: ETHICAL CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE



Ms Nomonde Cele (222121639)
School Of Education
Pietermaritzburg

Dear Ms Nomonde Cele,

Original application number: 00020080

Project title: A Decolonial Feminist Investigation of Gender Representation in IsiZulu Literature in the Further Education and Training Phase

Exemption from Ethics Review

In response to your application received on _____, your school has indicated that the protocol has been granted **EXEMPTION FROM ETHICS REVIEW**.

Any alteration/s to the exempted research protocol, e.g., Title of the Project, Location of the Study, Research Approach and Methods must be reviewed and approved through an amendment/modification prior to its implementation. The original exemption number must be cited.

For any changes that could result in potential risk, an ethics application including the proposed amendments must be submitted to the relevant UKZN Research Ethics Committee. The original exemption number must be cited.

In case you have further queries, please quote the above reference number.

PLEASE NOTE:

Research data should be securely stored in the discipline/department for a period of 5 years.

I take this opportunity of wishing you everything of the best with your study.

Yours sincerely,



24 April 2023

Dr Cedric Bheki Mpungose
Academic Leader Research
School Of Education

APPENDIX B: TURNITIN RECEIPT



Digital Receipt

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ABSTRACT

Literature is considered an essential educational resource in South Africa to aid teaching and learning. Learners can also learn about society's ideals through literary works. The paucity of knowledge on the kinds of texts that are recommended and the underlying ideologies that these teach learners is noteworthy. It is important because little is known about the kinds of recommended texts and the underlying beliefs that these teach learners. From this perspective, it is important to determine if gender representation in literature promotes gender equality. Therefore, this study aims to understand how gender is represented in isiZulu literature prescribed to educators and learners in the Further Education and Training (FET) phase in South Africa. This qualitative study is located in the decolonial paradigm and engages the tenets of feminist critical discourse analysis as its primary analytical framework. A purposive sample of two isiZulu literatures was selected to investigate the phenomenon of gender representation.

The results revealed that the selected texts perpetuate negative stereotypes of both men and women. The investigation found that patriarchy, heterosexuality, socialisation, and cultural modification of society that often picture women negatively all play significant roles in how characters are portrayed in isiZulu literature. The literary works depict scenarios in which men dominate and control women under the pretence of heterosexuality, normalised gender relations, and cultural customs. The results show that representations in the literary works are gender-biased and gender-inclusive. A critical approach to the selection of literature is required as it is concerning that these representations are being taught to learners in schools. Key stakeholders in the education department have a lot of work ahead of them to ensure that South African isiZulu prescribed literature incorporates gender inclusion.

APPENDIX C: CERTIFICATE FROM LANGUAGE EDITOR

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Date: 26 December 2023

CERTIFICATE OF LANGUAGE EDITING TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN

This is to certify that the thesis bearing the provisional title *A Decolonial Feminist Investigation of Gender Representation in IsiZulu Literature in the Further Education and Training Phase*, to be submitted by Nomonde Cele has been edited for language correctness and spelling, consistency, coherence, and completeness of the list of references and cited authors, by Ntwintwi Proofreading and Editing Solutions. Neither the research content and substance nor the author's intentions were altered in any way during the editing process.

Ntwintwi guarantees the quality of English language in this thesis, provided our editor's changes are accepted and further changes made to the thesis are checked by our editor.

Yours sincerely,



JABULANI NGCOBO

NTWINTWI PROOFREADING AND EDITING SOLUTIONS