

UNIVERSITY OF KWAZULU NATAL

**INVESTIGATION INTO THE PORTRAYAL OF FEMALE CHARACTERS IN SELECTED
ISIZULU NOVELS AFTER THE YEAR 2000: AN AFRICAN WOMANIST LITERARY
APPROACH**

SICELO CYRIL SHABALALA

2019

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APPROACH**

BY

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UNIVERSITY OF KWAZULA NATAL

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**A THESIS SUBMITTED IN FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENT FOR THE
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Declaration

I, Sicelo Cyril Shabalala, student number 209519162, hereby declare that the thesis for the Bachelor of Arts Masters (IsiZulu Studies) is my own work and that it has not previously been submitted for assessment to another University or for another qualification.

Signature

Date

Dedication

I dedicate this thesis to my late father, Maloji Elphas Shabalala and my mother Zibuyile Bester Shabalala for your tireless effort of wanting best for me. I inscribe this study to my sister, Sindiswa Zamaswazi Shabalala, who was supportive and concerned during my study.

Table of contents

| | |
|---|-----------|
| Declaration | i |
| Dedication | ii |
| Table of contents | iii |
| Acknowledgements | v |
| Abstract | vi |
| Chapter 1: Conceptualisation of the study | 1 |
| 1.1 Brief motivation/ Background | 1 |
| 1.2 Research Problems and Objectives: Key Questions to be asked | 2 |
| 1.3 Review of Literature | 3 |
| 1.4 Theoretical framework | 8 |
| 1.4.1 Western feminism | 9 |
| 1.4.2 African feminism and African womanist literary criticism | 10 |
| 1.5 Research Methods / Approach to Study | 15 |
| 1.5.1 Research paradigm and research strategies | 15 |
| 1.5.2 Research design and method of data analysis | 16 |
| 1.5.2.1 Sampling procedure | 17 |
| 1.6 Data analysis methodology | 18 |
| 1.6.1 Validity of the study | 18 |
| 1.6.2 Reliability of the study | 19 |
| 1.6.3 Rigour of the study | 19 |
| 1.6.4 Structure of dissertation | 20 |
| Chapter 2: <i>Impi Yabomdabu Isethunjini</i> (2002) | 21 |
| 2.1 Introduction | 21 |

| | |
|---|-----|
| 2.2 Analysis of <i>Impi Yabomdabu Isethunjini</i> | 21 |
| 2.3 Summary of the depiction of female characters | 43 |
| Chapter 3: <i>Kunjalo-ke</i> (2008) | 45 |
| 3.1 Introduction | 45 |
| 3.2 Analysis of <i>Kunjalo-ke</i> | 45 |
| 3.3 Summary of the depiction of female characters | 58 |
| Chapter 4: <i>Kungabheja ezansi!</i> (2012) | 59 |
| 4.1 Introduction | 59 |
| 4.2 Analysis of <i>Kungabheja ezansi!</i> | 59 |
| 4.3 Summary of the depiction of female characters | 89 |
| Chapter 5: <i>Ngivumele, Baba</i> (2011) | 90 |
| 5.1 Introduction | 90 |
| 5.2 Analysis of <i>Ngivumele, Baba</i> | 90 |
| 5.3 Summary of the depiction of female characters | 115 |
| Chapter 6: <i>Ngiyolibala Ngifile</i> (2010) | 117 |
| 6.1 Introduction | 117 |
| 6.2 Analysis of <i>Ngiyolibala Ngifile</i> | 117 |
| 6.3 Summary of the depiction of female characters | 134 |
| Chapter 7: Conclusion | 135 |
| 7.1 Introduction | 135 |

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Abstract

What use to work in time memorial may be outdated in the current dispensation. Western feminism and African womanism does not tolerate women oppression. Hands of time are not static in so doing the tide of time ensures that people move in accordance. People, men in specific, need to adopt and adapt to a new social and political context. The constitution of the republic of South Africa 1996 dictates that women ought to be protected against harm, discrimination and any form of exploitation. The study will reveal on whether women's place in society has changed and to what extent to represent the current political and social reality. It will also identify stereotypes that are used in depicting women. This study, therefore, attempts to explore the image of women in isiZulu literature. The study employs African womanist literary criticism as a tool in critically analysing the selected isiZulu texts. Texts in question were picked using purposive sampling.

The study concludes that there is gender biasness in the way in which female characters are portrayed. Roles that women fulfil in literature do not mirror the current social and political order of the day. Women are still under the yoke of oppression regardless of their educational status. Financial dependence in women plus the institution of marriage gives men the upper hand. Zulu mores foster submissiveness in women. Women who do not abide by the patriarchal rules are constantly lambasted.

Chapter 1: Conceptualisation of the study

1.1 Brief motivation/Background

Rimmon-Kenan (1983:33) states that mimetic theories equate literary characters to human beings. This research views literary characters within that ambit – as people we come across in our daily lives. Golding (1964:253) writes similarly to Rimmon-Kenan in his novel *Lord of the Flies*, when he informs his readers that “[I] have decided to take the literary convention of boys on an island, only make them real boys instead of paper cutouts with no life in them...” This study is motivated by the way in which literary texts portray female characters by comparison with male characters. The study intends to unearth tactics used in depicting women in the selected isiZulu novels. The study adopts the African womanism theoretical framework.

The main setback in many older isiZulu literary texts is that female characters are often portrayed as stereotypes, in line with patriarchal conventions. Moi (1985:34) states that Ellmann, in her book *Thinking about Women* (1968), identifies eleven key stereotypes of femininity as presented by male critics and writers: passivity, formlessness, confinement, instability, materiality, piety, irrationality, spirituality, compliance, and finally, two incorrigible figures of the shrew and the witch. In studies conducted by Gumede (2011), Rwafa (2011), and Zondi (2013), it becomes evident that African female characters are like commercial goods sold in order to bring some revenue to their place of birth. Zondi (2013) points out that African girl children are forced to marry men that they do not love in order to secure their father’s status of *umnumzane* [man as a respectable head of family]. The male child is given powers to dominate without having to account for such, while the female child is expected to be passive, following orders given by male adults. Moreover, males – males alone – discuss matters that touch females’ lives, without consulting the females. In this situation, females are seen as ‘children’ – worse, as people who cannot think things through. In the research conducted by Zulu (2004), Basotho females are portrayed as liars, schemers, selfish people, envious, idle, scheming gossips, and impossible wives. In the study conducted by Vambe and Mpariseni (2011), a female in the Zimbabwean context has no right to property after the death of her husband. All material goods accumulated before the death of the husband are given to the husband’s family. In such cases, Gumede and Mathonsi, (2019) and Zungu and Siwela (2017) observe that, in Southern Africa, the dead man’s widow must be inherited by the husband’s brother (*ingeni*). Viewing women in a negative light is not restricted to written

literature: it cuts across to oral literature. For instance, in reciting izibongo zikaNandi kaMbengi waseLangeni, unina kaShaka, the Bard (as cited by Canonici, 1994:21) says:

| | |
|-----------------------------|---|
| USomqeni! | Father of laziness! |
| UMathanga kawahlangani, | She whose thighs do not close, |
| Ahlangana ngokubon' umyeni. | They close at the sight of her husband. |

Canonici (1994:22) states that “[t]here is evidently nothing praiseworthy to say about this woman... One wonders whether this poem was ever recited in front of her after Shaka ascended the Zulu throne!”

On the same note, Zondi (as cited by Magwaza, 2006:2) affirms:

the women are presented in terms that appropriate their bodies and equate them to prostitutes. This is a cultural discourse that has been carried forward to the present time: a false association that perpetuates women’s objectification and lacks factual evidence.

1.2 Research Problems and Objectives: Key Questions to be Asked

The key objectives of this study are:

1. To investigate the depiction of female characters in selected isiZulu novels written post year 2000.
2. To explore why selected isiZulu novels written post democracy depict women characters the way they do.
3. To investigate the motives behind the way in which women conduct themselves in their day-to-day activities.

Texts earmarked for this study are all written post 2000 reason for such is to find out if democratic dispensation has brought any changes when it comes to issues of gender equity and gender-based violence. The following research questions are asked:

1. How the selected isiZulu literary texts depict women post 2000?
2. Why selected isiZulu novels written post democracy depict women characters the way they do?
3. What causes women to behave the way they do in the selected literary texts written post 2000.

1.3 Review of Literature

Boland, Cherry and Dickson (2017:10) state that the concept “literature review” is often a common cover-all term for any research that assimilates and synthesises or explains the findings of more than one research. The authors further state that “[l]iterature review is ... typically prepared by ‘experts’ to provide an overview of a specific topic, to raise overlooked issues and/or identify information gaps, and to encourage new research.” Welman and Kruger (2001:33) assert that we usually start the literature review section by reviewing the literature dealing with our topic of interest. This sets the platform for a clear construction of the research problem, whether research question or research hypothesis. The authors write similarly to Boland, Cherry and Dickson (2017), stating that “[b]y compiling a review of research findings on a particular topic that have already been published, researchers may become aware of inconsistencies and gaps that may justify further research. Such a review enables researchers to indicate exactly where their proposed research fits in.”

Connell (2002:10) purports that “[g]ender is the structure of social relations that centres on the reproductive arena, and the set of practices (governed by this structure) that bring reproductive distinctions between bodies into social process.” De Beauvoir (quoted by Connell, 2002:4) argues that gender is a social and cultural construct in the sense that no one is born a woman but rather one becomes a woman. Similarly, Jobson (2005:16) states that the identity of an individual is composed of gender and culture. Gender is defined in terms of culture, in the sense that it gives meaning to how one makes sense of the world around one, as either a woman or a man. In the same vein, Magwaza (2006:4) declares that “[g]ender is not only an ideological cultural construction, but a cultural practice that regulates and constitutes the manner in which culturally ill behaviours are meted out towards women.”

Numerous studies have been conducted on the depiction of female characters in languages other than isiZulu. For example, in their research, *Portrayal of Women Characters in Selected Contemporary Yoruba Novels in Nigeria*, Adeyemi and Ajibade (2009) examine the image of women in a Yoruba society. The feminist approach has been utilised as their theoretical framework. Their findings reveal that women are grouped into two clusters – Madonna, and Delilah. The two groups are rewarded according to their actions, in order to serve as testimonies

for others. Lust for material gain causes women to be immoral, resulting in failed marriages. Women are sketched as susceptible to gullibility, envious of one another, victims of primitive capitalism, and treacherous. Men deny women education as a liberating tool. Good women are industrious, dutiful, and dedicated.

In their study, *Negotiating Property Rights in Southern Africa through the Novel of Magora Panyama: A Legal Perspective*, Vambe and Mpfariseni (2011) explore the status of women under customary law in Zimbabwe. Their findings reveal that women face unimaginable abuse after the death of their husbands. For instance, the brother of the late husband will inherit the wife without her consent. The in-laws divide the property of a widow amongst themselves; the family of the deceased is strongly grounded in and steered by the traditional custom which believes that, when a man dies, all the property and belongings are automatically transferred and belong to the relatives of the deceased husband – a wife is taken as husband's property. In the observed text, the written will saves the widow from being stripped of her inheritance.

In her study, *The Portrayal of Women in Xitsonga Literature with Special Reference to South African Novels, Poems and Proverbs*, Machaba (2011) examines the image of women in the Xitsonga literature, in accordance with the expected roles of women in Vatsonga society. She employs African feminism as her method of analysis. Her findings reveal that women are portrayed as fulfilling the stereotype of a beautiful woman with a blemish in her character. For instance, women are sexually irresponsible, selfish, insensitive, cruel, and disrespectful to their husbands. Mothers encourage their daughters to be gold-diggers – a common stereotype of single women. Some are assigned the stereotype of a witch, a cunning and conniving killer. The women's disloyalty does not go unreprimanded. For instance, a promiscuous woman loses both her legs in a fatal accident. Women value their marriage to the extent that they would rather die than lose their status. This is related to the way in which society chastises divorcee, forcing submissive behaviour amongst women.

In her research, *The Depiction of Women Characters in Selected Venda Novels*, Mawela (1994) examines the role of female characters as depicted by some Venda authors in their literary works; the author assesses their contribution towards the image of women in society. Mawela (1994) uses

characterization as her tool of analysis. Her findings reveal that girl children are subjected to forced marriage. Traditional women hero-worship their husbands; the word of the husband is always final. These women are conservative, faithful, and respecting of their cultural heritage, only wanting to have a stable marriage and family. On the other hand, modern women are regarded as outcasts. Their behaviour is contrary to what their society expects of them – they are brave, extrovert, drunkards; they seduce men, and even conspire to kill men. This is a dangerous breed: cunning women who know no boundaries. They will seduce men in the interests of robbing them. Non-Venda is not a good woman. For the female characters portrayed as independent and enlightened, the ‘credit’ is given to their level of education.

In his work, *Culture and Gender in Mafata’s novels*, Zulu (2004) examines gender and culture in the novels *Mosikong wa Lerato* and *Mehaladitwe ha e eketheha*. Zulu (2004) uses feminist literary criticism as his tool of analysis. His findings reveal that women characters are depicted as fitting one of two neat categories – traditional Basotho women, and urban women. The former are good women who perform their wifely duties without complaint. The latter are a dangerous species that must be avoided. They lead men astray, hate Sotho initiated men, never tie the knot, and are prone to prostitution, being promiscuous. Some rural women fit the frame of a woman who is envious of another woman’s marriage and want to put an end to it. They are revealed as idle and scheming gossips. One of the leading female characters is depicted as the prototype of a paranoid woman who destroys her marriage. She is also the epitome of a woman suffering from ‘besieged fortress’ syndrome.

In his research, *A Violation of Women’s Right to Love: J K Ngubane’s Novel, Uvalo Lwezinhlonzi* [His Frown Struck Terror], Gumede (2011) employs an African feminist literary criticism. His findings reveal that fathers impose the choice of husbands on their daughters, dictating whom to marry or not. Their decisions are influenced by earmarking the highest bidder. Women’s emotions and concerns are not considered. The fathers’ primary focus is to fill their kraal. Women are not all submissive: they fight the oppressive system; for instance, they run away from their forced marriages. Similarly, Zondi (2013) explored the same novel and came to an understanding that men abuse the custom of *ilobolo*. Their findings concord with the view that women are commercial goods given to the highest bidder.

In her study, *Position of Women in Zulu and Shona Society: The Case of Uvalo Lwezinhlonzi and Nervous Conditions*, Zondi (2013) examines intrinsic gender oppressive practices prevalent in Zulu and Shona society. These are key issues investigated, centring on gender, language, and power, as mirrored in the literary works of these authors. Zondi (2013) employs a feminist approach in examining these literary works. Her findings reveal that girl children are forced to marry people they do not love. Females are not consulted when important matters are discussed, even when such matters affect their lives. Women's oppression does not only affect rural, illiterate women: it cuts across to urban, literate women. Marriage forces women into a state of submission. Girls are under strict time-factor surveillance, not permitted to roam around streets at night, while boys do as they please. Even so, women are not tolerant of the abusive patriarchal standards: they vent their concerns.

In their work, *Isiko Lokuzila: Umnyombo wengcinezelo ovezwa emanovelini Ifa Ngukufa and Ifa Lenkululeko*, Zungu and Siwela (2017) explore the impact of the culture of mourning in women. Their methodology makes use of feminism as a tool of analysis. Their findings reveal that the culture of mourning is biased against women: it also renders women susceptible to thugs. Mourning is detrimental to womanfolk. For instance, there is a prescribed period of mourning for widows – one year or more, depending on the status of the husband. On the other hand, men do not have a prescribed period of mourning – it can be a week or two. Women must wear humiliating and degrading clothes, mourning dress. Men have the privilege of remarrying without having to observe the entire period of mourning, while a woman must undergo a cleansing process. Thugs target women in mourning dress: they come in sheep's clothing to offer love, while their primary intention is to rob these women. Men treat women like inheritable stork. For instance, when the husband dies the brother to the late husband will inherit the widow.

On the same theme of widowhood, in their research, *Feminist Discourse Analysis of the Image of the "Liberated" Woman in Umshado [Marriage]* by N. Zulu, Gumede and Mathonsi (2019), the authors explore the use of language by both men and women in the literary text. They use literary discourse as a tool of analysis. Their findings reveal that, in the process of mourning, a man wears a small patch which is hardly recognisable; while a woman must wear a garment that covers the

whole body; also a blanket, on some occasions. The time of mourning is not equitable – women mourn for a longer period than do their male counterparts. Widows are not permitted to be involved in a relationship while in the period of mourning. A widow is a curse in the Zulu society; one must not have any relationship with such people. Women who contravene this custom suffer negative consequences and become the subject of ridicule.

In her work, *Images of Women in Some Zulu Literary Works: A Feminist Critique*, Masuku (1997) explores the image of women in Zulu literature. Her findings reveal that a stereotypes of a witch, a killer, an insensitive, selfish person, a gold-digger, an opportunist, a dishonest being, a liar, and a destroyer of men are assigned to women. The femme fatale and Delilah stereotype surfaces in women. Ideal women are loving, industrious, submissive, of high moral standard, a loyal, doormat type of a wife, and the sacrificial lamb. Masuku (1998) conducted a further study: *Female Stereotyping in Zulu Folktales*. In this study, the author examines the image of women in Zulu folktales. The intention is to explore examples of stereotypes attached to women, such as the housewife, witch, inter alia. Masuku (1998) uses the feminist approach as her tool of analysis. Her findings reveal that industriousness is expected from women. They are to hoe the field – one of the most recognised duties performed by women in a traditional Zulu society. Women are portrayed as a dangerous species – destroyers of human life. If not prevented, a woman can corrupt a man's true self. The husband is at liberty to decide the fate of his wife – whether she may live or die. Women are warned against using their beauty as a tool for deceiving men. Women should not endorse such a stereotype – they should act in such a way as to root out such beliefs. A woman is awarded a low status in the Zulu society.

In her study, *A Depiction of Female Characters by Male and Female Authors: A Comparison*, Mdletshe (2011) examines the way in which male and female authors portray female characters in their literary work. In her methodology, the author uses diverse approaches rather than confining herself to one theory. She uses womanism and semiotics as her tools of analysis. Her findings reveal that women fit into one or other of two neat categories: good and bad. The good women are honest, dedicated, and of strong moral fibre. The bad women are promiscuous, evil, cruel, prostitutes, drunkards, dangerous criminals, corrupt, and unruly widows who engage in extra-marital affairs while in their mourning period, causing conflict amongst men.

Overall, the above findings prove that women are defined in relation to men. The mentioned researchers have analysed their literary work using some of the following literary frameworks: literary characterization, Western feminist literary criticism, African feminist literary criticism, literary discourse analysis, womanism, and semiotics. The stereotypes identified by Ellmann in her book *Thinking about Women* (1968), as stated by Moi (1985:34), come to life in the analysis of the research studies identified above in this section.

1.4 Theoretical Framework

This study employs an African womanist literary criticism. The concept ‘African womanism’ is Afrocentric: it is associated with Clenora Hudson-Weems. African womanism addresses Black women’s gender-specific issues, including all aspects of oppression. It focuses on the experiences and struggles of African women in all parts of the world. This study will open by highlighting the important points put forth by Western feminist literary criticism, beginning with the views of the French feminist, Toril Moi (1985 & 1986). The intention is to discuss Western feminism, drawing parallels between the two streams of feminism: Western feminism as an older theory rooted in Western epistemologies, and African womanism. African womanism is a version of African feminism that has discarded Western epistemologies. It considers the indigenization of the once-colonised peoples.

The discussion therefore opens with Western feminism, moves to African feminism, and focuses on African womanism.

1.4.1 Western feminism

Moi (1986:204) states that the words ‘feminism’ or ‘feminist’ are political tags signifying support for the aim of the new women’s movement which arose in the late 1960s. ‘Feminist criticism’, then, is a particular kind of political discourse: a theoretical and critical practice devoted to the struggle against sexism and patriarchy. Feminist theory and criticism must, in some way, be appropriate to the study of the institutional, social, and personal power relations between the sexes. Millet (cited by Moi, 1986:205) affirms that the ‘essence of politics is power’ and the mission of feminist critics and theorists is to reveal the way in which male dominance is effected over women.

Moi (1986:209) argues that masculine and feminine represent social constructs; patterns of behaviour and sexuality forced by cultural and social norms. This is primarily to reserve 'male' and 'female' for the purely biological facets of sexual difference. Therefore 'feminine' symbolises nurture and 'female' nature in this practice. Moi (1986:209) points out that 'femininity' is a cultural construct: as Simone de Beauvoir pronounces it "one isn't born a woman, one becomes one." Viewed from this perspective, patriarchal domination consists of imposing certain social principles of femininity on all biological women, in order to make one believe that the chosen principles of 'femininity' are natural. Therefore, a woman who protests against obeying the rules can be labelled both as 'unnatural' and 'unfeminine.'

Moi (1986:209) asserts that it is in the patriarchal interests that these two signifiers (femaleness and femininity) remain thoroughly confused. In other words, patriarchy wishes one to believe that there is such a thing as an essence of femaleness, called femininity. Feminists, by contrast, have to unravel this confusion. Feminists, therefore, always insist that, although women indisputably are 'females', this in no way assures that they will be feminine. Cixous (as quoted by Moi, 1985:104) remarks that the underlying binary oppositions, man/woman, are heavily imbricated in the patriarchal value system: each opposite can be examined as a hierarchy in which the 'feminine' side is at all times viewed as the negative, powerless instance. The biological opposition male/female, in other words, is used to create a series of negative 'feminine' values which then are forced on and confused with 'female'. Cixous (as cited by Moi, 1985:105) avows that, for one of the terms to attain meaning, it must ruin the other. The 'pair' cannot be left intact: it becomes a universal battlefield in which the fight for signifying superiority is forever re-enacted. At the end, victory is associated with activity, and defeat with passivity. Cixous (quoted by Moi, 1985:105) points out that, under patriarchy, the male is always the victor. Moi (1985:166) declares that Kristeva's emphasis on femininity as a patriarchal construct, permits feminists to oppose all forms of biologicistic attacks from the protectors of phallogentrism. To posit all men as necessarily masculine and all women as necessarily feminine, is precisely the move which permits the patriarchal powers to describe, not femininity, but all women as marginal to society and the symbolic order. Blay (2008:67) confirms that the term feminism is new in the African context, but that does not qualify to dictate that the practicality of the term was absent in Africa.

1.4.2 African feminism and African womanist literary criticism.

Terborg-Penn (1995:3) states that African feminism is a theoretical approach devised in the early 1980s by Filomina Chioma Steady, an anthropologist, who herself is an offspring of the African diaspora. Born in Sierra Leone, Steady's ancestors were enslaved in another area of the African continent. The legacy of her family experience motivated Steady to reformulate African feminist theory, so that it covers not only the experiences of women of African origin, but also of those women of the African diaspora, globally.

Steady (quoted by Guy-Sheftall, 2003:31) defined the affiliation between the mainstream women's movement in the West and the women of African ancestry as problematic; and argued that the latter have devised their own brand of feminism. However, for them, the fight against gender oppression has always been interlaced with liberation from other systems of oppression, namely, racism, slavery, colonialism, neo-colonialism, illiteracy, poverty, and disease. Boyce-Davies and Adams-Graves (1986:8) aver that African feminism checks African societies for institutions which are of benefit to women, discarding those which work to their impairment; African feminism does not merely import Western women's agendas. Therefore, it gives credit to the African woman's status as a mother, but queries mandatory motherhood, and the traditional favouring of boys. Guy-Sheftall (2003:32) states that, in Awa Thiam's scornful critique of oppressive and patriarchal African traditions, such as forced marriage, polygamy, and female circumcision, she demands that women assume their own voices, speaking out for themselves.

Blay (2008:67) maintains that African feminism withstands the universalization and subsequent projection of Western concepts and notions. Blay (2008:67) argues for emphasis on culture in the description and ensuing analysis of African realities. In the same vein, Nnaemeka (1998:9) enlightens that, in order to meaningfully expound the phenomenon called African feminism, one must refer to the African environment, and not to Western feminism. African feminism is proactive, and not reactive. It has a vitality of its own that is engrained in the African environment. Its uniqueness originates from the cultural and philosophical precision of its provenance. Taiwo (as quoted by Blay, 2008:67) affirms that the label 'woman' is not universal; and therefore, 'women' "never experience their oppression in the same ways." The fact stands that the neo-colonial issues of gender oppression, gender discrimination, and gender inequality are actualities in Africa. The fact of gender being integral to and symmetric in our "tradition" and worldview

does not impede the asymmetry we experience today (Blay, 2008:69). Blay (2008:69) recognises that both “power” and “gender” can take on different meanings in different contexts. Therefore, the inspection of gender must be contextualised within the particular society and culture from which it transpires, and for which it has implications.

Mangena (2003:98) affirms that it is known that feminism springs from the West. In the process of its development, it has assumed the symbol of ‘science’. One of the fundamental principles of science is the notion of universality – ‘science’ is universal on the basis that it is objective – it can be tested and verified. The underlying assertion of this interpretation is that objectivity makes science value-free and universal. Even so, the three claims of science, namely, universality, objectivity, and value-free are continuously questioned. Mangena (2003:98) asserts that feminism as a ‘science’ diffuses across the world, but both as an ideology and science, feminism as introduced and pioneered by Western women, has been problematised. Such feminism continues to be cross-questioned by, among others, women of African descent living abroad, as well as African women in Africa. The root cause for this questioning is the assertion of universality by Western feminism on the basis that it is a science. As a science, Western feminists insist that it be embraced by all women across continents; and be utilised to deal with their concrete and specific problems. This in totality is a refusal of the probability of universality with a difference, rooted in the differentiated material conditions of the diverse people of the world. Mangena (2003:98) affirms that, in actuality, whenever people of cultures other than the dominant Western culture, confront Western universalism on the grounds of their respective different material conditions, Western feminism refutes such differences, by labeling feminism a non-scientific status. Al-Harbi (2017:121), in the same breath asserts:

The black and white women belong two distinct groups with different realities and experiences and it is too difficult to be united by a single frame of thought.

This idea is borne out by Adunora-Ezeigbo (in Arndt, 2002: 32) who maintains:

Partly in protest against the white history of and the White domination within feminism, but also due to the necessity of taking into account the material circumstances and cultural histories of African societies, African feminism was formed. The African discourse on feminism is manifested in part in the theorisation of alternative concepts to feminism. The best-known is Chikwenye Ogunyemi's concept of African womanism, which she

developed at the beginning of the '80's, almost at the same time as and without knowledge of Alice Walker's womanism. Other concepts are Mary Kolawole's womanism, Molara Ogundipe-Leslie's stiwanism (acronym of: Social Transformations Including Women in Africa) and Nnaemeka's negofeminism - feminism of negotiation. The Nigerian feminist scholar, activist and writer Akachi Adimora-Ezeigbo, and many others, speak of African feminism in order to express the ambivalence of being located within the network of a global feminism and focuses on concepts emerging from the concrete social and cultural constellations of African societies.

Blay (2008:65) declares that Hudson-Weems finds the concepts of “African feminism” and “Black feminism” puzzling. Such concepts naturally suggest an alignment with Western feminism, a concept that has been foreign to the plight of African women from its inception. According to Hudson-Weems, Black feminism is the brainchild of Western feminism. It fails to adjust the concerns of African women and it “is not a word that describes the plight of Black women” (1993:15). She further expresses her concern as follows:

Black feminism is some African women’s futile attempt to fit into the constructs of an established White female paradigm. At best, Black feminism may relate to sexual discrimination outside the African community but cannot claim to resolve the critical problems within it, which are influenced by racism or classism (1993:35).

Aidoo, in Hudson-Weems (1993:17), comments:

Feminism. You know how we feel about that embarrassing Western philosophy? The destroyer of homes. Imported mainly from America to ruin nice African women.

Hudson-Weems (1993:21), in the same vein, stresses:

Feminism, a term conceptualized and adopted by White women, involves an agenda that was designed to meet the needs and demands of that particular group. For this reason, it is quite plausible for White women to identify with feminism and the feminist movement.

What is wrong with the concept of feminism? Or why is the concept of feminism problematic to most African scholars? Hudson-Weems (1993:20-21) shares the light that the history of feminism projects its blatant racist background. Feminism, earlier called the Women’s Suffrage Movement,

was started by a group of liberal White women, whose dire concerns then were to address issues of slavery, and equal rights for all people, irrespective of race, sex and class. Such views dominated the platform amongst women on the national level during the early to mid-19th century. At the time of civil war, leaders such as Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Antony held the universalist doctrine on the natural rights of women to full citizenship, with the right to vote. However, in the 1870s, the 15th Amendment to the Constitution of the land, United States, ratified the voting rights of Black men, sidelining both White women and women of colour. That saddened White woman in general: they assumed that their efforts in defending full citizenship for Africana people would ultimately benefit them as well. The outcome was a racist reflex to the amendment and Africana people in particular. Hudson-Weems (1993:22) adds that in the late 19th century National Women Suffrage Association (NWSA) was founded. Both the Women's Suffrage Movement and NWSA moved away from the principles of Susan B. Antony and Elizabeth Cady Stanton. They asserted that the vote for White women should be used primarily by middle-class women, who would assist their husbands in conserving the virtues of the Republic from the threat of Africana men, unqualified and biological inferiors, who with their vote could catapult the American system. Voting rights vested in African men could change their living conditions; also diffusing White supremacy which White people were accustomed to. Carrie Chapman Catt, staunch conservative suffragist leader and other women of her influence, insisted upon White supremacy and strong Anglo-Saxon values. Such women were interested in teaming up with White men to secure the vote for Whites only, eliminating not only Africana people, but White immigrants as well. Hudson-Weems (1993:24) reaffirms:

Some White women acknowledge that the feminist movement was not designed with the Africana woman in mind. For example, White feminist Catherine Clinton asserts that "feminism primarily appealed to educated and middle-class White women, rather than Black and White working-class women" ("Women Break New Ground" 63).

The astute Black woman critic of African origin, Hudson-Weems, saw the need to formulate an Afrocentric theory that united and empowered Black women; instead of leaning on foreign theories in addressing Black experiences. Hudson-Weems avows:

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 (1997:79).

Thus, she suggests that African womanism, as a theoretical framework, which originates from the African culture, gives an authentic image of Black women as mirrored in Black literature. According to Al-Harbi (2017:119), the term 'Africana womanism' was coined in the late 1980s by Hudson-Weems. Al-Harbi (2017:121) argues that Hudson-Weems differentiates Africana womanism from other feminist discourses by adopting qualities that define Africana womanism. Such comprises of:

self-naming, self-definition, genuine sisterhood, family-centeredness, in concert with male in struggle, flexible role player, strong, male compatible, wholly recognizable, complete, authenticity, spirituality, respect and appreciation of elders, adaptability, ambition, tendency to mothering, and nurturing. These attributes are reflected in black woman literature. It is through the creativity of a group of women writers, the world is introduced to the authentic black woman's life and experience.

Blay (2008:66) is of the idea that what Clenora Hudson-Weems explains as an ideological framework, is rather, a collection of personality traits that a woman must have in order to be a "true Africana womanism". Ntiri (as cited by Al-Harbi, 2017:119) believes:

Africana womanism decides that Africana women are respectively marginalized due to their race, socio-economic condition and gender. Distinguishing itself from Feminism, Africana womanism operates on the assumption that race is of a paramount importance in any discussion related to black women. The racial and gender antagonisms of white women are disdained by black women who reject being inferior to the white race and consider their men as an integral part in their struggle to dismantle the shackles of enslavement, marginalization and poverty. Hence, feminism is seen as "a separatist and non-inclusive agenda for Africana women".

Al-Harbi (2017:119), in the same vein, attests that Africana womanism is constructed with the view to resist distorted and false representations of Black women by the Western feminist discourse. Hudson- Weems (1993:31) upholds that:

Africana Womanism rather than feminism, Black feminism, African feminism, or womanism is a conceivable alternative for the Africana woman in her collective struggle with the entire community, it enhances future possibilities for the dignity of Africana people and the humanity of all. In short, the reclamation of Africana women via identifying our own collective struggle and acting upon it is a key step toward human harmony and survival.

1.5 Research Methods/Approach to Study

1.5.1 Research paradigm and research strategies

Neumann (2011:95) states that the paradigm is an idea made popular by Thomas Kuhn (1970). A paradigm is “a general organizing framework for the theory and research that includes basic assumptions, key issues, and models of quality research and methods for seeking answers”. According to Babbie, in Fouche and Delport (2002:266), a paradigm is the essential model we employ to sort our observations and reasoning. Neumann (2011:91) supports that a research paradigm rests on a pedestal of ontological and epistemological assumptions. Ontology deals with the basic nature of reality; while epistemology is the issue of how we make sense of the world around us. Ontology also includes what we need to do to create knowledge. Neumann (2011:95) classifies research approaches into three; positivist social science (PSS), interpretive social science (ISS), and critical social science (CSS). However, it is the first two paradigms that dominate the research field.

Neumann (2011:95) remarks that PSS (Positivist Social Science) researchers favour accurate quantitative data, often using survey, experiment, and statistics. They seek exact, rigorous measures, and objective research. Neumann (2011:95) affirms that positivists adopt a realist ontology. They hold as true that reality exists “out there” and is lingering, to be discovered. Human intellect and perception may be faulty, and reality may be hard to contain, but it exists, is remarkable, and has a natural order. Neumann (2011:101) enlightens that we can trace ISS (Interpretive Social Science) to Max Weber (1864-1920), a German sociologist, and Wilhelm Dilthey (1833-1911), a German philosopher. In his renowned work, *Einleitung in die Geisteswissenschaften* (Introduction to the Human Science, 1883), Dilthey informs that there are two types of science: *naturwissenschaft* and *geisteswissenschaft*. The former is rooted in

erklärung (abstract description). The latter is founded on *verstehen* (empathetic understanding), of the day-by-day and lived experience of human beings in a specific historic milieu. Weber (in Neumann, 2011:101) argued that social science should explore social action with an aim. He adopted *verstehen*; and felt that we must learn the personal motives or reasons that form a person's internal feelings, and which steer decisions to operate in a particular way. Neumann (2011:102) affirms that ISS embraces a more nominalist ontology. What people observe and experience in the social world is socially constructed (Neumann, 2011:103). Neumann (2011:103)'s view is that constructionism declares that habitual ways of thinking, together with language, dictate what people see. Constructionism highlights the processes by which human beings create social construction, utilising them as though they were concrete "things."

This study will embrace interpretive social science (ISS), and the qualitative research approach will be the main method. This is because the subject under investigation – the depiction of female characters – involves a social phenomenon which calls for thorough understanding of social relations and human behaviour.

1.5.2 Research design and method of data analysis

Babbie and Mouton (2001) affirm that qualitative researchers have at all times been interested in describing in great detail the actions of the research participants, thereafter trying to comprehend these actions in terms of the participants' own beliefs, context, and history. This study employs qualitative research methods and it is rooted in the interpretive paradigm. "[I]nterpretive approach is the systematic analysis of socially meaningful action through the direct observation of people in natural settings in order to arrive at understanding and interpretations of how people create and maintain their social world" (Neumann, 2011:102). The interpretive approach is suited to this study because it considers that textual people, characters, give meaning to their textual environments, taking culture into consideration. The study does not treat textual people as cold, fixed, mechanical instruments divorced from feelings and emotions; rather, it takes textual people as mirrors of real people in real societies. This study adopts a textual analysis of data collected, that is, a textual analysis of selected novels. Textual analysis involves analysing texts. Fairclough (1992:73) asserts that the procedure that deals with the analysis of the text can be called a description. It is a process in which researchers gather information on how other human beings make sense of the world.

According to that logic, Bressler (1994:109) avers that feminist criticism opens textual analysis by asking some general questions: Is the text narrated by a male or female? Is the author male or female? What type of roles do women have in the text? Do any stereotypical characterizations of women appear? What are the attitudes toward women held by the male characters? Is feminine imagery used? “[D]ata analysis requires that the researcher be comfortable with developing categories and making comparisons and contrasts” (Creswell, 1994:155). Miles and Huberman (in Creswell, 1994:154) are of the view that the researcher should display information to the reader systematically using spatial format. The researcher should identify the coding strategy to be used to compress the information to categories or themes (Creswell, 1994:154). In that vein, Tesch (cited by Creswell, 1994:155) states that the researcher should abbreviate the topics as codes and then write the codes next to apposite segments of the text. This research will sort information into themes. Concepts of similar nature will be put into one theme.

1.5.2.1 Sampling procedure

The primary sources for this study are isiZulu literary texts. They were selected through purposive sampling. Unlike random sampling, purposive sampling is identified as judgmental sampling (Neumann, 2011:265). It is sampling on the basis of knowledge of a population, its elements, and the objective of the study (Babbie, 2013:160). The initiative of qualitative research is to purposefully select informants (or visual material or documents) that will most manifestly answer the research questions (Babbie, 2013; Creswell, 1994; and Swartz, de la Rey, Duncan, Townsend and O’Neill, 2016). Novels that were purposefully selected for this study focused on gender issues. IsiZulu novels written post year 2000 are of interest because of the political correctness of this day and age. I expect post year 2000 texts to mirror development in the way in which people interact when it comes to gender equality at homes, conflict resolution mechanism, and freedom to choose. Elements of Chapter 2 of the Constitution ought to surface in post year 2000 texts. To name a few, there are Section 9 (Equality), Section 10 (Human dignity), Section 25 (Property), and Section 29 (Education). Post-1994 literary texts were not a choice because democracy was still in its infancy: I gave democracy six years to find its footing. Findings reveal that the dominant themes of pre-1994 literary texts are that of tradition and culture, and liberation, which are of little interest to this study. The novels selected are *Impi Yabomdabu Isethunjini* (2002) by Jabulani Canaan Buthelezi,

Kunjalo-ke (2008) by Mjajisi Elias Wanda, *Ngivumele, Baba* (2011) by W.M Khumalo, *Kungabheja Ezansi!* (2012) by P.B Maphumulo, and *Ngiyolibala Ngifile* (2010) by E.D.M Sibiya.

Therefore, the focus of this study is on literary texts, not on authors, so as to avoid what the New Critics called the ‘intentional fallacy’ – the fallacy to rely on the ‘intention’ of the author as read from the text. Such an ‘intention’ is not the true intention: the writer of the text can assume various roles as a narrator. However, by coincidence, the texts that were suitable for this study were all written by male authors. This situation reminds one of what is said by Jefferson and Robey (1986:14-15) who argue that “the importance given to the author by literary studies tends, roughly speaking, to be in inverse proportion to the importance given to specifically literary qualities.” Theories which focus on these qualities are more likely to ascribe only an incidental role to the novelist: for example, both the Russian formalist and the new critics felt it essential to downgrade the author, in order to assure the autonomy of literary studies, and to defend them from being merely a second-rate form of psychology or history (Jefferson and Robey, 1986:15).

1.6 Data Analysis Methodology

1.6.1 Validity of the study

Neumann (2011:214) expresses that validity means Truthfulness. It refers to the extent to which a measurement instrument measures what it is intended to measure (Swartz et al., 2016:37). Neumann (2011:214) argues that, in qualitative studies, we are more focused on gaining authenticity than acknowledging a single version of “truth.” Qualitative researchers attach to the main principle of validity to be truthful (evade distorted accounts or false); trying to construct a tight fit between ideas, understandings, and pronouncements about the social world and what is really happening in it. Any confines of a single observer become restrictions of the study. Neuman (2011: 164) states that confines are a result of a biased view on an issue; lack of skill in an area, or inattention to certain details. Multiple observers bear alternative perspectives, social characteristics, and backgrounds. This study will make use of triangulation of observers so as to ensure the truthfulness of the measurement instrument, which is the research questions. The mentioned method will permit possible interpretation of the data. I formulated my research questions with a model in mind of tried and tested research questions. Such ensured that my instrument measures what it was designed to measure.

1.6.2 Reliability of the study

Reliability means consistency and dependability (Neumann, 2011; and Swartz et al., 2016). Neumann (2011:214) avows that researchers use a variety of techniques, such as document studies, photographs, participation, and interviews, to document observation consistency in qualitative research. Coaley (2009:100) tells that high reliability is seen when a measurement instrument produces similar outcomes on different occasions. Triangulation is generally considered to be one of the perfect ways to improve reliability and validity in qualitative research. Triangulation refers to the use of multiple methods. To ensure the reliability of the study I will ask for the team of observers to do an audit trial of my findings. Such team will point out flaws, biases and other problems in my study. Their assistance will help me overcome deficiencies that arise from one investigator.

1.6.3 Rigour of the study

Swartz et al. (2016:39) inform that there are numerous debates regarding the rigour of a qualitative study. These rotate around questions such as: “How can we trust the authenticity of qualitative research?”, and “How can we be sure that such research is reliable and valid?” Swartz et al. (2016:39) affirm that there are numerous different outlooks on how to make certain that qualitative data is rigorous and trustworthy. A commonly used method involves correspondence checks. These verifications may involve the use of other researchers and colleagues to analyse the data independently. These findings are then compared with those of the researcher, to check for similarities. Some researchers revisit their participants with their analysed data, to discover what participants think of the analysis. Another method that may be put into practise is to contemplate possible interpretations of the data, reporting on such also. According to Reissman (in Swartz et al., 2016:40), the researcher, in the final analysis, should give enough information to permit others to assess the trustworthiness and the merits of the work. Swartz et al. (2016:40) argue that, whatever method is employed, all researchers must ensure that their interpretations correspond with the overall objectives, theory, and method of the study. A single observation does not cover all the parameters of the research. Such a limitation affects the rigour of the study. Neuman (2011: 164) states that limitations are a result of a biased view on an issue, lack of skill in an area, or inattention to certain details. In ensuring rigour of this study, I will employ triangulation of

observers. The mentioned method will assist in overcoming the deficiencies that flow from one researcher. Triangulation of observer gives grounds for possible interpretation of the observed data.

1.6.4 Structure of dissertation

This dissertation will comprise seven chapters. Chapter 1 will be the conceptualization of the study. The following chapters will cover five literary texts that depict interesting female characters in their narratives: Chapter 2: *Impi Yabomdabu Isethunjini*; Chapter 3: *Kunjalo-ke*; Chapter 4: *Ngivumele, Baba*; Chapter 5: *Kungabheja Ezansi!*; Chapter 6: *Ngiyolibala Ngifile*; Chapter 7: will be my conclusion. It is important to note that this research is an African womanist literary criticism. The texts were selected because they were published after the year 2000. It is hoped that they will reflect some evolution in the status and role of women post-democracy.

It will be beyond the scope of this research to include everything. Events that outshine others will be selected for the benefit of the research questions. Were the scope not strict when it comes to word count, the research would have included some fieldwork, and ethnography, to measure how rapidly social attitudes are changing from worse to better, or vice versa. It will also be of advantage to examine texts based on their timeline; for example, novels published after the year 1984, after the year 1994; and last, after the year 2000. Such development will give us a glimpse into how ordinary people view women in their daily encounters. To mix the three methods will be of benefit in understanding societal perspectives, when it comes to women. Triangulation of the method will give a firm understanding of literature vis-à-vis society.

The next chapter investigate the depiction of female characters. It will start with *Impi Yabomdabu Isethunjini* by Jabulani Canaan Buthelezi.

Chapter 2: *Impi Yabombadu Isethunjini* (2002): Jabulani Canaan Buthelezi

2.1 Introduction

This chapter examines the portrayal of women in Zulu novels and the influence of culture and gender in the way in which women are depicted. This chapter contains a synopsis of each literary text, an analysis of each text, and a summary of the portrayal of female characters.

The narrator of *Impi Yabombadu Isethunjini* (2015) depicts the clash between the modern way of living and the traditional way of life after democracy. Those who live in urban areas view those who live in rural areas as outdated people who adhere to the illusions of the past. On the other hand, those living in rural areas view those who live in urban areas as self-centred people who lack *ubuntu*. The text rotates around two female characters: Poppie, and Uzithelile, both literate ladies. The theme is women's oppression under patriarchy in the 21st century. Poppie is an urban woman, while Uzithelile is a rural woman. Their common denominator is that they both experience oppression of women in their locality. Both these female characters fight for gender equality; however, Poppie often appears softened by stereotypical values of marriage. It needs to be noted that these two female characters are of different age cohort. Poppie is of the older generation. She still has soft spot for patriarchal standard while Uzithelile is of the younger generation. She is more of a liberal. Age factor has the impact in the way in which these two women choose to behave in a patriarchal setting.

2.2 Analysis of *Impi Yabombadu Isethunjini*

Uzithelile is depicted as brave, a protector, a vanguard of change, a liberator, a women's rights activist, an unapologetic woman, who can push pillars that give support to a patriarchal structure. Uzithelile understands that women's position will not change unless women capsize this institution. She wants women to be recognised as equal to men; not as tools for a patriarchal agenda, or as cook, nurturer, and comforter of men. Uzithelile is an archetypal woman who believes that change is mandatory as far as the position of women is concerned.

Mr Cele who lives in Mpaphala, a rural village, visits his nephew who lives in the township, uMlazi. His intention is to discuss the upbringing of his grandchildren Uzithelile and Hlanganisani. He feels he can no longer support his grandchildren, owing to his age and the dire poverty they are

living under. Mr Cele wishes for his nephew, Bafana, who is well off, to take care of these youngsters, who are his sister, Linono's children. Mr Cele takes the children after their mother married. Bafana is a married man with two children. The two male characters discuss the issue at hand in the absence of the women. Through the text's devices the matter of equality in married couples is stated by the male character, Bafana. Bafana enunciates his vision clearly to his uncle when he says:

'Phela malume ungeke uqhibuke uzongitshela ukuthi mangiye eShowe ukuyolanda u-Uzithelile noHlanganisani ungakhulumile noPoppie okunguyena oyobheka lezo zingane, kuphendula uBafana ebheka phansi' (Buthelezi, 2002:19). (Henceforth only the page number for this book will be used)

(Then uncle you cannot come from nowhere to tell me that I should go to eShowe to fetch Uzithelile and Hlanganisani without talking to Poppie the one who will look after those children. Bafana replies, looking down).

Bafana mentions Poppie's name and looks down. Is it because he feels guilty for empowering a woman in a men's conversation? His body language fails to rise above the issues of sexual discrimination. After Bafana has defended his wife's case in the domain of patriarchy, Mr Cele delivers a double-edged statement. He expresses his position clearly to his nephew when he says: *'Nguwe wedwa indoda kwaNgubane ngakho-ke onke amehlo abheke wena'* (p.21). (You are the only man in KwaNgubane, so all eyes are watching you). In other words, this utterance of Mr Cele tries to enlighten Bafana about the discourse of patriarchy: that men rule, and women follow. Mr Cele is saying that whatever decisions Bafana takes, Poppie has to live with, because she is a woman. It is a man's world. Women must take a back seat in the patriarchy, in which all decisions pertaining to children, women, and the household, are taken by men – men alone. Bafana takes a binding decision: his wife is no longer a factor. This proclaims that men do not want to be viewed as though governed by their wives. Bafana then contradicts what he has said before, about putting a woman centre stage. He regains his patriarchal power. He says: *'Angizithathi ukuba ngingazithathi, kusho uBafana'* (p.27). (I don't take them as I won't be taking them). The 'I' tells the reader that Bafana took the decision alone without discussing the matter with his wife. By now we see Bafana navigating through the patriarchal compass; a man alone makes decisions for the

entire family. In all these conversations, the women in question have nothing to add to the discussion about issues that concern them. They are referred to and discussed as though they do not exist; however, naturally, they are the core of the debate. In this context, Jobson (2005:18) depicts the scenario discussed above fittingly, when she argues that males in authority refuse to involve the women in the family in any of the decisions about the home or their children. Gumede (2002:59), in the same breath, avows:

In the African tradition the status of women is clearly defined. As a stranger who joins a clan from outside, a wife is viewed with suspicion reserved to all strangers. Therefore, she is forbidden from taking part in decision making activities... In a patriarchal or patrilineal, the woman thus becomes an instrument-a tool- for continuation of the male's lineage.

Intshebe, a beard, is a symbol of respect that women ought to respond to fittingly. *Intshebe* grows in men. This is a general tendency, not an absolute rule, because some women have beards, however, only a select few. *Intshebe* of women is linked to the stereotypical belief: *indoda ethandana nomuntu wesifazane onetshebe iyashona* (a man who is in a relationship with a woman with beard, dies). This expresses that one person alone in the house ought to have a beard: if there are two beards, one ought to die. This is a typically unjustified stereotype. Men may be afraid of women with male features. Such women may seem powerful to a man; or may even beat men in a dual. It a patriarchal tactic used to warn men of the select few who will emasculate men if not correctly guided. In *Ubhuku Lwamanqe*, Thamsanqa says: '*Kufanele sibekezele umuntu ephimisela phezu kwentshebe? Ngeke*' (p.56). (Should we tolerate the disrespect of women? We will not). This underlines the presumption of traditional men who condemn women for wearing trousers. Trousers symbolise masculine power. In *Impi Yabombabu Isethunjini*, the Mpaphala society dislikes Poppie for not observing the traditional values of married women: '*Phela koMpaphala abaziwa omakoti abafaka amabhulukwe*' (p.19). (Indeed at Mphaphala the society is not fond of married women who wear trousers). It not the trousers that they are against; they reject the symbol of power it affects. Women should not be the equal of men. Culture safeguards this terrain. Men do not wear dresses in a Zulu society. Woman should also keep to traditional dress. Men view this movement not as sign of equality but as the invasion of their 'sacred place,' their centre of power.

In *Impi Yabomdabu Isethunjini*, the gender roles of Bafana and Poppie fit the gender-stereotyped image: a man is a hunter, and a woman is a nurturer; or men equal adventure, while women equal private space. For example, Bafana says: *'Ngohlelo lwalapha ekhaya, zonke izindaba zezingane ziphethwe ngumkami uMaMthimkhulu. Mina ngengamele izindaba zalezi zinja zalapha ekhaya'* (p.19). (According to the programme of this house, all matters concerning children are handled by my wife, MaMthimkhulu. I handle the matters concerning these dogs of this house). At this point, the text seems to give value to the aspects of motherliness, and fails to go beyond a stereotypical reference to females as nurturers of humanity, and thus, consigned to issues of domesticity. "[N]urturing in itself is not a problem, but the idea that it should be associated only with women, not men, is what makes it a gender-stereotyped image" (Rwafa, 2011:47). Poppie looks after the children. She is also a nurse by profession. The text uses its devices to promote nurturing from the private setting to a public setting. What Poppie does at home is similar to what she does at work. She is a nurturer in all settings. This is a stereotypical depiction of women's work. In *Impi Yabomdabu Isethunjini*, Poppie seem to represent the voice of the voiceless women. She is aware that two males, her husband and her father in-law, have discussed some issues without her being present. Poppie is advocating equality as the first major step towards liberation of women. She proclaims her view clearly to her husband when she says:

'Ngizocela ukuba ngelinye ilanga ungangikhulumeli ngikhona Bafana, kuhle ukuba unginike ithuba lokuba ngizikhulumele, ikakhulu ngoba phela indaba ebenikhuluma ngayo ikolwami uhlelo' (p.51).

(I beg you in the future not to speak on my behalf while I am around Bafana, It is better that you give me the chance to speak for myself, mostly because the matters you were discussing about are on my programme).

Poppie is depicted as a typical wife who fails to respect her in-laws because she insists on wearing trousers or tracksuits in the presence of her in-laws. Zulu tradition insists that a married woman wear clothes befitting her status as a married woman. In the Zulu custom, women should not wear trousers in the presence of their in-laws. A married woman should cover her body in a respectable fashion according to the particular culture. Poppies stands for the opposite: she says: *'Bengingeke*

ngishitshe Bafana. Phela kukwami lapha. Angizukutshelwa ngabakini ukuthi ngigqokeni emzini wami’ (p.49). (I was not going to change, Bafana. Indeed, this is my house. I will not be told by your relatives what to wear in my house). Patriarchal culture specifies what married women ought to wear; however, there are no clothing prohibitions for married men. On those grounds, this custom discriminates against women. It translates to gender bias. Basow (in Machaba, 2011:42) discusses the repercussions of gender stereotyping:

Gender stereotypes are powerful forces of social control. People can either conform to them and be socially acceptable but restricted, or they can rebel and face the consequences of being socially unacceptable.

In *Impi Yabomdabu Isethunjini*, the essence of biology is a determining factor. For instance, male characters believe that masculinity equates to adventure, while femininity equates to being indoors. In other words, to be a shepherd, one must sport masculine genitals. Those who lack that feature are transgressors that must be dealt with. Uzithelile is a shepherdess. By virtue of this, she is a transgressor in a men’s terrain. Such a stereotypical mentality surfaces as Uzithelile comes across boys. Uzithelile is bullied by boys. For example, Khanjana strikes both Uzithelile and her parents’ cow with a knobkerrie. This is what the other boys had to say after the incident: *‘Ayi Khanjana! Shaya intombazane lena sihambe... Akunamantombazane azodelela abafana kulesi sigodi sakithi. Kuhle siyibeke endaweni yayo intombazane ebhensayo*’ (p.32). (No Khanjana! Hit this girl, so that we will go...There will be no girls that will disregard boys in this dale of ours. It is better we put this show-offing girl in her rightful position). What these male characters are trying to tell the reader is that Uzithelile has deserted her rightful place in the kitchen. In this context, Davies (2003:114) depicts the scenario discussed above as:

The male-female binary is an idea with material force through which males are allocated positions in which they can act as if they are powerful. They thus become powerful both through developing a subjectivity which is organised around power and through the discursive practices which establish male power as real and legitimate. Females are allocated positions of weakness, complementary to and supportive of that power.

In *Impi Yabomdabu Isethunjini*, the narrator describes the physique of Uzithelile and that of Khanjana before the fight commences:

'Zonke izicubu zomzimba kwakuyizinyama, engekho amafutha. Umumo wakhe kwakungowemidlalo ye-Olimpiki uma uwubuka nje. Izinkonyane zazethembisa amahle amagalelo. UKhanjana yena weyengutondo, umbijana osindwa ngamabhuzu kodwa ethembe nje ukuba ngumfana. Imikhono yayingangezingalo zephela, nezandla zimfushane' (p.32).

(All her body parts were muscle, no fat. Her physique was fit for the Olympic Games. Her biceps were promising excellent strikes. Khanjana was short, small, in heavy boots, but relying on being a boy. His arms were like that of a cockroach, and his hands were short).

The way in which the narrator describes the features of these characters, the reader concludes before the fight commences that Uzithelile will be the victor. Uzithelile had to defeat Khanjana. Khanjana's physique was inferior to that of Uzithelile. The text implies that a tough girl can defeat a weak boy, which is not the case. Fighting is not rooted in ones' physique or biology. MaMhlongo in *Ubhuku Lwamanqe* matches the character of Uzithelile. She is not like other women who wait to be struck by men: she attacks first. She is not afraid of men, whether they are armed or not (p.17). Her ability to confront males is linked to her physique. Males acknowledge her huge hands, which makes her fit to strike men. Women's physical features must be exaggerated to the extent that the reader finds it obvious why men are defeated by such women (p.19). On the other hand, the text may be transcending the male-female oppositions which equate males as strong/active and females as weak/passive. In this context, Davies (2003:116) depicts the above scenario, stating:

many aspects of being physically male or female are a result of social practice, of positioning oneself as a male or a female and of tacking appropriate subjectivity (becoming masculine or feminine).

In *Impi Yabomdabu Isethunjini*, boys made the matter worse between Uzithelile and Khanjana. They all believe that Khanjana, who stands for them in binary opposition, will win the fight with ease by virtue of being a male. Uzithelile proves that fighting is not the essence of biology. When Khanjana is defeated by Uzithelile the scene is depicted plainly as follows: *'Wamngqubungqubuza ngekhandu, wamfaka izimvula zesibhakela ekhaleni'* (p.33). (She knocks him on the head and

gives him dozens of blows to the nose). The text here focuses on discrediting patriarchal strictures and structures that delay participation and progression of females in all spheres of life. After the full description of Uzithelile's physique, it is not surprising that Uzithelile needed more than two boys to remove her from Khanjana (p.33). In this context, the text gives us the female character that challenges the status quo. Uzithelile is there for equality. The text moves power from the centres of power, males, to the periphery, females. The text empowers females through the actions of Uzithelile. In *Impi Yabomdabu Isethunjini*, MaKhumalo, Mr Cele's wife, as a female, ought to support other females who challenge gender-based violence. However, she condemns such actions, while her husband supports them. She says: '*Noma elwa baba, kuhle angalwi nabafana u-Uzithelile*' (p.46). (Even if Uzithelile fights, father, it is better not to fight with boys). The same is also true of Melody, another female character, who condemns what Uzithelile has done. She says: '*Ngizocela ukuba umkhuze udadewethu uthi angalwi nabafana*' (p.138). (Please warn my sister not to fight with boys). The question that comes to mind is: who should fight for girls in matters of inequality and injustice, if all female characters who are supposed to support Uzithelile, discredit her actions? Mr Cele sees this fight as an important step in empowering women. In the follow-up statement, Mr Cele says:

'Yibo kanye afanele alwe nabo. Ukuba uLinono wayefunde ukulwa nabafana ngabe akekho kulesi simo akuso. Kudingekile MaKhumalo siwafundise amantombazane ukuba akwazi ukuzivikela kubafana ukuze angabi yibhola labafana' (p.46).

(They are the ones she is supposed to fight. If Linono had learnt to fight boys, she would not be in the situation she is in. It is necessary MaKhumalo that we teach girls on how to fight so that they will defend themselves against boys, they will not be their toys).

In the previous pages Bafana tells the reader that Linono, mother of Uzithelile and Hlanganisani, was a boy's toy. She had two children as a result. Mr Cele, in favour of Uzithelile's actions, argues that, had Linono been capable of fighting, she would not have had children out of wedlock, who are not taken care of by their fathers. When Linono married, her in-laws rejected her two children. They ordered Linono to leave them behind, so that she could start a family with a clean slate. In other words, Uzithelile will not be in the same position that her mother is in; because she can defend herself, and she demands what is right for herself. One could think that rural and illiterate men are worse when it comes to issues of women's oppression. The text presents Mr Cele, who is

illiterate, and lives in rural area, as the voice of reason for the voiceless. He stands for women's liberation, in contrast to Bafana, an urban literate man who oppresses women. Bafana's worldview has not changed even though he is highly literate. He still credits males with supremacy. The text here focuses on undermining urban men as worse when it comes to issues of women's oppression. Another unsettling aspect of Poppie's character is that she frequently projects unexplained anger, which affects her husband. Bafana, her husband, is in a state of helplessness: *'Kwakuthi lapho inkulumo yabo isiqala ukugudla lezo zinkalo zentukuthelo, uBafana agoqane okweshongololo azithulele'* (p.52). (When their discussion was moving towards that terrain of anger, Bafana would coil up like a millipede). In the above scenario, Poppie fits the image of the abusive wife, who is feared by her husband. The text depicts Poppie as a dictator-type of a wife whose word is final. She conveys her mental picture openly to her husband, when she says:

'Mina angithandi ukuqalwa neze. Ngiyethemba uyezwa Bafana? Kusho uPoppie elindele impendulo. Ngiyezwa Poppie, kusho uBafana eseyekile ukudlala ngepeni, isandla sakhe sobunxele silokhu siphulula isiphundu, sibuye siphenye izincwadi ezaziphezu kwetafula lakhe' (p.52).

(I don't like to be provoked – not at all. I believe you hear, Bafana? Poppie is waiting for an answer. I can hear Poppie, said Bafana, after stopping playing with a pen. His left hand was constantly brushing the back of his head, while perusing the books on his table).

In the above scenario, Bafana is reduced to the status of a child. Bafana's behaviour in the above scene is that of a frightened child in front of an abusive parent. In *Impi Yabomdabu Isethunjini*, Mr Mdluli is in a critical condition in the hospital. He feels as though his last hour has come. He would prefer to die at home. Mr Mdluli calls one of the nurses to voice his plea. Nurse Joyce receives Mr Mdluli's plea and forwards it to matron. Nurse Joyce is in favour of this old man's plea. She believes that a dying man's wish must be fulfilled at all costs. Poppie, Matron in command, turns this wish on its head. She raises the issue of women's suppression under patriarchy. She expresses her idea overtly to her colleague, when she says:

'Wena ufanele uzwele lo makoti ozonesa leli khehla, ungavumeli amakhehla asemafamu ukuba adlale ngomakoti bawo. Ngiyadumala ukubona umuntu wesifazane ongabazweli abanye abantu besifazane begqilazwa ngabantu besilisa' (p.55).

(You are supposed to sympathise with his son's wife who will take care of this old man; you should not allow an old man from the village to play on the sympathy of his son's wife. I am so disappointed to see a woman who does not show sympathy for other women who are being exploited by men).

Poppie is depicted as an impossible nurse. Poppie chooses to go to dinner instead of saving lives. The problem is that the patient lives in eShowe where her in-laws also live. She is angered by the fact that she is not on good terms with people of eShowe, the in-laws, therefore, since the patient comes from eShowe he is also not good. Poppie forgets about the Hippocratic oath that she has vowed to uphold at all costs, as a nurse. Poppie puts across her view clearly to her colleague when she says: '*Nesi Jali lesi siguli saseShowe sigula kabi. Make ngiyokudla. Ngothi ngingadla, ngiqale ngayo. How is that my dear?*' (p.56). (Nurse Jali, this patient from eShowe is very sick. Let me eat. After eating, I will start with him). Poppie does not want to assist while she is in command. Nurse Jali tries to beg her to see to the patient before she goes to dinner, but she fails in her attempt. This is what nurse Jali has to say to convince Poppie: '*Bengithi mhlawumbe umathiloni angadlula nje ngase-Huma eseya edineni*' (p.56). (I thought maybe Matron, you can pass by ward H on your way to dinner). Poppie's reply fails to represent what she stands for as nurse, let alone a matron. She answers: '*Kufanele ngidlule kumathiloni Dladla le e-6A. Ungatatazeli nesi Jali uzokhathala*' (p.56). (I have to start by checking matron Dladla in 6A. Do not panic, Nurse Jali, you will get tired). Poppie's primary concern is to meet her friend and then to have dinner. She binds the unrelated issues that her in-laws are from eShowe and the patient is from eShowe. The patient therefore deserves to die because she does not see eye to eye with her in-laws. Poppie matches the stereotypical belief that depicts female nurses as cruel and insensitive.

In *Impi Yabomdabu Isethunjini*, Euthanasia, Bafana and Poppie's boy child, gives orders to the maid. Her sister, Melody, feels uncomfortable with the way he handles himself. She says: '*Ngiye ngifikelwe amahloni lapho ngikuzwa uthuma ugogo, uthi akakulethele amanzi, akakwenzele itiye, noma uthi akabokuvusa ngo-4 usayolala*' (p.88). (I feel ashamed when I hear you sending granny to fetch water for you, to make a tea for you, or ordering her to wake you up at 4 o'clock the following morning as you go to sleep). Already, as a boy child, Euthanasia is groomed to give commands according to the dictates of culture and society norms. In other words, Euthanasia's speech echoes a traditional belief which sees all household chores as the duty of a woman; while

men are seen as providers for the family. In *Impi Yabomdabu Isethunjini* we are told that Euthanasia, a boy child, is one year older than his sister, Melody. By virtue of age, one may consider that an older child, regardless of sex, should prepare food for the younger one. Poppie, their mother, is quite an interesting character in this context. She is highly educated. One would therefore expect that the worldview that she has been exposed to would put her in a better standing when it comes to matters of gender roles. As a woman, she is supposed to be a defender of women's rights; yet her method proves the opposite. The narrator has this to say about her:

'UMaMthimkhulu yena waya ku-Melody wafike wambikela ukuthi kuzofuneka ukuba ageze masishane ngoba uzozenzela ukudla enzele nomfowabo ngoba uMaXakushe usehambile' (p.129).

(MaMthimkhulu went to Melody and informed her that she needed to bath quickly because she must make food for herself and her brother; MaXakushe has left home already).

In other contexts, such as her workplace, Poppie rises above women's oppression. Ironically, she fails to apply the same thinking at home. She seems to use a different script for each different context. In *Impi Yabomdabu Isethunjini*, MaXakushe, the maid, is not only taking care of the household duties and the children, but her presence in the family includes instilling patriarchal values. Girls must sit modestly. They must not sit with their knees apart regardless of what they are wearing. On the other hand, boys can sit in whatever position they wish. In addressing Melody's sitting fashion, MaXakushe says: *'Wenzani phela manje MaNgubane? Intombazane ayishayi amangqeshane yize ifake ibhulukwe. Yehlisa amadolo ngane yami. Awuzwe ke'* (p.92). (What are you doing now MaNgubane? A girl does not lie down and open her knees even though she is wearing pants. Close the knees, my child. That is fine). The text portrays Poppie as a terrifying person: she resembles a snake. She also acknowledges her animosity. Bafana, her husband, feels threatened by her. Euthanasia, her son, runs away from home after stealing the maid's money. He goes to his relatives without informing his parents where he is heading to. One of his nephews tries to tell him that it is not right to run away from home, because parents become worried. The nephew proposes calling his mother to inform her of Euthanasia's whereabouts. In giving his opinion, Euthanasia says: *'Masingalokothi siyihlokoloze inyoka emgodini wayo'* (p.136). (We should never disturb a snake in its hole).

It is not a new thing to associate women with snakes. In the garden of Eden, Eve was the first person to be approached and led astray by the snake as it transpired in Genesis 3:1. This implants the notion that women have low morals; a falsehood. In psychology, when a victim mimics the methods of the perpetrator, they refer to this mental process as identification. Today's victim becomes tomorrow's perpetrator. Women were led astray by the serpent; now they lead men astray. A simple stereotypical syllogism: A snake is cunning; women are cunning; therefore, snakes are women (or vice versa). In *Impi Yabomdabu Isethunjini*, the narrator refers to Poppie as a snake. *Ubhuku Lwamanqe* speaks similarly. Thamsanqa, in referring to his wife, says: '*...ngilande imamba ngayifaka endlini...*' (p.67). (...I have brought a snake into the house...).

Poppie behaves like a snake that strikes without an immediate threat. For instance, Euthanasia steals from MaXakushe, their maid. Poppie, as a woman, was supposed to protect the other woman from the wrongdoings of her boy child. As a mother, she was supposed to discipline her child. However, what she resorts to is beyond understanding. She fires MaXakushe, who is a victim of theft, and lets her child go unprimanded. Moreover, the maid is warned against discussing this matter with other people (p.27). In this scene, Poppie fits the image of women who abuse other women because they have financial power.

In *Impi Yabomdabu Isethunjini*, Poppie is also aware of her snake features. She expresses her ideas clearly to her husband when she says: '*Kulungile Bafana bavikele abakwenu yize bevumbuka eShowe bezongihlokoza emgodini wami*' (p.52). (Its fine, Bafana protect your family, even though they come from eShowe to disturb me in my hole). The loathsome creature that lives in a hole is a snake, deadly dangerous when provoked. Poppie resembles this animal. Slaughtering of animals in most African cultures is associated with males; while females are associated with brewing beer. In *Impi Yabomdabu Isethunjini*, Uzithelile, a female child, rises above this gender role stereotype. For instance, she slaughters a goat while a boy child holds the dish for the blood. That alone shows that masculinity and femininity are social constructs. The text gives Uzithelile the platform to challenge the status quo. She says: '*Mina ngizoyinquma imbuzi, wena uzokhongozela ubende, uyibambe iqine indishi ukuze sidle ubende*' (p.133). (I will slaughter the goat; you will hold out the dish; you must hold the bowl tightly so that we can eat the blood). In most cases, when the father of the house slaughters a goat, the young boy holds the dish since it demands less power. The older boys hold the front and the hind legs of the animal, this activity demanding more power.

In this scene, Uzithelile takes the role of the father, while Euthanasia takes the role of the child. Through Uzithelile's actions, women are empowered.

Verwoerd once said that an educated native is a spoiled labourer. In *Impi Yabomdabu Isethunjini*, Bafana seems to be holding the same views but from a different angle. In observing Bafana's behaviour, one may assume that he thinks that an educated woman is a spoiled wife. Poppie studies for her PhD. Bafana, her husband, discredits her endeavour. The narrator defines Bafana's actions and feelings towards Poppie's education, saying: '*Waphendukainja ebomvu ethi owakwakhe makakhethe phakathi kokufunda kanye nokuba umama wekhaya*' (p.160). (He turned wild, saying that her wife should choose between learning and being the mother of the house).

Johnson (as cited by Eler, 1979:16), avers:

Men thought that women were an overmatch for them, and this was the reason for their choice of the weakest and most ignorant.

The presumption is that illiterate rural women are more oppressed than literate urban women. The character of Poppie proves this notion to be farfetched. Poppie, a well-educated woman, is subjected to unimaginable oppression. She is forced by her husband to cancel her PhD studies, because educated women are troublesome to their husbands. On the other hand, the presumption is that illiterate rural men are more oppressive than literate urban men. The character of Bafana, Poppie's husband, contrasts with this notion. Western education does not always produce better husbands who adhere to the principles of equality. Socialization outclasses Western education. Gumede (2002:88) states:

During the colonial period, the sex role distinctions common to many African societies supported the notion that western education was a barrier to a woman's role as wife and mother (because it would qualify her for jobs outside the house), and an impediment to her success in these traditional modes of acquiring status. With few exceptions, girls were not encouraged to attain formal education and especially higher education.

The law, in general, states clearly that a mother has the right to see her children and children have the right to see their mother. However, in *Impi Yabomdabu Isethunjini* this not the case. Linono is denied permission to go and watch her children playing school games, let alone visit them:

'ULinono wanqatshelwa abasemzini ukuba aye emidlalweni' (p.163). (Linono was denied permission by the in-laws to go to the games). The status of Linono is that of a child. She cannot go anywhere without the consent of her in-laws. The in-laws never consider her feelings as a mother. To be physically fit is not the essence of being a male; and to be soft is not the essence of being a female. Many authors and theorists have addressed this topic, calling it a social construct. In *Impi Yabomdabu Isethunjini*, Poppie sees Uzithelile's well-built physique and concludes by saying that she was supposed to be a boy. In other words, girls are not expected to be fit. It seems that fitness spoils femininity; and softness spoils masculinity. These stereotypes are ingrained in one's psyche – they tend to distort the way one views the world: *'Wazibuka izinyama zika-Uzithelile egxaya efica abakwabo wabona ukuthi lentombazane yayifanele ukuba ngumfana'* (p.165). (Viewing Uzithelile's muscles as she was hurrying to reach her relatives, she saw that this girl was supposed to be a boy). When a boy child is about to weep, there is saying that tigers don't cry. This is how most boys have been socialised. The text proves that tigers do cry (boys do cry). As Uzithelile was motivating Hlanganisani before the games commence, he became so emotional that he started to weep. It was Uzithelile, a girl child, who ordered her brother not to weep. Patriarchy sees women as emotional: crying is a behaviour that befits women. The following proves that the act of crying is not restricted to females only; it cuts across all sexes: *'U-Uzithelile ekubona loku okwenziwa ngowakwabo wathi, Kahle ngane kama. Akusona isikhathi sokukhala lesi'* (p.166). (As Uzithelile saw what was being done by her brother, she said: Stop, my mother's child, this is not the time for weeping).

Poppie feels that it is essential and natural that girl children should have long hair. She believes this preserves feminine qualities. In other words, the length of hair determines one's position in the male-female binary opposition. Poppie's feelings about Uzithelile's hair fail to transcend stereotypical beliefs. The narrator has this to say about her: *'Wayeyizonda le nto yezingane zasemakhaya yokugunda izinwele zibe mfushane bekuse ngathi ngabafana'* (p.169). (She hated this thing of rural children of cutting hair to be as short as boys).

In the eyes of male characters, Bafana's friends, in *Impi Yabomdabu Isethunjini*, Poppie has abandoned her rightful place as a woman. In their perspective, feminine qualities include moderate education for women – partial literacy. To advance to a level of a PhD is not permitted. Poppie is now becoming a threat to men's submissive wives: they believe she is about to plant the seeds of

learning. They assume that literate women are wives impossible to handle. The narrator has this to say about Bafana's friends:

'Babengamthandi uMaMthimkhulu bethi ubahlikizela izindleke zentonkomalo yobungani, futhi uzobonela amakhosikazi abo ngokufaka wabesifazane[sic] leli vangeli lokuba kufundwe' (p.177).

(Men dislike MaMthimkhulu, saying that she is destroying the happiness of their friendship, moreover she will spoil their wives by putting forth this gospel of learning).

Male characters in the text feel that educated women are bad wives. They argue with their husbands; moreover, they do not recognise the place and the status of a man. Bafana, Poppie's husband, thinks this way also. He expresses his ideas plainly to his wife when he says: *'Akekho umuntu wesilisa othanda ukuba aganwe isifundiswa bese ehluleka ukuba asibonise. Abesifazane abangafundile ngamakhosi abantu'* (p.178). (Not a single male who would like to marry an educated woman then fails to give her advice. Illiterate women are the best people). Bafana does not want his word to be overruled by that of Poppie. He gives credit to illiterate women because they do not object what their husbands are saying. Their words are final. In a setting where a male is the head of the family traditional illiterate woman is the ideal wife. Zulu (2004:156) states that males favour illiterate women because they respect men and perform 'women's tasks' 'naturally' and without protest, as is commonly the case in patriarchal societies. Rushkin, cited by Elert (1979:23), is of the notion that:

she must be enduringly, incorruptibly good; instinctively, infallibly wise –wise, not for self-development, but for self-renunciation: wise, not that she may set herself above her husband....

I see stereotypes safeguarding gender borders. Bafana prefers illiterate women because they have the feminine quality most men admire in them. Bafana defends his belief by drawing on culture and religion. The text invests the voice of emancipation in Poppie. Poppie questions her husband on who made the law that husbands should be kings of the house, leaving women in a subordinate position. Bafana fails to give an answer to that; in other words, the text is telling the reader that such beliefs are social constructs and non-watertight when scrutinised. Males fear that education will empower women; which will lead to them questioning all the ills of society. Men's primary

concern is to maintain the status quo. Bafana is narrow-minded. He fails to consider the benefits he will receive if Poppie continues with her education. He clings to outdated modes of thinking which are of no benefit in the democratic dispensation. Sibiya (as cited by Gumede, 2002:72) a feminist and a strong critic, argues that:

These man-made barriers should stimulate more innovation. Woman, in her endeavour for change, often has to endure unfair and false accusations. Such are aimed at making her feel guilty about her achievements, thus demotivating and distracting her from reaching her fullest potential.

John Stuart Mill, in Elert (1979:26), is of the idea that:

Not only do women suffer but men as well. "A man who is married to a woman his inferior in intelligence finds her a perpetual dead weight or, worse than a dead weight, a drag, upon every aspiration of his to be better than public opinion requires him to be."

In *Impi Yabomdabu Isethunjini*, Bafana believes that his wife cannot spend her money without his approval. For example, Poppie buys a car for their children. This angers Bafana, her husband, because he did not give his stamp of approval for that decision. Bafana's patriarchal script tells him that he is the financial manager of his wife. Bafana articulates this view plainly to his wife, when he says: '*Njengoba wena ungumama, bewufanele ukuba ucele*' (p.183). (Since you are a mother, you were supposed to ask). Baloyi, as cited by Machaba (2011:4), affirms this view by saying that:

In a marriage relationship, a woman is a minor who must submit meekly to her husband and her sole purpose in life is to serve and satisfy him. The husband is the figure of authority in the family - he has to be informed of everything that happens in the family. Nothing is done without his knowledge and consent and his decision is final.

Machaba (2011:70), still in the same vein, accentuates that:

a woman is never independent and always has to submit to the authority of either her husband and/or her father.

Gumede (2002:60) believes that:

According to the Zulu custom, a woman in the house of her husband is subjected to certain constraints. *Hlonipha*, respect, obedience and humility are the cornerstone of women's expected behavior. These are emphasized within the family, i.e. respect for elders, and in marriage wives must respect their husbands.

A heated argument ensues between Bafana and Poppie, his wife, about the purchasing of a car without his consent. That is viewed as sign of disrespect on the part of Poppie. She is not supposed to go against her husband's word. She was not allowed to buy a car for the children, even though she was using her hard-earned cash. Patriarchy dictates that women should observe their husbands' word, since his word is final. Gumede (2002:60), in like manner avers that:

Men in the traditional Zulu system regard their wives as their properties, and as people who have no say in matters that require a higher intellect.

Mawela's (1994:77) statement validates Bafana's views when she says:

... a woman was not supposed to initiate anything in the family. In Venda they say *Khuhu ya phambo a i imbi mutsho* meaning a hen can never crow. In African tradition when a cock crows it reports dawn, therefore, a hen can never report any dawn.

Regardless of Poppie's high level of education, her role as a woman does not seem to have improved in terms of societal and patriarchal expectations. There is relentless pressure of patriarchal authority over literate women. On the other hand, there is a stereotypical perspective that women are not good at handling finances. Bafana is governing Poppie's finance because men in a patriarchal setting are viewed as providers to their families. Men hold all buying decisions in the homestead. Another example surfaces in *Ubhuku Lwamanqe*, in which Phindisiwe admits that

she has poor financial skills when it comes to managing her finances. That is why she has plunged into debt (p.96). In addition to that, Bafana in *Impi Yabomdabu Isethunjini* employs another stereotype. He claims to be well versed when it comes to cars. He says: '*Mina ngazi kangcono ngezimoto kanye nezingozi zazo kubantu abancane*' (p.183). (I know better when it comes to cars and the accidents they cause for young people). Gumede (2002:66) further says: "[A]ccording to the traditional division of labour, the kitchen is the woman's kingdom. Out of the kitchen she has no say, no expertise, no authority..."

MaMhlongo, in *Ubhuku Lwamanqe*, is not the type of woman Bafana has envisioned; women have little knowledge when it comes to matters of cars in general. MaMhlongo knows names of assault rifles which her husband fails to pronounce. That proves that knowledge of guns and cars is not gender specific, as men choose to think (p.25). What Bafana is saying is similar to what men used to joke about: that females are worse drivers than males – a baseless allegation. Bafana feels as though his wife is changing the way in which his forebears lived in being respected by their wives. Poppie has overlooked Bafana's advice of not buying a car for their children, therefore she is disrespectful. No man will tolerate being ignored in his house. In this instance, Poppie is depicted as an impossible wife who fails to listen to her husband's request. The reason for Bafana's departure, in this instance, is linked to Poppie's behaviour. Bafana then leaves his family because of Poppie. The reader knows better that the real cause is his wife's quality education. In living his wife, he is trying to catch up with the stereotypical self-fulfilling prophecy that assume that educated women are impossible wives. Males often want to secure their status of being superior to females. If this reputation is tarnished, men often resort to abandoning the relationship: this applies to Bafana.

In *Impi Yabomdabu Isethunjini*, Poppie is being portrayed as an atheist, because she left behind the Holly Bible that was given to her as a present by her mother-in-law. The text is now shifting all the blame from Bafana to Poppie. The reader may now find a fitting reason for Bafana's departure. Bafana complains: '*Ukube wawuvuthiwe ngabe awulishiyanga eMlazi iBhayibheli owaliphiwa ngumama*' (p.192). (If you were matured, you would have not left the Bible behind at uMlazi. The Bible was given to you as a present by my mother). Rwafa (2011:48) puts it better when he asserts that, whenever a family comes across a problem, men are swift to point at females

as the transgressors. The words Bafana chooses to use informs the reader that a good woman should be grounded in religion; if not, she is bound to bring problems into the house. Religion and married life are a patriarchal validation of a good/bad wife in this context.

In *Impi Yabomdabu Isethunjini*, Poppie goes back to kneel and beg the return of Bafana. This gives a blurred narrative that, as a woman, she cannot handle the house alone. She needs a man to run the house with. This depiction discredits women liberation. This gives light to a presumption that renders men heads of the household. As educated as she is, she is still a woman. Poppie cannot raise children alone, nor discipline them. Being a single parent, it is a huge problem for her. To run after Bafana gives the reader the wrong impression that she cannot survive or raise children in the absence of her husband. One of Machaba's (2011:50) female characters in *Vutomi I Vhilwa*, confirms the above. She fails dismally in the role of becoming the head of the family. Poppie says: '*Nakhu manje awusahlali ekhaya ngoba ngithengele izingane imoto, uma ungayifuni imoto, buya ekhaya sizokhuluma siyithengise imoto*' (p.193). (Here now, you no longer live at home, because I bought the car for the children. If you don't want the car, come back home so we can talk and sell the car). The text uses Poppie to illustrate the significance of marriage in a Zulu woman's life. Although lettered, a nurse, and a PhD student, she is still so cornered in a custom that sees marriage as such a prize, that she is prepared to become a doormat of Bafana. It is accepted as true that educated women are activists, yet, in this case, Poppie's value of marriage outclasses her activism. In this context, Zulu (2004:152) argues that whenever marriage fails, society is quick to point at females as the cause of the wrecking of marriages. Rwafa (2011:48) supports the idea of Zulu (2004). He affirms that, whenever a family come across a problem, men are swift to point at females as the transgressors. Poppie pleads with Bafana to return home: she renders herself voluntarily to a patriarchal prison. She is willing to forego her rights just because patriarchal society expects submission from married women, irrespective of their educational status. Women ought to be under the banner of their husbands. Machaba (2011:5) defines Poppie's behaviour fittingly, even though it is in a different context. She says:

Most modern Vatsonga women demand to be treated as equals in the marriage relationship and reject domination by their husbands. However, even though some of these women are economically independent, they continue to be bound by traditional norms of subservience in order to preserve their marriages.

Machaba (2011:66) declares:

A normal person would...leave such an abusive relationship, however ... She chooses to be physically and emotionally abused rather than lose this status.

In *Impi Yabomdabu Isethunjini*, Bafana becomes an alcoholic, because his wife, on her last visit to the office stole his books. Those books were going to secure his place in the company that was downsizing. Poppie took the books as a tactic to force her husband to return home, Sadly, that did not work out as planned, therefore she resorts to burning the books. In this instance, Poppie is being depicted as a self-centred person who destroys other people's lives if things don't go according to a selfish plan. The reader now feels sorry for this poor man. Bafana is forced by circumstances to resign. This is what he had to say to Terry, his boss: '*Wazishisa zonke wangithumelela umlotha wazo*' (p.198). (She burned them all and sent me ashes). Poppie is an urban literate woman of independent character. She does not tolerate double standards: that leads her not to respect her in-laws. She sees patriarchy as the centre of women's oppression. Such activism has created the disjuncture between her and her in-laws. Njini holds as true that Poppie is a bad person. The text confirms Njini's perception of Poppie when she hides letters supposed to go to her husband coming from the in-laws, moreover, when she burns Bafana's books, which were to secure a job for him when the company was retrenching employees.

In the text, there is another interesting female character: Prisca stole her stepfather's car keys just to prove to her boyfriend how much she loves him. Prisca's behaviour fulfils the stereotype that women are driven by emotion, failing to think logically. Prisca takes the car keys and gives them to her boyfriend, knowing very well that he does not have a driver's licence. Prisca and her boyfriend are involved in an accident where she is left unconscious. Through her deeds, Prisca fits the stereotypical image. Africana womanism understands that unity amongst women, genuine sisterhood, is the key to fighting all sorts of patriarchal structures and strictures that oppress women. Uzithelile and Melody's sympathetic friendship is the friendship best described by Frank (1987:87):

A friendship that lacks those qualities of a male-female relationship which cause women so much grief: power, restraint and subordination. Even when one woman is stronger or more powerful than another, she does not wield her power over her weaker sister. In fact, the exact opposite occurs; power is used by the stronger to support and strengthen the weaker.

Uzithelile gives psychological and emotional support to Melody, who is depressed. She has no appetite for life. Melody sees marriage as something to die for. She is frustrated by the idea of not getting married. Her mother has turned down her marriage proposal, claiming that the man was no match for her, a man with only a Grade 8. As a result of that failure to allow her to marry, Melody writes a letter to Uzithelile informing her that she is about to commit suicide. Uzithelile warns her against doing such: '*Uma uzithanda zikhethela okungconcwana*' (p.240). (If you love yourself choose the best).

This reflects that women have high regard when it comes to matters of marriage: being outside the circle of marriage is seen as being on the wrong side of the social divide. In women, to miss out on marriage it is to lose the essence of life in its totality. Patriarchal society has made marriage the destination for women. Marriage must not be missed no matter the cost. This creates unnecessary stress in women, as in the case of Melody. Masuku (1997:136) is of this opinion:

Women... should have a positive perspective towards life. They should be realistic about their lives, accept their shortcomings and improve their outlook on life. Men and marriage are not the things to die for.

Uzithelile formulates a political organisation. It is the text's way of further discrediting the patriarchal frame of reference, to permit Uzithelile to simply influence and challenge men in the centres of power. She is campaigning to empower women. It is not an easy ride, since she is challenging the centres of power. She is bullied by those who try every which-way to reserve privilege in the hands of men. Men perceive her as a threat; she is a non-male other. In highlighting the ills of society, Uzithelile focuses on treatment given variously to people according to their sex. For instance, she says that her mother was denied access to education because she had a child

while at school. On the other hand, her uncle committed the same mistake, but he was not denied education. She elaborates that her mother was ill-treated simply for being a female. She enunciates her vision plainly to the crowd when she says: *'Empeleni umama wajezisela ukuthi ungumuntu wesifazane, hhayi ngoba ethole ingane'* (p.253). (In reality my mother was punished because she is a female, not because she got a child). The text offers Uzithelile the power to liberate women.

Some men do not wish to be told by women what to do; especially those in the centres of power, be it social, political, or economic: they treat these avenues as solely theirs. Some men believe that, if a female tries to empower other females, it is because she hates males, or she comes from an abusive relationship. To their way of thinking, empowering other females is revenge in disguise. These types of women are viewed as rabble rousers by those who are powerful. They are labelled negatively, so as to prevent other females from disturbing the status quo. A male character in *Impi Yabomdabu Isethunjini* has this to say to Uzithelile: *'Usho ukuthi wasuka phesheya wabuyela ukuzophekula usonele abafazi bethu ngoba wena unguzendazamshiya?'* (p.260). (You mean you came from overseas to distort our wives because you are a single woman?). Roland and Harris (1979:106) are of this opinion:

Autonomy, independence and assertiveness, the qualities most valid in our society, are considered “unfeminine”.

Ferguson (1986:8) has this view about single women:

Unlike the other stereotypes, the image of the single woman has not been at all ambivalent. A single woman beyond the marriageable age, say, and thirty- has been either pitied or ridiculed in literature. The exception is the nun, admired for giving herself to a supernatural cause as a bride of the church. But a single woman who remains in society is seen as queer, frequently thin and emaciated to symbolize withdrawal from life, prim, highly conventional, excessively curious, and troublesome.

Impi Yabomdabu Isethunjini gives light to three types of women: the extremely bad, angels and women rights activist. The extremely bad women are fearless. Men are called into order. They are financial independent and well lettered. This type of character makes men frown in their

comfortable corners. Alice is depicted as an abusive lover and male hater. She emasculates Bafana, her boyfriend. She says: *Nasi isidwedwe sendonda* (p.266) (This is a rubbish sort of man). She does not end there. She orders her boyfriend to take care of the washing, which includes her underpants. The narrator has this to say about Bafana: '*Wazikhahlela lezi zangaphansi wasezicosha ngonyawo ezifaka emshinini wokuwasha*' (p.268). (He kicked her underwear, picking it up with his foot, putting it the washing machine). This seems unfair. Men, traditionally, expect women to wash their underpants. Men should, however, also accept such a duty. If it is humiliating and degrading when done by a man, it should also be humiliating and degrading when done by a woman. Fearless women are not only restricted to *Impi Yabomdabu Isethunjini* but they are also present in the research conducted by Machaba (2011:46). For instance, Tsatsawani took off her husband's trousers and left him naked.

Some males have the tendency to think that being a leader, one must be a male. In *Impi Yabomdabu Isethunjini*, Bafana was travelling back home after being chased away by Alice. He comes across a billboard depicting Uzithelile. He poses the question: how can a female become a candidate in the coming elections? He consoles himself by saying that this was because he was not around (p.274). Bafana's mode of thinking is outdated, with no relevance to the present democratic dispensation, as illustrated in the previous chapter. He continues to question women capabilities and sees himself as better than women. Bafana has a high opinion of himself. He sees himself, rather than Uzithelile, as fit to be on billboards. To his way of thinking, by virtue of being a male you ought to lead women must be led. This is clearly not true. Bafana cannot see beyond the patriarchal landscape. He is of the view that men are better when it comes to leadership roles, with women becoming their subordinates.

Rousseau, quoted by Elert (1979:19) argues:

Men and women have qualities that complement each other, and they should not strive to do the same things. The place of women is in the home, that of men in the world.

Bafana belongs to the discourse that exploits and oppresses women in post-democratic South Africa. Male supremacy is the pedestal on which patriarchy rests. The character of Uzithelile proves that men and women are equal what men do women can also do. Women have led men they continue to lead because neither of the two groups have monopoly over leadership qualities.

She defends and mobilizes women. Uzithelile is the spokesperson and leader of women's organisations seeking election.

Cele, a traditional man, puts Poppie, an urban, literate woman, in her place of hero-worshipping men. She has to be united with Bafana so that life will flow as usual. She is sick: why should she be sick after Bafana has left her? She was in good health while Bafana was still around. That reflects that a woman needs a man in order to survive (p.180). A woman ought to "belong" to a man as the Bible reveals that Eve came from Adam's ribs. A woman should not be far away from a man. She ought to be described according to that notion. The text sanctions educated women. For instance, Poppie's educational endeavour has distanced Bafana, her husband, from her, which led to the dissolution of her marriage. MaKhumalo is a traditional woman who observes her duties as a Zulu woman. The text praises such women. A man in a meeting referred to Uzithelile as *uzendazamshiya* (single woman). He defines women within the confines of men. It does not cross his mind that a woman can live her life without a man as companion. This is verified by Emecheta's (1977:112) statement:

Every woman, whether slave or free, must marry. All her life a woman always belonged to some male. At birth you were sold: you belonged to a new master.

Elert (1979:30) is of this view:

Women who engaged in the movements for female emancipation were generally regarded as "unwomanly" and had difficulty in securing support for their activities from both men and women.

Elert (1979:105) affirms the above:

The young women are confronted with learned and intellectual men, whose attitudes to them are a source of vexation.

The female characters, Uzithelile and MaMsibi, in *Impi Yabomdabu Isethunjini*, are shown as independent and enlightened. Homage is paid to their level of education, except that with Poppie, an educated woman, her education fails to free her from patriarchal bondage. Uzithelile and MaMsibi are free because they are not married. This tells the reader that the source of oppression is rooted in marriage. Western education changes the way in which women view the world.

Women lean towards gender equality; they are able to voice their concerns. However, that behaviour is minimal in married women.

The ending of the novel gives an admirable solution to the texts that portray women as the underdog. Uzithelile becomes a candidate in the elections. In order to empower them, peripheral women should hold higher position in politics, so that they will implement change from within.

2.3 Summary of the Depiction of Female Characters

The text places women into two neat categories – traditional, illiterate women, and urban literate women. They are either submissive women or “masculine women.” The rural, illiterate women are church-goers, industrious, adhering to traditional values. They perform their wifely duties; they respect their husbands, and do not argue with them. The husband’s word is regarded as gospel. The urban, literate women are vocal, unapologetic, ambitious, and authentic. They wear trousers; they call men to order; they are not afraid to call a man a fool; they are not afraid to order their male counterparts to do household chores, such as washing. Such agency is toned down by societal values, especially in married women. In observing their wifely duties, women forego their rights. We can divide masculine women into two types. We use the term masculine loosely. The good, masculine women, and the bad, masculine women. The former advocate women’s rights on relevant platforms. They call for equal footing in all spheres. The bad masculine women scold, humiliate, and degrade men. A pushy type of woman is feared by society: such women never get married.

The next novel to be analysed is *Kunjalo-ke* by Mjajisi Elias Wanda.

CHAPTER 3: *Kunjalo-ke* (2008): Mjajisi Elias Wanda

3.1 Introduction

The novel revolves around the female character by the name of Dumazile Kheswa. Dumazile is tricked by one of her schoolteachers. She falls in love with him and she becomes pregnant by him. She is then expelled from school, while the culprit runs away. Dumazile is forced to work in order to support her child. She finds a job at a retail store. She has a second child by the married owner of the store. The shop owner funds her education; she becomes a nurse. At the hospital she finds a boyfriend. She deserts the shop owner and is married to her new lover. At the end of the novel Dumazile and her long list of boyfriends all die of HIV/AIDS.

3.2 Analysis of *Kunjalo-ke*

Dumazile is painted as a liar, greedy, a femme-fatale, a cunning woman who knows no limits, and a person of low morals. She is inhumane: she destroys Sithole, a man who has funded her education and supported her child. Dumazile is an unsatisfied individual who bites the hand that feeds her. Dumazile is a gold-digger and a go-getter. She does not tolerate indigent men. When Sithole was about to become a pauper, Dumazile left him and moved on with Mtalaselwa, a financially promising young man who works with her. Dumazile's depiction will be explored in terms of how the other characters in the text see her; and how most women depict her. It is interesting what the narrator says about her and women in general. In *Kunjalo-ke* (2008), we are given a male teacher, Mr Moloji, who uses his offices for his selfish interests. He exploits young girls by taking sexual favours. Mr Moloji uses all sorts of dirty tricks in order to get what he wants. Other female characters have this to say about him: '*Angithi welekelelwa yilemithi ayisebenzisayo*' (Wanda, 2008:3). (Henceforth, only the page number for this book will be used). (Indeed, he gets support from the muthi he uses). Mr Moloji buys expensive clothes for the girl children. Those who are in the centre of power (males) exploit those who are on the periphery (women): '*Kwakuye kuthi ngokuphela kwenyanga, uthisha amthathe uDumazile aye naye edolobheni ukuyomthengela ingqephu kanokusho*' (p.14). (Sometimes, at the end of the month, the teacher will take Dumazile to town to buy expensive clothes for her).

In the first page of *Kunjalo-ke*, the reader is given the gender roles of females. For instance, the narrator says: *'Omemu bathuma amantombazane ukuba ayohlanza izindlu zangasese'* (p.1). (Female teachers send girls to clean toilets). However, not only the female teachers inculcate gender roles into girl children. Males also tell girls to do what is expected of them. Mr Moloi sends girl children to his room to prepare food for him. Mr Moloi has this to say when he speaks of Dumazile: *'Kusobala baye bambone ngesikhathi senhlabakhefu eyongishisashisela isibindi, ubhekeni namaqanda'* (p.7). (It is clear they have seen her during the break when she was going to fry liver, bacon, and eggs for me). In *Kunjalo-ke*, female teachers fit the stereotypical belief that women are gossips. The two female teachers are puzzled by the sounds they hear in the toilet while gossiping. One of the female teachers says:

'Ngubani lowo? Kubuza uMemu Ngcamu esefile wukwethuka. Kuthi nya. Aphinde abuze futhi kodwa do impendulo. Bavule kancane isicabha somnyango wasendlini encane, baphuma sebenyonyile bephikelele esitafulumu' (p.3).

(Who is that? Asking Mrs Ngcamu, frightened. No response. She asks again, however, no response. They open the door of the toilet slowly. They depart, ashamed, going to the staffroom).

In *Kunjalo-ke*, one female teacher blames girl children for the sins of her colleague. One would think that she, as a woman, she would protect girl children and confront the wrongdoer. Instead, she says that girl children ask for 'it': *'Nakho kodwa okungammantombazane kuyabaheha othisha besilisa. Akukhona ukugqoka lokhu! Lezi zinto ziyehluleka nawukuhlala, ziyadunusa nje!'* (p.2). (There it is, however, girl children attract male teachers. This is not a way of dressing! These things fail to sit properly, they protect the buttocks merely). By the above words, the female character is defending those who are in the centre of power (males) at the expense of women. She thinks like wicked men. In silencing this thinking, the text gives voice to another female character who speaks for the downtrodden. This female character defends women. She says: *'Sikhula thina, amantombazane ayetota ngempela. Yayithi uma ihamba nje intombi umamhlongo ubone ngosi. Kwakungekho lokhu konakala ezinsizweni'* (p.2). (While we were growing girls will show off, really. When the girl walks you could see the underwear. None of these ills were present in males). In condemning Mr Moloi's behaviour as a mother and as a woman, she says: *'Kodwa uthisha uMoloi uyaganga. Ubengasheli ngani omisi bebaningi kangaka lapha eskoleni?'* (p.20).

(However, teacher Moloi is wrong. Why did he not go for the mistress, while there are so many women here in the school?).

In *Kunjalo-ke*, there is an interesting female character, Miss Hlophe, portrayed as an irrational person governed by emotions. She even fails to consider her position as a teacher and also as a parent in the school context. For example, she argues with a learner over a boyfriend, Mr Moloi, on the school premises. Miss Hlophe enunciates her ideas plainly to Dumazile, one of her learners, when she says: '*Lalela lapha ngikutshela-ke mina: UJeffrey yi boyfriend yami uthi mina!*' (p.19). (Listen here I will tell you: Jeffrey is my boyfriend he is mine!). In that argument, the reader receives another disappointment regarding Dumazile. She exchanges words with a female teacher in an argument over Mr Moloi, a male teacher. Were Dumazile a well-behaved girl, she would have handled this incident in a modest way. The novel portrays Dumazile as a disrespectful person. In proving that, she reveals her position clearly to Miss Hlophe, when she says: '*Uyazi bengithi uzothi ungu vro wakhe. Kanti uyi girlfriend nje*' (p. 19). (You know I thought you were going to say you are her wife, whereas you are just a girlfriend). The text depicts Dumazile in a stereotypical fashion. She is being portrayed as a mindless girl who longs for love in wrong places (school) and in wrong people (teachers). Dumazile's depiction fails to fit the image of a learner. Instead, her mind is centred on issues of love. In her monologue, she says: '*Ukuthandana nothisha kuzongisiza. Futhi ngiyogcina senginguMehisi Moloi, ngiphathe izishaqane zemali*' (p.12). (To fall in love with a teacher will help me. And I will end up being Mrs Moloi, handle a lot of cash). In other words, the text depicts Dumazile, as young as she is, as a materialistic individual. Mr Moloi, after hearing from Dumazile that Mrs Mpungose and Mrs Ngcamu were gossiping about their relationship in the toilet, uses discriminatory language when referring to other female teachers. He says: '*Labo memu bacabanga ukuthi mina lo ngingaqonywa yile mijendevu yomisi balapha esikoleni?*' (p.7). (Those mistresses think that I for one can fall in love with these old unmarried women of this school?).

In *Kunjalo-ke*, female teachers discover that Dumazile is pregnant. They inform the principal of this. The male principal calls for Dumazile. He expels her from school leaving the culprit, the male teacher, secure in his job. The sad part is that, of the two female teachers who inform the principal, one is Miss Hlophe. One may think that she schemes that, in expelling Dumazile, her boyfriend,

Mr Moloji, will be saved from all the troubles heading his way. She will keep him for herself. As women, these female teachers were supposed to support and protect Dumazile from Mr Moloji and Mr Mzobe, the principal. To deny one access to education is an infringement of one's human rights. What we see is a lack of genuine sisterhood between female characters. Mrs Mpungose asks the principal whether he is not afraid that Dumazile will report him for expelling her. The principal says:

'UDumazile akaxoshiwe esikoleni. Ugodukisiwe nje ukuba alande abazali bakhe ukuze bazochazela umkhandlu owengamele isikole ukuthi kuyokwenziwa njani uma umntwana wabo eseficwa isikhathi sokubeletha esemagcekeni esikole njengoba singenayo i-ambulance njena' (p.22-23).

(Dumazile is not expelled from school. We send her home so that she will bring her parents in order to explain to the governing body what will happen if their child goes into labour on the school premises while we don't have an ambulance).

Neither Mrs Mpungose nor Miss Hlophe is willing to defend the girl child from the lies of the principal. Mr Mzobe expels the student on shaky grounds. Miss Hlope does not inform the principal that Mr Moloji is the culprit. Qualified teachers know very well about the SACE document and SAEA – one cannot deny a girl child access to education on the grounds of being pregnant. What is surprising about this resolution is that boys are exempted from such: girls take the entire burden. Were these rules fair, both girls and boys, in the case of a pregnancy, ought to be expelled. In the novel, Mr Kheswa, Dumazile's father, states that Dumazile should get married and forget about schooling. MaNdovela, Dumazile's mother, being the defender of women rights, rejected such proposals. In empowering women, she says: *'Umendo omuhle kufanele uyifice ingane ifunda'* (p.26). (The good marriage should get the child while learning). By these words MaNdovela is challenging the centres of power which view girl children as commodities to be sold and bought. Mr Kheswa is standing in the male ivory tower. He does not want to cut small incisions in the skin, for medicinal purpose, of his sick daughter. He says: *'Wake wakuzwaphi ukuthi indoda igcaba umuntu wesifazane?'* (p.31). (Where have you ever heard that a man makes incisions on a woman?). One would expect that a father will do anything to save her daughter, but in the case of patriarchy there are things that a man cannot perform on women regardless of whether the girl child is his or not. MaNdovela is puzzled by her husband's response. She says: *'Hhayi bo! Yilumbo*

yini? UDumazile ngumuntu wesifazane kuwena?' (p. 31). (No! Is it bad luck? Dumazile is a woman to you?) MaNdovela is puzzled by this because she never thought that such stereotypical beliefs applying to her child would come from her husband's mouth. In cases of infidelity, the patriarchal society lashes women. Other women are used as a mouthpiece in furthering these aims. Males who are involved with these women in extra-marital relationships are not criticised for their actions. In *Kunjalo-ke*, MaJwara blames Dumazile for taking MaNzimande's husband: '*UDumazile useyithathe ngempela indoda yakhe*' (p.109). (Dumazile in really has taken her man). The same transpires in *Ubhuku Lwamanqe* where two women talk about the extra-marital relationship of Phindisiwe, accusing her of destroying the house of Mabhekakude (p.39).

The subject of nurturing in the novel *Kunjalo-ke* is noticeable through a woman whose job is to sell items related to cooking or brewing beer. For instance, MaNdovela's means of income is selling eating mats, beer-strainers, small sitting mats, spoons, and spoon-like beer-skimmers (p.33). I find a statement by Rwafa (2011:47) relevant even, though it relates to films. He says that one of the central subjects is that, when women are portrayed in films as earning a salary, their jobs are often downgraded to menial jobs, that are a duplicate of those jobs that women do at a domestic level. Female characters in *Kunjalo-ke* support gender roles through their actions. For instance, MaNdovela leaves her husband, and other women bring food to him (p.56). The theme around these actions is that women cook for men. Cooking is restricted to females in this context. Yet the reader comprehends that males are not forbidden to cook. Lizy is depicted as a gossip, liar, and a spoiler of another woman's marriage. She runs to MaNzimande, Sithole's wife, to inform her that Dumazile gets special treatment from Sithole because they are lovers. That angers MaNzimande, who demands that Dumazile leave immediately. Sithole hears the news and confronts Lizy about the veracity of her story. Lizy admits the fault of character, usually associated with females being liars, a downright gender stereotype. She says: '*Eqinisweni bekungamancoko nje, hhayi ngoba bengithi mhlawumbe kukhona into ekhona ngempela phakathi kwenu ninoDumazile*' (p.72). (In fact, I was joking, not that I was saying you are in love with Dumazile).

In the text, Dumazile is depicted as a typical woman who does not learn from her mistakes. She is short-sighted in her actions. For instance, when she was at school, Mr Moloi tricked her by buying expensive clothes for her. She considered this when she was making her decisions. When she is

working at Mr Sithole's shop, Mr Sithole uses the same trick that Moloi used. As a grown woman she still falls into the same trap (p. 83). On the other hand, I may say she is vulnerable because she is not in a social, political, or economic centre of power. On Christian mythology, Elert (1979:30-31) avers:

The "good" woman and the "bad" woman represented different poles of femininity but they were both "womanly" women... "Womanly" woman were conceived of as being of two kinds: the pure, chaste woman, the ideal wife and mother, who helped to save her husband and sons from their base, carnal nature; and the passionate woman who ensnared and lured men with temptations of the flesh. Both of them have a long history in mythology and literature. Since Christian mythology ultimately prevailed in the West, the two types of women were symbolized in the Virgin Mary and in Eve, the temptress, responsible for Adam's fall and their expulsion from the Garden of Eden. Eve's inability to resist the devil in the disguise of a snake proved her inferior moral strength and her need of protection against the evils of the world.

MaNzimande fits the former description. She warns her husband about Dumazile: '*Aphelile amadoda yilabo nonkiloshi abachithiwe ezweni*' (p.85). (Men have died because of promiscuous women). She tries everything to save him, but Sithole fails to resist Dumazile's beauty, which he wants to secure for himself. Dumazile traps Sithole and sucks him dry of his cash and belongings. MaNzimande confronts Sithole, her husband, about his promiscuous behaviour. This angers him, and on the following day he does not return home. MaNzimande resorts to accepting the status of the underdog; saying it was better before, because her husband would visit Dumazile, but return to her. She blames herself for her present condition: '*Kuzofanele ngifunde manje ukuba ngingaqophisani noyise kaMpisendlini*' (p. 94). (I must learn now not to argue with Mpisendlini's father). In other words, MaNzimande is trying to say that women should not argue with their husbands because they may not return home. These words are not doing any favours to women on the periphery; they are simply empowering the centres of power (men). In short, men are given the privilege of infidelity. The village women fit the image of women who are envious of another women's marriage, desiring that marriage to end. For instance, when MaNzimande's marriage was

on shaky grounds, women from the village never showed support; instead they projected their envy: '*Sengathi UDumazile angayithatha unomphela le ndoda yakhe*' (p. 95). (We hope that Dumazile would take her men forever).

At the beginning of the novel, Dumazile has her first child by Mr Moloi, the teacher, who ran away after the incident without paying *inhlawulo*. This placed Dumazile in a bad light. Now she has a second child by Sithole. She is still not married to him. She cannot bear the recurrence of the hardships she has been through. She decides to lie to her boyfriend: '*Abalele bangathukuthela bangiphuce lo mntwana uma kuthuleka njengoba kuthulekile*' (p.103). (Ancestors will be angry and take this child if there are no payments, since there are no payments). Dumazile tells lies to Mr Sithole, the father of her second child, so that he will pay for the damages (*inhlawulo*). The reader knows that, according to African culture, having children out of wedlock is unacceptable. It is therefore not surprising to see a woman who lies in order to save herself from naming and shaming a lover. Yet the reader comprehends that such women are coerced by circumstances to become plotters and liars (Zulu, 2004:152). On the other hand, this validates the stereotype that women are liars. In the same breath, in *Ubhuku Lwamanqe*, Phindisiwe tells lies about her husband, accusing him of beating her. In fact, she ran away because of her infidelity which was about to surface. She presents her mother with a negative portrait of her husband, as an abuser. Makhangela, mother of Phindisiwe, jumps to this conclusion without verifying the facts. Phindisiwe is the image of a spoiled daughter who runs to shelter under the wings of her mother when things go wrong (p.75). Phindisiwe underscores the fact that women lie. When questioned about lying, she says: '*Ayathengwa yini?*' (p.76). (Do you have to pay for lies?).

In *Kunjalo-ke*, Dumazile is notorious for taking other people's boyfriends and husbands. MaMndinsilwa, a village woman, says to her friend: '*UDumazile useyithathe ngempela indoda yakhe*' (p.109). (Dumazile in reality has taken her man). In addition to that, from the start to the end of *Kunjalo-ke*, Dumazile is portrayed as a typical woman who finds boyfriends everywhere, she sets foot. At school she fell in love with the teacher. Working at a retail store she fell in love with the owner of the shop. She also fell in love with the security guard guarding the shop she was working at. As a nurse, she fell in love with the man who drives ambulances. Dumazile is lambasted for the infidelity of her lover, Sithole. MaMndinsilwa says: '*Nezingane zamantombazane*

zinjalo kodwa, zihamba zizineka nje koyise ngoba zifuna imali' (p.109) (Girl children are like that however they go on seducing people of their father age just because they want cash). This was also true in the research conducted by Machaba (2011:54), where Tsatsawani in *Nkatanga I dlakuta* and Dudu and Thokozile in *Vutomi I Vhilwa* are also blamed for the infidelity of their married partners. Machaba (2011:55) attests:

It is a common practice in Vatsonga communities for women to bear the blame in adulterous relationships largely because men are allowed to have more than one wife.

This type of behaviour makes the reader wonder about her moral compass. Dumazile is from eMzimkhulu, yet the reader understands that Dumazile's behaviour is not that of all rural women. In *Kunjalo-ke*, Dumazile is thus representative of the symbolic gold-digger. She manipulates Sithole, her boyfriend, to purchase a car for her. Moreover, she schemes with other men in order to rob Sithole of his wealth. With the money she will receive from robbing Sithole, she proposes to buy a car for her father, opening a saloon with the remaining money. In justifying her evil deeds, she says: *'Inkosi iyongixolela bandla, imali ngiyayidinga*' (p.118). (God will forgive me; cash is what I need). The text depicts Dumazile as the type of woman to disarm and dispossess a man, leaving him ruined. Dumazile became a nurse through being financed by Sithole. When they were together, Sithole bought a car for Dumazile. While driving, Dumazile did not observe all the rules of the road. She was speaking on the phone while driving, and this caused an accident, Sithole protected Dumazile by saying that he would pay for all the costs, not knowing that Dumazile was scheming to rob him. Dumazile and a group of thugs robbed and burned down Sithole's shop. The plan did not go as imagined. The insurance company did not pay because of Sithole's late payment of his premium. Sithole lost all his money, becoming a drunkard. In that process, he was arrested for failing to finance damages caused by Dumazile's road accident. Once Sithole had no money, he was of little use to Dumazile. Dumazile moved on with her life, putting the new boyfriend in the house bought by Sithole: *'Bavumelana ngokuthi bazohlala bobabili eMafezini eMlazi*' (p.132). (They agreed that they would live together at uMlazi Phases).

Since women are, in the eyes of men, ones' property, the new rivalry and promiscuous tendencies are not tolerated. Contrary to the norm of being loyal to one man invokes violence in most African societies and a Zulu society is not an exception. In *Kunjalo-ke*, Dumazile is beaten up by her husband after he finds her speaking to her ex-boyfriend. She is not given the opportunity to present her case. She is guilty at first sight: '*wayesemuthi xhafa ngenqindi*' (p.140). (he just punched her). In a patriarchal landscape, men believe that violence puts women in order. Without violence, the homestead would be 'chaotic.' As a cure for infidelity, it forces truth out of women, since their 'trustworthiness' is questioned, and it levels out disrespect. For instance, in *Ubhuku Lwamanqe*, Thamsanqa beats his wife for disrespect, (p.53). He lashes his wife for lying (p.56). Violence, in these contexts is justified (p.53). In such a context, Zulu (2004:151) portrays the situation discussed above appropriately, when he avers that the matter of husbands beating up their wicked wives in the novel is portrayed in terms of the stereotype that marriages become brutal because of the ill behaviour of their wives. In this light, Dumazile being beaten up is depicted as expected; therefore, compulsory under such conditions. The beating is therefore viewed as a patriarchal validation of male violence against women (Zulu, 2004:151).

In *Kunjalo-ke*, the aspect of Dumazile being a gold digger surfaces again after she meets Mr Molo for the second time. She is dedicated to robbing him, saying: '*Mh, kepha uma ngingambambeli eduze, ngiyophinde ngimthole kuphi ukuze ngimchuthe*' (p.152). (Mh, however if don't hold him nearer, where will I get him so that I will drain him cash). The character of Phindisiwe in *Ubhuku Lwamanqe* validates the stereotype that women are indeed materialistic, for instance, she is willing to sacrifice the life of her husband for financial returns (p.84). Dumazile, in the novel, fits the image of women who do not like their in-laws. We are familiar with the tug of war between wives and the in-laws, both parties pulling the husband on opposite sides, one party bad-mouthing the other. Dumazile even accuses her mother in-law of being a witch. She says to her husband: '*Bathi wayefunga egomela ngisakhulelwe ethi angeke ngiyigone*' (p.146). (They say she vowed while I was pregnant saying I will not cuddle my child). Dumazile's behaviour fits the well-known stereotype that wives and mothers-in-law are constantly competing for recognition and first position. Dumazile demands all recognition as a wife. She feels her position as first is in jeopardy because of her mother in-law. The latter does not want her place to be filled by another woman, regardless that her son is no longer a child: he is now a married man. The tug of war between two women always creates tension. One presents herself as perfect at the expense of the other. The

husband is left with the dilemma of choosing between the women he loves most, which he cannot do. He tries to satisfy both parties. The problem is that each party want him to choose their side.

Another troubling feature of Dumazile, is that she brings all her boyfriends into her house while the children are home. Dumazile's ways of exchanging boyfriends constructs an image of volatility and lack of responsible decision-making often said of women. Dumazile's lack of a clear mental picture makes her story fail to rise above the exploitative background that is forced upon women through the discourse of patriarchy. Children are good at mimicking what parents do. Dumazile is not a good parent or a good role model to her children. She is sowing seeds of destruction in their psyche. Owing to her loose morals, fathers of her children have fought over her in the presence of her children, while her husband was with his parents. As the argument was about to commence, Dumazile resorts to: '*UDumazile wathi nhla maqede wathi lacu, wathi pheshe endlini encane, washuda*' (p.161). (Dumazile sees then rush, to enter into the toilet, locking it): '*UDumazile waphuma endlini encane selidume ladlula*' (p.162). (Dumazile came out when the fight was over). Dumazile is therefore a typical woman who fails to address the problems of her disloyalty; thereafter running to the toilet to protect herself. What occurred in Dumazile's house reaches the newspaper and reaches her husband. In her escapist mode, Dumazile runs away from home. In most cases when mothers desert their homes their "responsibilities" of nurturing are shifted to girl children regardless of age. When that occurs, young girls are deprived of their childhood and educational rights. For instance, after Dumazile's disappearance, Lerato, her first-born child: *Kwadingeka ukuba uLerato aphume esikoleni ukuze abheke izingane zakwabo* (p.163). (There was a need for Lerato to cancel schooling so that she could look after her siblings). Age difference is of importance in *Kunjalo-Ke*. The older generation follows certain values, be it kindness, submission, loyalty, and femininity, while the new generation has contrary values to the older generation. They are inhumane, activists, disloyal, a mixture of femininity and masculinity. For instance, MaNdovela is loyal to her husband, while Dumazile has a string of boyfriends, also a husband. Mandovela is a kind and forgiving person. She looks after the child of Dumazile while she is in search of work. She does not permit circumstances to hamper her child (p.64) On the other hand, Dumazile runs away, leaving the children behind, after being exposed for her adulterous life (p.163). Stunningly beautiful women in literature are depicted as matching an isiZulu proverb, *ikhiwane elihle ligcwala izibungu* (a red fig does not lack worms inside).

Machaba (2011:9) gives a similar proverb in her language, Xitsonga, stating that women are depicted in the proverb:

‘Kuwa ro tshwuka ri ni xivungu ndzeni – Nhwana lowo saseka, loko a nga lowi wa loloha kumbe wa yiva, kumbe wa kariha, kumbe u ni mona’ (A red fig does not lack worms inside – a beautiful girl is often lazy, or a witch, or she is addicted to robbing, or ill tempered, or wicked).

Machaba (2011:9) notes that this proverb is also found in Shona, for instance:

Gaidzanwa (1985:11) links the proverb to single women, especially those who have refused to marry or have been unsuccessful in maintaining marriages, widows and single or jilted women. These women’s beauty is regarded as the reason for the failure of their marriages. Similarly, Kolawole (1997:64) renders the proverb in the Shona language and its translation as follows: ‘Mukadzi munaku kurega kuroya anoba (A beautiful woman always has a blemish; if she is not a witch, she is a thief). A ‘thief’ in the sense that she steals other women’s husbands.

Dumazile in *Kunjalo-ke* is not an exception. From all angles, her behaviour validates the proverb. Mtalaselwa, Dumazile’s husband, understands better the African proverb: one who plants grapes by the roadside and one who marries a pretty woman, share the same problem. Elert (1979:31) informs about:

...evil in the shape of a beautiful passionate woman or man has always held in literature.

Dumazile is depicted as a femme fatale. Infidelity does not go unpunished. This was also evidenced in the work of Machaba (2011:74), where Molina loses both her legs in a fatal accident; also in the work of Zulu (2004:157), where Sentebaleng loses an eye. In our work, Dumazile loses her life.

Ferguson (1986:78) attests:

One of the most persistent stereotypes that has permeated literature is that of the dominating woman, aggressive, the shrewish bitch who is a threat not only to man's happiness but to his integrity and even his life. She is an embodiment of everything a man would like to avoid. Through aggressiveness and self-assertion, women are shown to make men their slaves, especially economically. A woman is seen as a dangerous species, which can divert man from his true self.

At the end of *Kunjalo-ke*, Dumazile, her long list of boyfriends and her husband suffer from HIV/AIDS. She is depicted as the one who infected all the males. The reader understands that she caught HIV/AIDS from Moloji. Dumazile was not aware of this until she became sick. She remembers that Moloji once told her that his wife was thin when she died. In the hospital she listens to the burial programmes on the radio, where she hears all the names of her long list of partners. It is as if she wants to hear the names of her victims. The text depicts her as the perpetrator. In her last days, Dumazile calls for her family and the pastor to confess to them her sins. It is as though she alone has sinned. Not even one male admits to his sins, only Dumazile. A woman must take the fall, she says to the pastor: '*Baba ngaphula umthetho wesithupha uNkulunkulu awushiya kuMose*' (p. 168). (Father I broke the sixth commandment that God left for Moses). In this manner the text allows men to preserve their innocence in cases of disloyalty. It is as though all the other men in the text are saying that they were led astray by this wicked woman; while the reader understands that they were all equally to blame.

Gaidzanwa (1985:11) informs:

The expectation of infidelity from sons and husbands is taxing on women in a way that it is not for men since men are not penalized for adultery as strictly as women are.

Machaba (2011:38) confirms this, saying:

In Xitsonga culture, women (unlike men) are not allowed to have multiple partners... It is regarded as immoral for a woman to have more than one partner...

In *Kunjalo-ke*, immorality is a crime, the punishment for which is death. HIV and AIDS is a consequence of women who engage in extra-marital affairs. Dumazile is a beautiful woman who leads men to their early death. Masuku (1998:41) gives her view of how literature sees beautiful women:

...as a dangerous species which, if not destroyed can divert man from his true self. A beautiful woman always has a blemish and men are pardoned for acting the way they do.

Women are warned against using their beauty to deceive men; by contrast, society roots out such behaviour as in the case of Dumazile, who is infected. Machaba (2011:42) confirms Masuku's statement:

The men are consequently warned about being deceived by a woman's beauty. A well-known Xitsonga proverb holds that a beautiful woman always has a blemish.

The text presents us with a hypothesis that a beautiful woman has a blemish – either she is a thief or promiscuous. The text associate beauty with low morals, a negative correlation. A hypothesis is to be rejected or confirmed, based on evidence. The character of Dumazile is our variable. Our findings reveal that what used to be judgement without support about a woman's character is no longer merely an assumption without reference, but a fact, as circumstances confirmed. The narrator carefully builds a case to support a stereotypical view of women. At first, the text uses two female teachers who question the morals of Dumazile. Second, the text uses two old women who blame Dumazile for infidelity. Third, Dumazile falls in love with any man she comes across. Men even fight over her in front of her children, and last, on her dying bed, Dumazile admits that the fault lies in her character. This confirms the hypothesis that, indeed, a beautiful woman has a blemish. We should also consider other factors. Males were not subjected to such scrutiny that society subject women to. For instance, males have the freedom to have as many girlfriends as they wish; this privilege is discouraged in women and men friends. Based on the evidence, we conclude by saying that Dumazile's character was treated unfairly.

Dumazile, together with her long list of boyfriends, committed adultery. The text treats these culprits differently. Man is viewed as *'isoka'* (popular lover) while the woman is seen as *'isifebe'* (prostitute, fornication). This becomes evident in the text in which most women on different occasions lambast Dumazile for being promiscuous. Males are hardly blamed for cases of promiscuity. To have more than one partner is a common thing amongst men, yet a taboo for women. If men can consume the fruit of infidelity, women should also be permitted to do the same. To make the issue taboo when it comes to women, is gender stereotyping. Gumede (2002:23), in defining one of his female characters, says:

Thoko in *Ikhiwane Elihle* exemplifies an economically empowered and sexually free woman. She challenges the social norm that women are not allowed the opportunity and the privilege of dating more than one man.

Dumazile matches the definition offered to Thoko by Gumede (2002:23). For instance, she has more than one partner, each partner fulfilling his role. They take turns in driving her to work: *'UDumazile wayengenankinga nje yokuthi abantu bazothini uma eshintshanisa izimoto zoyise babantwana bakhe'* (p.160). (Dumazile was not troubled by what people may say seeing her being driven to work on different occasion by fathers of her children).

3.3 Summary of the Depiction of a Female Character

The text proves the Zulu proverb true that *ikhiwane elihle ligcwala izibungu* (a red fig lacks no worms). Dumazile is the epitome of this. She seduces men and robs them of their property. She is promiscuous and a total gold-digger, a destroyer of men, a femme fatale. She infects most of her boyfriends with HIV/AIDS. Infidelity taxes her life: she dies of HIV/AIDS. This is a lesson to other women who use their beauty for deceiving men.

The next literary text to be analysed is *Kungabheja Ezansi!* by P.B Maphumulo.

CHAPTER 4: *Kungabheja Ezansi!* (2012): P.B Maphumulo

4.1 Introduction

Kungabheja Ezansi! depicts the clash between African customary law and the Bible vis-à-vis modern law. Male characters in the text are in favour of the former, while female characters favour the latter. The clash between the sexes commences after independence. Males view the law of equality as a threat to their dignity. They uphold the verse that says a man is the head of the family: women ought to obey the rules of a male; moreover, they argue that the Zulu tradition also dictates so. Mathontela, a male character, abuses his wife on those grounds. Simamile, a female character, the wife of Mathontela, suffers the consequences of the traditional customary law. She is forced to multitask, cooking, ironing, and looking after the child, while her husband enjoys comfort. The division of household tasks in this family is grounds for conflict. For instance, when his wife calls for assistance, Mathontela draws on custom, saying what a wife is supposed to do. He views household tasks as the work of women. Mathontela abuses his wife both physically and verbally. Gabazile, an activist, and a leader of women's organisations, seeks to release women from the shackles of patriarchy. Mathontela's abusive behaviour towards his wife escalates to the point that the law has to intervene. On his arrest, males feel as though their position in society is overlooked. They establish a male organisation that will defend their rights as well as that of Mathontela. Males scheme and lie in court in defending their own kind. On Mathontela's release they organise a march to Parliament. Their intentions are to amend the gender equality clause. The president creates a platform on which people must vote – for, or against gender equality. Males lose the election. They are not satisfied with the result. They call for a re-election: they lose for the second time. It is hard to swallow the pill of defeat; they scheme to attack women at their celebration ceremony. Women are beaten by males. The law comes to the rescue: perpetrators, that is, Mathontela and Shazi are arrested. The court finds them guilty, and they receive a severe sentence. Modern law outweighs African customary law. Women are protected from the ills of patriarchy. Gender equality reigns supreme.

4.2 Analysis of *Kungabheja Ezansi!*

Simamile is depicted as literate, submissive, loving, forgiving, and tolerant – a prototype of a traditional wife. She upholds all the values required to be observed by all married women. She has

a high regard for the institution of marriage, and the custom of *ilobolo*, to the point that she puts herself in an inferior position. Simamile perseveres in an abusive marriage just because she fears being labelled as *umabuyemendweni* (marriage returnee). She supports her husband, regardless of his abusive tendencies. Gabazile is depicted as an activist, brave, and aggressive. She practices equality in her house: her husband cooks for her. Zodumo is depicted as a beauty queen, wavering between two ideologies- supporter of patriarchy and the women's movement, being untrustworthy.

Kungabheja Ezansi! (2012) starts with proverbial issues that affect married couples, specifically women. Women are expected to perform all household tasks regardless of their condition. In the eyes of patriarchy, nurturing is viewed through biological lens. Nurturer ought to be a female. The text presents the reader with Simamile who is having difficulties in executing several tasks at once. She says: '*Uzwile ngikhalehwa ngumntwana awangazihlupha ngokuba uzobuza nokuthi ungangelekelela ngani ekubeni bewubonile ngimatasatasa namabhodwe?*' (Maphumulo, 2012: 6). (From now on only the page number for this book will be used) (You heard the baby crying and you did not bother to come and ask how you could be of service while you saw me: I was busy cooking?). Mathontela, Simamile's husband, holds it as true that nurturing is for females. He will not participate in chores; he would rather hire a maid. A maid would necessarily be a female, meaning that Mathontela preserves this domain for females. He says: '*Wangiphendula wathini nje ngesikhathi ngithi kuwe makuqashwe intombazane ezokwelekelela njengomzanyana? Akuwena owathi wukudlala ngemali lokho?*' (p.6). (What was your answer by the time I proposed that we should hire a female that will assist you as nanny? Is it not you who said that was a waste of money?). If a female cannot perform her household tasks, she will be supported by another female. The male should stick to the socially constructed role of being the head of the family, a breadwinner, and a protector. Mathontela's wanting to hire a maid distances him from nurturing.

In *Kungabheja Ezansi!* Simamile cannot perform all tasks since she cannot divide herself in two. She asks for a hand from her husband. She says: '*Sala nanantu usana uluncelise idamu ulushintshe namanabukeni ingaze lutshabuke. Mina ngisaphuthuma ekhishini kengiyobheka umonakalo walolu phuthu lwami olushayo*' (p.7). (Stay with the child; give him a dummy and change his napkin so that he will not get the infection. Me I am rushing to the kitchen to check the damages of this stiff porridge of mine that is burning). These words disturb Mathontela in his comfortable

seat of patriarchy. This request angers him. He voices his discomfort to his wife by saying: ‘*Musa ukungidakelwa wena...yini sengathi usuyikhohliwe nje indima okumele idlalwe nguwena njengomfazi kulamagceke?*’ (p.7). (Don’t disrespect me: why do you act as if you are forgetting the role that you must be fulfilling as a wife on these premises?). As a wife she cannot ask for help because her family took *ilobolo*, moreover, the day she accepted the offer of being somebody wife she was rendering herself into doing all household task. This is how Mathontela thinks of a married woman. Machaba (2011:1) says:

Women’s responsibilities include being mothers, wives and home administrators. In these roles, they undertake all domestic duties including cooking, feeding the family members, keeping the home tidy and above all, childbearing.

Elert (1979:48) writes similarly to Machaba (2011):

The wives... answer to the requirements of domesticity. Their thought are centred on their husbands, their activities on the household duties and on the raising of children.

Mathontela, as a man, does not see himself partaking in household tasks. He has opted for a wife because he is not interested in these duties. Paying of *ilobolo* (bride price) warrants that Mathontela will not touch anything associated with females. When Simamile’s family accepted *ilobolo*, they were conforming that their child will do all work associated with women. In failing to meet these standards handed down by African customary law, women cause those who paid *ilobolo* to feel cheated. In this situation, paying of *ilobolo* guarantees male supremacy. Mathontela says: ‘*Yini ungenze ngizisole sengathi inhloso yami yokukulobola ngakusondeza njengomfazi wami iyakucashela manje ukuthi yabe iyini?*’ (p.7). (Why you make me regret my intention of paying *ilobolo* so that you will be nearer as my wife? Is it not so obvious to you on what was it?) Mathonsi and Mpungose (2015:37) explain it better, saying, “this practice is common in most Zulu communities, and if a woman voices her dissent, she is quickly reminded of the *ilobolo* (dowry/bride price).” In the same vein, Magwaza (2006:2) argues that “the acclaimed value of *lobolo* is viewed different by men and women- whilst men employ it to enforce their power...” In short, males do not have to participate in household task. “[T]ypically, Zulu women perform duties

that range from fetching water from the river, to gathering firewood, tilling, cooking, procreation and cleaning” (Mathonsi and Mpungose, 2015:37). The reader understands that a stereotypical belief in plain sight helps to keep patriarchy intact. Mathonsi and Mpungose (2015:38) assert that women have only duties, no rights, as they have been ‘bought’ through the system of *ilobolo* (bride price).

In Zulu society, there is a proverb that says *izwi lendoda liyabhekwa* (a man’s word is to be taken note of). Mathonsi and Mpungose (2015:34) assert that a man who permits his word to be rejected by a woman is mocked, and he thus does not receive respect from other men. Referring to the above statement, the reader is not surprised that the exchange of words between Mathontela and his wife will anger him. Mathontela sees Simamile, his wife, as short of respect. In restoring that respect, he resorts to violence: ‘*Umuntu wesifazane ochwensa njengawe nje kanje, wenziwa nje... asho ebe embamba ngesiphika selokwe maqedane amngqubuze ngamawala odongweni*’ (p.8). (A woman who disrespects like you that what happens... grabs her with a collar of a dress and then she knocks her by force on the wall). The type of respect in *Kungabheja phansi!* is one-sided because Mathontela demands respects while he does not respect his wife. He demands what he fails to give. In short, he is abusive towards his wife. The text empowers Simamile and others of her kind; she is not passive under the abuse. Simamile fights back: agency is vested in her: ‘*Aziphindisele uSimamile ngokumvisha ngephini esihlakaleni nasedolweni*’ (p.8). (Simamile attacks back by hitting him with a stirring-stick on the back of the hand and on his knee). Simamile proves that women can defend themselves.

In *Kungabheja Ezansi!* Gabazile and Zimazisa are disturbed by the noise in their neighbours’ house. Mathontela is beating his wife. The couple goes to intervene. Gabazile is an activist and a leader of the women’s organisation *iMbokodo kaMagayisa*. She stands for gender equality. The text, through its device, forces Gabazile into the role of nurturing. The quarrelling couple have abandoned their child. In the room there are two males, two females, and a crying child. Gabazile voluntarily looks after the crying child: ‘*Alugqokise amanabukeni ahlanzekile maqedane alushishizele eluthunduzela ngenhloso yokuba luthule*’ (p.9). (She covers the child with a clean napkin, and she comforts him with the intention of making him quiet). In this situation, Gabazile portrays one of the qualities of Africana womanism which is family-centredness. However,

Gabazile's action exempts men from nurturing. To change a child's disposable napkin is not like breast-feeding; a man could be of assistance in changing a napkin. If looking after children is forced onto females rather than males, this reinforces gender stereotyping.

In the text, the utterance of Zimazisa serves the purpose of gender equality. He is against women's abuse. He says: '*Kulesi sikhathi esikuso umfazi akashaywa makhelwane*' (p.10). (In this time, we are in wife is not beaten up neighbour). Zimazisa acknowledges that, under democratic dispensation, there is no time or place for the abuse of women. Such infringes human rights. In *Ubhuku Lwamanqe*, Mathonsi a male character of a similar view. He understands that the law is there to safeguard women against gender-based violence. He also warns other men against gender-based violence as acceptable, a means of social control (p.48). To beat women is wrong in all senses; but to discourage gender-based violence, as MaMholngo does in *Ubhuku Lwamanqe*, opens another can of worms. For instance, she says: '*Uzoke uthi uyashaya ishoba lilale amazolo*' (p.56). (You will kill a woman by hitting her). This emphasises the stereotype of women as fragile and weak. It will be better to denounce women's abuse on legality, not on the grounds of binary opposition.

Zimazisa also acknowledges that household tasks should be divided amongst couples. He says: '*Uma ethi yigemu lami lokupheka namhlanje nokukorobha. Ngivele ngishone khona ngaphandle kokunanaza ngoba ngisuke ngazi ukuthi ukhona umsebenzi osemahlombe akhe osamhlalele*' (p.11). (If she says today it is my turn to cook and clean the floor, I attend to it without any hesitation, because I know that there are other tasks waiting for her). Zimazisa's worldview is not shared by Mathontela. He says: '*Phela mina angisona isiyoyo sendoda. Kanti yini laba enisonela abafazi Zimazisa, hhe?*' (p.11). (Indeed, I am not the type of a weak man. After all it is you that spoil women Zimazisa, hhee?). Mathontela still holds firm to the system of patriarchy. He does not view gender inequality against women as wrong. He is of the view that men, by virtue of being men, are naturally superior to women. This utterance mirrors his dogmatism, in the sense that he still regards household tasks as the tasks of women. In other words, Zimazisa is a sell-out to male society. Some males do not wish to accept and permit the new dispensation of gender equity.

Gabazile calls police in order to arrest Mathontela, who is abusive towards his wife. The irony is seen when Simamile says: *'Bheka nje ngoba sewenze ubuthutha wawasukumisela ubala amaphoyisa athuthuleka eza lapha ephuthuma isidumo esingekho'* (p.12). (Look because you have committed stupidity calling police to come here for nothing). Zulu (2004:152) covers it all, when he says that: "some African cultures tend to attribute the failure of marriage to a woman and as a result she is stigmatized as a quitter." Simamile does not wish to be the root cause of the wrecking of her marriage. She is saving herself from humiliation: society is swift to point towards females as the cause of wrecking of marriages. Gabazile fails in correcting the ills of abusive males, as Simamile defends the culprit. Mathontela rejoices in that. He says: *'Abanye bangaze babuze ukuthi ngikuthandelani kanti abazi bona ukuthi ngikuthandela yona kanye le nhlakanipho yakho onayo.'* (p.13). (Some may ask why I love you whereas they don't know that I love you for that cleverness of yours). Patriarchy praises women when they fall silent in cases of abuse; they are referred to as clever women. In disguise, this promotes women's abuse in a family setting. Women who voice their discomfort may be labelled as bad.

In *Kungabheja Ezansi!* Simamile comprehends the situation she is living under. She says: *'Angiphumele obala ngingavumeli neze ukulunga kwami kungiphendule iMvana yomhlatshelo'* (p.15). (I must get out of the closet not allowing my kindness to turn me into a scapegoat). The obstruction in that is that she fears that she will be forced to raise the child alone. The text here informs the reader that some women stay in an abusive relationship for the sake of children; not that they are not aware of their abusive partner. In *Kungabheja Ezansi!* Zodumo fits the typical image of a beauty queen. *'Ngisaphuthuma edolobheni sibali kwenye yama salon ngisayokwenza ikhanda ngizicwale ukuze ngibukeke kahle ngiyintokazi yakwabo'* (p.16). (I am hurrying to town, brother-in-law, to one of the salons. I am going to do my hair and apply some makeup so that I will look beautiful as a lady). The text polarises males and females ideologically.

Zodumo is an activist, but through the text devices she defends male supremacy. She says: *'Uma indoda nomfazi kulingana ekhaya awusoze nanini waze walawuleka lowo muzi'* (p.18). (If a man and a woman are equal in the house, that house will never be governed at any time). In proving the point that males and females are not equal, and they will 'never be equal', she cites the scripture: *'Yini eyabangela ukuba u-Eva adalwe ngobambo olwasuswa ku-Adamu? Akadalwanga ngani naye'*

nezakhe ziphelele?' (p.19). (What caused Eve to be created by the rib of Adam? Why she was not created with her own ribs complete?). Zodumo does not believe in what she stands for; her character in this situation is implausible. Zodumo's actions fits the image of women who fail to think logically. Her actions fail to rise above women's oppression.

In most African societies, including the Zulu society, a married woman should ask for permission if she wishes to go anywhere: either the husbands or the in-laws should give consent. In most cases, in the absence of a husband, she is accompanied by the in-laws. To leave the homestead without reporting is a sign of disrespect. Simamile left the homestead without her husband's consent. She was supposed to ask for permission before leaving the house. To leave the house without reporting your whereabouts is a sign of disrespect in traditional homesteads, especially when such is committed by females of all ages, except *ugogo*. Status saves no purpose in liberating women from this constant reporting. Literate urban women, as well as illiterate rural women, are all subjected to this rule. A wife reports to her husband; a girlfriend reports to her boyfriend. In siblings in the absence of a father, first in command, the child will report to her mother, the second in command. In the absence of both parents the girl child will report to her brother. This behaviour is heavily policed; it has its judiciary. In some instances, violence is used in ensuring that women's movements are controlled. Simamile did not report her whereabouts to her husband, therefore he is angry. She has overstepped the boundaries. Mathontela says: '*Yikhathi uzonke ungitshela kahle ukuthi uliqhamukisaphi kanye nokuthi awungibikelanga ngani uma kuya ngoba kukhona indlela ozoyithatha?*' (p.21). (It's about time to tell me clearly where you have been and why you did not inform me if there was a journey to be taken). Mawela (1994:81) confirms the above scenario. She says:

Traditionally a Venda woman was never expected to be able to explore things on her own, she was only expected to comply with the standard regulations which were set for women, i.e. to remain at home, plough the fields, and cook for her family and bare children.

Baloyi, as cited by Machaba (2011:4), affirms by saying:

In a marriage relationship, a woman is a minor who must submit meekly to her husband and her sole purpose in life is to serve and satisfy him. The husband is the figure of authority

in the family - he has to be informed of everything that happens in the family. Nothing is done without his knowledge and consent and his decision is final.

Qunta (1987:436) gives clarity to the societal attitude in the following manner:

We live in a man's world and men are considered superior to women. As daughters and as wives we must respect and listen to our brothers and husbands and it is only right that we should seek their permission before we do anything or go anywhere.

What is surprising about this belief is that it is gender specific: women have to report, while males have the freedom to do as they wish without having to report to the female. Such is what makes it gender stereotyping. Simamile explores this gender bias. She says: '*Waba inqaba njalo wena yise kaMnqobi ngoba ufuna ngikwazise ngezami izindlela ekubeni kuqale wena njalo wavele wamonyuka nje ungangibikelanga ngezakho izindlela.*' (p.21-22). (You're so difficult father of Mnqobi, because you want me to inform you about my journeys, while you are the one who started leaving without reporting your journey). Men view women as deceitful and unfaithful. For instance, Mathontela says: '*Ngizokwehlukana kanjani phakathi kohambo lwakho lakwaNhliziyongise kanye nakulolo lweqiniso...?*' (p.22). (How will I differentiate between your private journey and that of truth...?). In the eyes of most men, women always have something to hide, other relationships. A woman who leaves the household without reporting, surely, she is visiting other males, to the patriarchal mindset. In this context, Simamile fits the image of a woman with low morals.

Simamile's utterance is retelling a traditional belief that, without a male voice, nothing will come to fruition. She says: '*Mhlawumbe izwi lakhe lingezwakala kangcono libe nesigqi njengendoda...*' (p.25). (Maybe his voice may sound impressive as a man...). Mathonsi and Mpungose (2015:34) argue that, in a Zulu social community, a man's statement does not come back annulled... whilst that of a woman is usually taken lightly. The reason for that prestige, Mathonsi and Mpungose (2015:34) insist, lies in that social community itself; it is also of a patriarchal frame of mind.

In *Kungabheja Ezansi!* males refuse to do work that is traditionally associated with women; yet if what is expected of them is worse, they resort to doing what women do. For instance, Mathontela says: '*Asishintshane phela mkami mina ngiqhubeke nalo msebenzi engikufice uwenza yikhona wena uzobe wenza imizamo yokubhekana naleli thoyilethi elibhulokhile.*' (p.27). (Let us swap, my wife. I will continue with what you were doing by the time I arrive so that you will make some means of addressing the blocked toilet). In the eyes of males, women are inferior to them, therefore their work ought to fit their inferiority. In short, one may deduce that nurturing was given to females by patriarchy because of its inferiority. The blocked toilet is worse than all aspects of nurturing. Women are given the worst: if something is degrading and humiliating, women ought to address it. Mathontela chooses what is better for him as a male, in comparing the blocked toilet with nurturing, the latter being more acceptable to him. He opts for the nurturing. Surprisingly, in the previous pages of the novel, he has vowed not to associate himself with nurturing, because he has paid *ilobolo*.

Women are forced by patriarchy to be in the kitchen. Their dedication is not applauded; instead, they are mocked, and referred to as over-eaters. It is not surprising that Mathontela has this to say to his wife: '*Ingani ngamanyala akho lana asexaka ithoyilethi njengoba selize lazithathela isinyathelo sokubhulokha nje ukuze lizwakalise isikhalo salo sokulithwalisa kanzima.*' (p.28). (It's because of your disgusting matter that places the toilet in difficulties in as much as it has taken the decision to block so that it will voice its grievances of the hard time it receives from you). People who eat a great deal tend to visit a toilet frequently – people who visit a toilet frequently tend to overeat. Simamile fits this stereotypical image of women. It appears that males do not visit a toilet. This depiction of women is a gender stereotype. The text depicts Simamile, a female character, as careless, stubborn, and stupid. When Mathontela was unblocking the toilet, he comes across napkins, clots, and pieces of steel wool, as indicated in paragraph 1 of page 30 of the novel. Only a retarded person or young child would put such items into the toilet. However, the text uses such devices to depict females in a negative light.

The narrator, through the actions of Mathontela, is levelling the playing field in household chores. The narrator says: '*Esekwenzile lokho kuwo womabili amathoyilethe bese eswakamisa izindwangu aguqe akorobhe imaphansi lendlu...*' (p.31). (After doing that in both toilets he then pours water

on the cloths; he kneels and wipes the floor of the house...). The narrator reminds the reader that domestic chores are a social construct. In Zulu society, women are not allowed to participate in the discussions of men. A woman's task is to listen and follow instructions when she is spoken to. In *Kungabheja Ezansi!* Mathontela has this to say to his wife in condemning her uncalled for behaviour: '*Hheyi! Ake uthule wena, angizange ngisho ukuthi phawula mina lo nontandakubukwa onjengesiyephu lona!*' (p.33). (Hey! You be quiet, I have never said you should comment; you like to be gazed at, like a long-haired goat). Women need to have the go-ahead from males if they wish to participate in their discussions. This rule does not apply to males: it is gender specific, in other words gender biased.

In cases of distress, people turn to vent their anger at a safe object, a scapegoat. In *Kungabheja Ezansi!* Simamile abuses the child to spare herself from her husband: '*Ululumula ebeleni nje eqinisweni bekungeyona neze inhloso yakhe ukwenza into efana naleyo.*' (p.35). She removes the child from the breast; in fact, it was not her intention to do such a thing). Mathontela constantly beats his wife just to remind her of her place, a subordinate position: '*Kade ngagcina ukukushaya wena mfazi, yingakho nje sewaze wangiphuza inyongo wangikhohlwa nokuthi ngingubani..., useqalile phela umyeni wakhe umgijima ngamaveleman ebusweni*' (p.38). (Time has passed without me beating you that why you no longer respect me you have forgotten who I am..., indeed her husband started beating her in the face with fists). The text here reiterates women's abuse under patriarchy, that was denoted in paragraph 4 of page 8 of the novel. Moreover, *Kungabheja Ezansi!* argues in the same vein with paragraph 4 of page 183 of *Impi Yabomdabu Isethunjini* and paragraph 3 of page 140 of *Kunjalo-ke*, that women's abuse is not only reserved for illiterate rural women: it extends to literate urban women. Zondi (2013:180) presents it better when she states that women's oppression still has no borders, be it place, class, or time. In keeping male supremacy intact, males have to constantly check that females are in their place, an inferior position. As Mathontela was beating his wife, Simamile, she retaliates: '*Nguye lona esehlwitha ivasi yezimbali maqedane emesulela ngayo ebusweni umyeni wakhe*' (p.38). (It is her who quickly takes the vase of flowers; then she hits her husband with it in the face). The text here reinforces the agency of women that was introduced in paragraph 3 of page 8 of *Kungabheja Ezansi!* Women defend themselves in cases of abuse. They do not settle at the receiving end. Even though women defend themselves, the text still presents the stereotypical belief that women are poor fighters who resort to biting

when the fight commences: ‘*Useze wamhlala ngamazinyo esibeleni...*’ (p.39). (She has grabbed him by the teeth in the breast muscle). Men use fists while women use teeth. The reader is aware of this gender stereotyping. Men use teeth when fighting; but it should be noted that this is as a last resort. For instance, Mike Tyson made use of his teeth when he was losing the fight against Evander Holyfield. Men use teeth as a last resort, while women use teeth as their attack mode.

In *Kungabheja Ezansi!* the police force symbolises justice. They protect the periphery, women, from the injustices of those who are in the centres of power, males. Modern law towers above male chauvinism that perpetuates women’s abuse under the banner of patriarchy: ‘*Ngena evenini ke wena njengamanje siyokuvalela ezitokisini*’ (p.50). (As now you enter the police van so that we will lock you in the police cell). Police arrest Mathontela for beating his wife, proving that women’s abuse is not tolerated. The police force intensifies the fight against women abuse as it is illustrated in the new democratic constitution. The way in which men turn to abuse their wives has the dire impact in the way now Zodumo views the institution of marriage. Zodumo now fits the image of a paranoid woman because of gender based violence. She fears married life; she sees it as a site of women’s abuse. She says: ‘*Yingakho nje ngaziqokela ukuhlale ngingaganile...*’ (p.51). (That the reason I chose to stay unmarried). She thinks of the worst in marriage; that fear keeps her out of the marriage institution. To save oneself from harm, one ought to be single. Yet the reader understands that not all marriages are built on violence.

The text presents us with some reasons for some women soldiering on in abusive relationships. Simamile says: ‘*Singathini phela ngane kama ngoba sikubuka kuyihlazo elimangalisayo ukubizwa ngomabuyemendweni lokhu.*’ (p.51). (What will we say indeed my mother’s child because we view it as disgrace to be called a divorcee/returned soldier). These words were carefully chosen by society to serve male interests. For instance, males, in cases of disunity of marriage, are not given such tags as *omabuyemendweni*; there is no equivalent name for males. Ntuli in Zulu (2004:153) delineates:

‘Derogatory tags’ for marriage quitters- ‘UDFs’ for the unmarried, divorced and frustrated women, and *omabuyeni* for those who have come back, or ‘returned soldiers.’

Ntuli, as cited by Zulu (2004:153), holds the view that it is unfair to put blame on women for all sorts of 'wrongs', including the dissolution of a marriage. With sadness, she writes:

When it comes to a woman, society develops sudden amnesia and starts to speak in tongues. A woman's 'sins' are magnified and subsequently condemned by labelling her with insinuating [and] derogatory tags. These labels are given to women who seem to have failed or faltered in complying with or behaving according to the expected code of conduct... [because] society tends to treat women with less respect and dignity, as compared to their male counterparts.

Mawela (1994:85) confirmed what Ntuli has illustrated:

In the Venda culture, a person who has returned home or who is divorced is looked down upon or is regarded as a failure. Although slavery is not practised [sic] in the Venda culture a man pays something for a bride. So that is why a woman feels that she owes the husband some loyalty even if she is unhappy with her life. Therefore, the issue of lobola becomes tantamount to slavery. And this seems to encourage men to take advantage of women because they know they have paid something for them.

Machaba (2011:66) declares:

A normal person would...leave such an abusive relationship, however ... She chooses to be physically and emotionally abused rather than lose this status.

Simamile cannot think outside the borders of marriage. The status of being somebody's wife means much in most African women. The patriarchal system conveys its message through the character of Simamile: '*Ingani le nkolelo phela yedlulela nasekutheni emendweni lapha kuyabekezelwa ngisho izinto sezishisa okweseko eziko.*' (p.52). (It because of this belief that continues to say in marriage you have to persevere even if things are at boiling point). These words serve to domesticate women instead of liberating them. Women are forced by the system of patriarchy to let go of their agency. Women tend to take this advice sincerely: it is the last advice they receive from home before they go to the in-laws. They have to persist, no matter the cost. Women are

forced to stay with the in-laws so that they will save their families from having to return *ilobolo*, and preserving the status of their father's *umnumzane*. In maintaining the above points, society has to condemn the abandoning of marriage through naming and shaming of those who fail to persevere. Males are exempted from the above, proving that these statements and proverbs are gender-biased towards women. Statements and proverbs of this sort conscientise women to handle the unbearable in the name of marriage. The text here reiterates the subordinate position of women pointed out in paragraph 7 of page 12 of the novel. Good wives are those who accept male supremacy as illustrated in paragraph 3 of page 13 of *Kungabheja Ezansi!*

Zodumo tries to alert Simamile, her sister, whom she sees as living in the stone age. The text empowers Zodumo to liberate women from the manacles of patriarchy. She says: '*Seligaya ngomunye umhlathi ke-manje ngoba izinto lezi sesizibuka ngeso lokulingana nomsebenzi siwabe ngokwereshiyo yokulingana*' (p.52). (The wheel has turned now because we view things with the eye of equality, and household chores are divided according to the ratio of equality). Zodumo asks Simamile what keeps her from divorcing her abusive husband: '*Okukhulu kunakho konke futhi ufundile unamajazi emfundo agcwele iwadilophu*' (p.53). (The biggest of it all is that you are educated – your closet is full of educational gowns). Simamile is a well-educated woman compared with other women in the text. However, her outlook is that of an illiterate rural individual. The reader expects that people of her caliber know their rights inside out. Same was also true in the study conducted by Zondi (2013) where a highly educated women was persistent living under the yoke of abuse. The text portrays Zodumo in this way so to inform the reader that the abuse of women does not only affect illiterate rural women whom we tend to assume they know little when it comes to women's rights but it cut across to literate urban women. One is forced to draw the conclusion that the marriage institution and its protocols disarm women of their agency. Moreover, marriage comes with status for some women for that matter they are not prepared to let it goes even if it goes hand in hand with abuse. In support of such Simamile says: '*Ukhumbule phela ukuthi kubuye kuvuke kimina ukuthi ngumkhwenyana wangempela lona owazishaya zonke izinkomo zelobolo zaphelala...*' (p.54). (You need to remember that it sometimes seems to me that he is a real husband: he paid *ilobolo* (bride price) in full). Mawela (1994:85) confirms what Simamile is saying. She says:

So that is why a woman feels that she owes the husband some loyalty even if she is unhappy with her life. Therefore, the issue of lobola becomes tantamount to slavery. And this seems to encourage men to take advantage of women because they know they have paid something for them.

This is also verified by Emecheta's (1977:112) statement:

Every woman, whether slave or free, must marry. All her life a woman always belonged to some male. At birth you were sold you belonged to a new master.

The *ilobolo* paid for Simamile confines her to a new master, Mathontela. The payments oblige women to be loyal to the point that they tend to associate love with this payment, as in the case of Simamile. The reader recognises that to pay *ilobolo* does not give one permission to abuse one's partner. To accept *ilobolo* does not necessarily mean one has to succumb to all forms of abuse. Simamile is giving credit to the payment of *ilobolo* made by her husband to her family. In so doing, she is trapped in the yoke of oppression. Zodumo raises the question on whether *ilobolo* covers abuses that women are subjected to during their marriage, as pointed out in paragraph 2 of page 54 of the novel. These words from a female character exposes woman who still stand by *ilobolo* in cases of abuse. Stating clearly that *ilobolo* does not cover abuse of any sort, Zodumo stands for equality, and women's liberation: she defends the downtrodden.

In *Kungabheja Ezansi!* female characters comprehend that a man's voice, on most occasions tends to lead to the execution of matters, society being designed in such a manner. As a well-known stereotypical belief, women question this line of thinking, and give dignity to the woman's voice. Women's voices should be recognised and respected. Most people know that a woman's voice in patriarchy has no value. They say: '*Izwi labesifazane malihlonishwe kuwo womane amagumbi*' (p.61). (A woman's voice needs to be respected in all four corners of the earth). These activists understand that as a first step to liberation, women ought to be heard. Women realise that their role in society ought to be equal to that of males. Society will cease to exist if both sexes fail to work as one: '*Akekho namunye ongazi lapha phakathi kwethu ukuthi inhloko ayisoze yaphenduka macala onke ingekho intamo*' (p.61). (You all know that a head will not move in all directions

without the help of a neck). It is a good analogy that Gabazile chooses to use in defining a gender relation. However, it also runs the risk of functioning under binary opposition, taking it literally that the head is above the neck.

Men are against the gender equality clause. Mathontela, in the police cell, receives support from other males who condemn gender equality. The notable character is Pastor Shazi: '*Ayikho nayinye indoda ehlakaniphile engavuma le mfeketho yokwabelana nezimazi zethu imisebenzi yasekhaya*' (p.70). (There is no clever man who will accept this foolishness of the division of household tasks between sexes). In other words, in a traditional setting a proper man will not bow down to gender equity; meaning if you dare do you are less of a man. This is a stereotypical belief held by patriarchy, in which household tasks are defined in terms of biological features. In the same vein, Mathontela argues that it will be a disgrace on their side if their forefathers were to witness them doing work associated with females: '*Usho ukuthi bangeze basifela ngamathe?*' (p.70). (You don't think they will spit at us?).

Umuthi in the text is the important element in imposing gender equity at homes. Mathontela also believes that those males who have accepted gender equality have not done so out of their own accord: they have been programmed by their wives through the use of *umuthi*. This male character believes that it is only the use of *umuthi* that can make one desert the 'order of creation' and that of 'nature:': '*Bakhothiswa kumbe banyala nokunganyalwa ngolimi, ukuze kube lula kubafazi babo ukuba babadonse ngamakhala kumbe ngemidumba*' (p.70). (They were made to lick, or they lick what was not meant to be licked, so that it will be easier for their wives to pull them by their noses or by their private parts). Women are in accord with men, they see Gabazile as a sorceress. They believe that she uses *umuthi* to control her husband, and she hides what she does, making it appear that there is voluntary gender equity: '*Phela uZimazisa lona usefe ephila ngenxa yale mithi asemgxishe yona umkakhe esimenza intotholo*' (p.113). (Indeed, this Zimazisa is a dead man leaving because of traditional medicine, his wife has used it in him which has turned him into a weak man). Democratic constitution strives for gender equality, but some women's action prove that they are not prepared to share the kitchen with their husbands. Women who have excelled in implementing gender equality are questioned. Their success is seen as by-product of *umuthi*. A 'normal' man in his right mind would not be equated to a woman; he would need to be tamed.

Women are notorious for using *umuthi* (love potion) to steer their husbands. This is also evidenced in *Ubhuku Lwamanqe*, in which MaMhlongo suspects her daughter in law of using *umuthi* to soften up her husband (p.44). This act is associated with women, while the reader knows very well that some men make use of this same tactic. If it is not *umuthi*, force then becomes the prime suspect in imposing gender equity. Simamile thinks along these lines. She believes that Gabazile forces her husband to accept gender equality and the division of labour for the household chores. Simamile believes that household tasks should be shared amongst partners voluntarily; no one should be forced. She says: '*Hhayi kodwa aphoqwe aqhanyukelwe ngehheshe nangendlovuyangena njengoba kwenza ontamolukhuni babafazi bakweminye imizi abafana noGabazile nje lona*' (p.104). (He should not be forced as it is done by cruel wives of other homes like this Gabazile). In the eyes of Simamile, the division of household chores in the house of Gabazile was not a joint decision: it was forced upon Gabazile's husband.

Gabazile, a women's activist, matches the image of women who fail to stand for their principles. As an activist, we expect of her to challenge patriarchy at all costs. Pastor Shazi visited her to discuss the case of Mathontela. Gabazile decides to shield herself from this discussion, ordering her husband to lie on her behalf: '*Amtshele ukuthi angikho okungcono makashiye umyalezo*' (p.73). (He had to tell him that I am not around it better to leave a message). Gabazile, a well-known activist, in the text is afraid to confront the pastor. The reader is left wondering whether she is softening up on her spiritual obligations, or whether she does not want to disappoint the man of God. In this situation, Gabazile fits the stereotypical belief of women who initiate matters, only to run away from them when they start to boil over. Gabazile also gives a contradictory statement when she says: '*Mina bengineke ngincengeke*' (p.74). (I was not going to be coaxed). I am not certain of that because she ran to hide herself. Gabazile's tactic encourages the reader to question her activism. In so doing, Gabazile fulfils the stereotype that says some women tend to change their principles when confronted with real situation that warranties them to practice what they preach.

The right to have sex at any given time is seen as men's privilege. Women may have the same drives. They are, however, seen as tools in fulfilling these demands. Marriage forces women to abide by this "rule", however, *Kungabheja Ezansi!* invests such rights in a female character,

Gabazile: *‘Muva nje kwayona ngisho ingangincenga ithini ifuna ilungelo layo lasemshadweni leli elaziwa ngokuthi yinhlalivuthiwe, igcina ingasashayisananga nalutho uma kuya ngoba liphakeme ithika lami’* (p.74). (Lately, even my husband may coax me in whatever means wanting his right of marriage (sex), he ends up not getting it if I am not in a good mood). In the mentioned scenario, the text empowers women. It gives them liberty to do as they please when it comes to their bodies. In this situation, we witness the power shifting from the centres of power, men, to the periphery, women. Does the payment of *ilobolo* and marriage give men right over women’s bodies? – absolutely not. However, this is the direction in which *ilobolo* moves from a man to a brides’ family. Such a transition makes men believe that they are buying their wives. The *ilobolo* price is exchanged for rights to a human being.

The text presents us with an interesting male character, Mciciyeli, who is a lawyer by profession. By virtue of that we are persuaded to think that a man of his caliber fully embraces gender equality since he deals with human rights. By contrast, he is against gender equality in all formats: *‘Lo mthetho ngiwenyanya kabi ngoba uhlanekwezela amaqiniso asobala’* (p.75). (I hate this law because it distorts plain truth). Mciciyeli is a lawyer, except that he does not believe in gender equity. This proves that it is not only rural illiterate men who stand for male supremacy – this also extends to urban literate men. In defense of patriarchy, men are willing to offer their services free of charge just for the benefit of male supremacy: *‘Mina-ke njengommeli ngilapha ukuzokwazisa ukuthi ngelula isandla ngenhloso yokukunika usizo ngingabheke nzuzo’* (p.76). (As a lawyer I am here to let you know that I am extending my hand with the aim of helping you. I am not expecting any payment). In addition to that, Mciciyeli lies in defense of Mathontela: *‘Wena kuzomele uliphike icala enkantolo’* (p.76). (You have to plead not guilty in court). Mciciyeli fits the typical image of cunning associated with lawyers. He distorts truth in order to save those of his kind, males. The lies the lawyer uses to depict Simamile’s actions fit nurturing; cleaning of a house is seen as women’s work; therefore, cleaning material is within their reach. Thus, it is not astonishing that Simamile uses a mop to strike her husband. Had it not been a mop, surely it would have been a kitchen cloth, a vase of flowers, or a stirring-stick, so as to fit the image of a woman and her household chores. Mciciyeli says: *‘Uyitshela inkantolo ukuthi wena umshaye ngempama nje kuphela umkakho uziphindiselela ngoba ezame ukukhiphela kuwena isibhongo ngokukubhonya ezimbanjeni ngenduku yemophu’* (p.77). (You tell the court that you only slapped your wife in

retaliation because she attempted to vent her anger by striking you in the ribs with a mop). To enhance this argument, one is forced to cite paragraph 4 of page 8 of the novel, and paragraph 4 of page 38 of the novel, where a similar situations surface.

Kungabheja Ezansi! uses apparatus in elevating nurturing into a profession. A female character, Simamile, is a nurse by profession. She has been elevated from a simple woman in her private home to the level of a worker at a hospital. What she performs at home is like what she does at work: ‘*Ngosuku lokuqala nje ebuyele emsebenzini wakhe esibhedlela lapho asebenza khona njengomhlengikazi ...esayobhekana nomsebenzi wakhe wobizo*’ (p.79-80). (On her first day of return to her work in hospital where she works as a nurse... to confront her work of calling). The same is also true in paragraph 3 of page 46 of the novel. Such transpires in other texts, for instance, in Paragraph 2 of page 58 of *Impi Yabomdabu Isethunjini* and in Paragraph 4 of page 113 of *Kunjalo-ke*: women are nurses. A nursing profession in its pure sense is not an issue. However, the idea that it must be associated with females, not males, makes it gender biased.

Traditional men go to great lengths in defense of the status quo, male superiority. For instance, in *Kungabheja Ezansi!* males create *Izwi Lamadoda*, an organisation that will serve men’s interests, moreover, this organization will preserve patriarchal power seen to be threatened by gender equity. The founder of the organisation is Pastor Shazi. This is the antithesis of the women’s organisation *Imbokode kaMagayisa*. It is an obvious fact that the intentions of these male organisations is to water down all efforts to liberate women from the chains of patriarchy. *Izwi Lamadoda* is a sexist organisation: ‘*Okumele kucace nje wukuthi abesifazane abemukelekile...*’ (p.87). (What needs to be clear is that women are not allowed). In contrast, women allow men in their organisation. Men who support *Izwi Lamadoda* are taxi drivers, police, warders, and prisoners (p.88). It is no surprise that *Izwi Lamadoda* has found a soft spot in these individuals; their common element is violence. The underlying aim of this organisation is to give support to Mathontela, who is facing an abuse charge. Males are elevating one of their own, turning a perpetrator into a victim of circumstances – a man crucified by a women’s organisation: ‘*noMathontela njengomunye wamadoda othathwa ngokuthi usebe yisisulu sokuhlukumezeka*’ (p.90). (Mathontela was taken as one of the men who have been a victim of abuse). By these actions, Mathontela is portrayed as the innocent, whilst women are vilified. The reader is not led astray: Mathontela has been portrayed as an abusive lover

– not once, but on several occasions, as presented in paragraph 4 of page 8 of the novel, and paragraph 3 of page 38 of the novel.

In defense of patriarchal ideology, the male characters in the text cite their ‘icon’ as their cornerstone in the battle against women: ‘*Uma kungavuka okaSinono, uFulathelazimbuke kwelamathongo asifice sesidlala abesifazane kangaka, angakhihla esikaNandi isililo lesi asibize ngeziyoyo zamadoda omabuthwa nelondolo*’ (p.97). (If Sinono were to wake up Fulathelazimbuke from the dead, and discover us being a plaything for women, he will cry and call us weak men who are collected with laundry). Mama (as quoted by Magwaza, 2006:4) notes:

it is common for men to appropriate and interpret African traditions and culture in selective ways that enhance their power and authority.

It is a male discourse that discredits gender equality. The views of Shobane of Mangethe, cited by male characters in *Kungabheja Ezansi!* are biased towards women. What surfaces is that women should persist in abusive relationships, while men have the liberty to let go of, or divorce, women who are troublesome. Men have power either to hang onto or let go of the other sex. Women lack that agency. For instance, Shazi says: ‘*Ingani kwakuthi nxashane uyindoda uhlushwa ngumfazi uShobane kaMangethe lona umuzwe esethi Mkhulule, kanti uma ngabe kungumfazi okhonondayo athi Gwiny itshe! Weza uzogana ngakho-ke yithobele noma ngasiphi isikhathi sosuku indoda yakho*’ (p.97). (Definitely at that moment when a male is troubled by his wife, Shobane of Mangethe would say let her go, whereas if it a woman complains he would say persevere! You came to get married therefore respect your man at whatever time of the day). In *Kungabheja Ezansi!* Mathontela holds a low opinion of his wife. He says: ‘*Sengibone kahle ukuthi isitha esimelene nami asinamandla...*’ (p.98). (I have seen clearly that the enemy confronting me has no power). Mathontela portrays his wife as an enemy to fellow men, while we all know from page 7, 8, 22, 28, 33, 38, 39 and 47 that he is the enemy of women; he threatens and beats women.

Certain clothes are used to put across the stereotypical belief of women. For instance, Zimazisa says: ‘*Pho-ke ngoba nakhu ningabantu besifazane kungcono ngisale sengithi nyusani amapentihose*’ (p.99). (Well then because you are women it is appropriate to say pull up your

pantyhose). We know that not all women wear pantyhose; we also need to consider that some men wear pantyhose; so, to equate pantyhose with women only is stereotypical. This is a male mode of thinking. *Kungabheja Ezansi!* represents Simamile as the type of woman who cannot survive in the absence of men. She says: ‘*Singakhuluma nje sikhohlisane kodwa lona iqiniso lihle impilo ngaphandle kwendoda imuncu, injalo nje iyesinda*’ (p.103). (We can talk and deceive one another but the truth prevails: life in the absence of males is sour, thus it is difficult). This corroborates the stereotype that a woman’s life is incomplete without a male partner, as is denoted in paragraph 1 of page 237 of *Impi Yabomdabu Isethunjini*. The same sentiment is expressed in paragraph 2 of page 132 of *Kunjalo-ke* and in paragraph 4, page 41 of *Ngiyolibala Ngifile*. The reader understands that there are many women who live happily in the absence of men. Men are not the entire source of happiness. To be given such status is what makes the perspective gender biased.

Kungabheja Ezansi! dishonours Gabazile’s activism in the sense that she abuses the power of gender equality. Gabazile is against women’s oppression; but what her husband does at home brings the character of Gabazile into question. It appears that she dislikes abuse of women, but enjoys the abuse of men: ‘*Ingani ngizwa kuthiwa imwashela ipitikoti ngisho nanedilozi imbala? Ingani asebeke bayelamela bafakazelana ngezwi elilodwa lokuthi bake bayifika ikhuhla isikigi nge-Vim?*’ (p.103). (Definitely, I heard that he washes her petticoat and underwear for her. Certainly, those who have seen him testify in one word that they found him washing a native night commode with *Vim*). The text uses its power to vilify female characters, as is demonstrated in paragraph 3 of page 268 of *Impi Yabomdabu Isethunjini* in which women instruct their partners to wash their underwear.

Female characters believe that, for justice to take its course, the magistrate should be a woman, so that matters of women would be taken note of. Male judges are seen as instruments of patriarchy. The male judge finds Mathontela not guilty of the abuse charge. Gabazile says: ‘*Abenziwanga neze ubulungiswa phela kuleli cala*’ (p.105). (Justice was not done in this case). According to the practices of male characters, women should be silenced when they are being abused by their husbands: such is a sign of a good wife. If they rebel when they ought to rebel, they are labelled bad. Patriarchal discourse is biased towards the abuse of the other sex, females. After the court has exonerated Mathontela of abuse, the cry is heard: ‘*Abafazi...Woswayini! Woswayini!*’ (p.107).

(Women... are swine! Are swine!). To associate women with pigs of all creatures in the animal kingdom clearly shows that males have a low opinion of women. The text here runs concurrently with paragraph 3 of page 8 of the novel. Simamile, in defending herself from her abusive husband, runs the risk of being called a pig. This is a tactic to silence radical women. Pigs are equated with filth. To class women as pigs is an attack on women.

In *Kungabheja Ezansi!* men are not willing to accept a gender quake, a shift from male supremacy to gender equality. Women will occupy seats reserved for males in all sectors of society. To hamper this, men challenge gender equality in parliament. Men believe that gender equality is a threat to their dignity. Men want the law of gender equality to be amended. They say: '*Isithunzi samadoda sehlile emindenini nasemphakathini, ngakho-ke sicela kuchitshiyelwe lo mthetho osibeka ezingeni lokulingana nabesifazane thina besilisa*' (p.109). (Dignity of men has decreased in families and in society. So, we beg for the amendment of this law that makes us equal with women). Males want to safeguard their position of power in their families, regardless that time and place does not permit. It is difficult for men to accept that male supremacy is outdated.

Zodumo, in the text, acts as the stereotype that women are unstable; they waver between two schools of thought – people who do not stick to what they have said, lacking consistency. The reader remembers that Zodumo was crying and calling for the arrest of Mathontela, the abuser. Now she reverses her position and calls for unity between Simamile and her husband, Mathontela. Simamile is disturbed by her character. She says: '*Ngithathe kuphi-ke kokukhulumayo uma ngabe ungakwazi ukuwamela amagama akho*' (p.111). (Which advice should I take in what you are saying if you cannot stick to your words). Simamile is now confused on which advice to take – the former or the latter. The text depicts Zodumo as someone not to be trusted – a person with a forked tongue. She changes colours like a chameleon to suit her mood of the moment. Zodumo, in defending her current position: '*Nansi iminwe iyisihlanu kodwa okufike kugqame ngayo wukuthi yadalwa yangalingana ngobukhulu nangobude*' (p.112). (Look fingers are five: what is noted in them is that they were created to have different length and breadth). Through these utterances, Zodumo is accepting defeat. Fingers of the hand do not represent gender differences as socially constructed by patriarchy, women occupying positions of less importance. Moreover, gender differences have been used to disguise ill treatment given to women. Zodumo is giving power to

patriarchy while marginalising the periphery, women. She says: '*Lilonke nje ngithi mina noma sesithanda kanganani asissoze nanini salingana nabantu besilisa*' (p.112). (Above all I say even if we like will never be equal to males). In this situation, Zodumo is a mouthpiece of patriarchy. She serves to downgrade women. The text here uses a female character in upholding male ideology.

In the text, women understand that scripture forces women into a position of submissiveness, while politics offers liberation. In understanding the distinction between the two, women question the latter, seeing it as having a negative influence in raising of children: '*Ngisho ngoba phela nangu UGabazile oyisishosho vu sezepolitiki akamazi nokuthi uyini kuye umyeni wakhe, yingakho nje nezingane zakhe zixegelwa ngamakhanda njengezimpukane*' (p.113). (I say that on grounds that indeed here is Gabazile, a political activist: she does not respect her husband which is why her children are ill-behaved). This shows that women may be of equal value as their husbands; however, some things cannot be fulfilled. Gabazile fails to put her children in order, invoking the presence of a man to fulfil his duties. This reflects that women are not destined to become the head of the family, leaving men to outclass women in the task of leading the family. The ill behaviour of children is put at the door of gender equality.

Kungabheja Ezansi! depicts Zodumo as an unreliable character. She serves two parties in conflict, women's liberation, and patriarchy. She says: '*Sibali okuyisona sihloko sodaba esizobonisana ngalo ngelokuthi musani ukuvumela izitha ezicasha ngesihlangu sepolitiki zingene phakathi kwenu zinihlakaze*' (p.115). (Brother-in law, the topic we are about to discuss is that you and your wife should not allow enemies who are using politics as a war shield, to divide you). The reader understands that Zodumo, together with Gabazile, were championing the arrest of Mathontela, her brother in-law, who was abusive towards his wife. Since that did not work, she resorts to uniting the two. Zodumo is putting the fox in the den of chickens, hoping the fox will lose its wilingness. Zodumo's way of exchanging views and thoughts affirms a sense of shakiness and a lack of responsible decision-making associated with women. Patriarchal society has the tendency to blame women for the wrecking of marriages. Something similar applies in *Kungabheja Ezansi!* Mathontela underlines the above point: '*Nguye udadewenu lona ovumela imimoya yabezizwe ibhidlize ubunye nobumbano lwethu*' (p.115). (It is your sister who has succumbed to outside forces that destabilize our unity). It is pertinent here to use Zulu (2004:152) as our point of reference. The

author affirms that some African cultures lean towards attributing the collapse of a marriage to a woman; as a result, she is stigmatised.

Religion plays an important role in perpetuating gender inequality or patriarchal tendencies. *Kungabheja Ezansi!* proves that the Bible itself also subscribes to patriarchy. It places men in a superior position, forcing women into a submissive role. Males in the text use the Bible to defend their chauvinism; the Bible dictates women's position in society: '*Ekubeni ngokweBhayibheli owesilisa kalingani neze nowesifazane ngephuzu lokuthi indoda iyinhloko yekhaya*' (p.119). (According to the Bible, the male is not equal to female, in the sense that the male is the head of the family). Elert (1979:12-13) states that:

Religion also influenced the position of women...It fused with Judeo-Christian thought on women, dominated by the views of St Paul. Aristotle, and after him St Thomas, considered women defective and thus inferior to men. Early Christian theologians had come to view St Paul's texts as proof that women should be subordinated to men. On the other hand, they exalted the Virgin Mary to almost divine status as Queen of Heaven.

Elert (1979:13), on the same note attests:

The Protestant religions retained the earlier ideas concerning the subordinate position of women. The Reformation, also, overthrew the image of Mary as an ideal. The teachings of St Paul were reinforced. For instance, an English homily on the state of matrimony demanded of the wife that, in addition to obedience, she "should endeavour in all ways to content her husband, do him pleasure and avoid what may offend him." A homily on matrimony also stressed the idea of woman as a defective creature: a "weaker vessel; of a frail heart, inconstant."

To prove that the Bible was written with a male reader in mind, when women cite the Bible to correct the ills of patriarchy, there are no specific words that depict their situation. Instead, they take words which are symbolic but not specific: '*Akukho tshe eliyohlala phezu kwelinye libelokhu licindezele?*' (p.117). (There is no stone that will stand on top of the other). Women, when

defending gender equality, tend to resort to the allegory that speaks of stones. The reader understands that stones, in general, can represent anything. We also know that, in building houses, stones are placed on top of others. The Bible laws, as well as customary laws, are tools used by patriarchy in justifying their method of operation. Both the Bible and customary law tell in detail what is expected of men and women.

Gabazile is angered by the way in which men treat women. She even vows to discipline Mathontela by giving him a hard blow. She wants to use the language men understood better – to be violent. Zodumo condemns such an approach: ‘*Kungeze kwakusiza ngalutho ukulwa neNhlango yabesilisa ngodlame ntombinkulu*’ (p.128). (It will not help to fight male organisations using violence, big girl). Zodumo understands that violence is not the solution when fighting the centres of power. She acknowledges that violence begets violence. In *Kungabheja Ezansi!* males marched to Parliament to challenge gender equality. The president sees the need to bring the matter into the cabinet. He wants to hear the views of parliamentarians on this matter. The congress is polarised; men are against gender equity, while women are in favour. This proves that even educated males in seats of parliament still favour male supremacy, regardless of being the protectors of society and the constitution. For instance, one parliamentarian says: ‘*Izwakala iyihlaya nembudane yodwa le ndaba yokuthi abantu besifazane mabalingane nathi thina bantu besilisa ngamalungelo*’ (p.132). (It sounds like a joke and all nonsense that women should be equal to us males in rights). This text proves that it is not only the illiterate rural men who favour women’s oppression. It cuts across to most men, regardless of their educational status and location. The text here magnifies what was illustrated in the last paragraph of page 182 of *Impi Yabombadu Isethunjini* that women will never be equal to males. In short, men ought to rule over women and their children. Both texts confirm the stereotype that men are superior to women. *Kungabheja Ezansi!* gives evidence that males in centres of power defend male supremacy. We will see the clear cut between the views held by educated men to those held by the general public when it comes to matters of gender equity. The results show that men share the same perspective when it comes to liberation of women. Women are not supposed to receive the recognition given to males to enjoy. The males in question vow to uphold the constitution, which dictates that women ought to have equal rights with males. However, when the issue of gender equality resurfaces, men rely on the customary law or the scripture dismissing the constitution. Men in parliament are the extended version of the men in the

street. People are supposed to defend the constitution instead of stepping on it. Theoretically, they preach equality; in practice, they exercise women's oppression, that is underscored by the various views that transpired in a parliamentary sitting. This proves that there is no difference between the man in the street and the one in parliament. All men subscribe to the patriarchal ideology – subjugation of women.

Men suppress gender equity at all levels. In the text, the president discovers the clash between the sexes and concludes that the matter should be given to the public at large; the vote will determine which route to be taken. He says: '*Lilonke nje ivoti loquqaba yilona eseliyoba yisixazululo kulolu daba...*' (p.133). (Overall, it is the vote of the people that will determine the solution of this matter...). Parliament has failed to address the problem of gender equality amongst its members. The problem was exacerbated by the conflict between men and women using different lenses in viewing the matter- men in the centres of power in favour of male supremacy. The text uses this device to inform the reader that women and men regardless of status have different views when it comes to gender equality. In a family setting, Simamile understands that all the confusion in the house is caused by the traditional belief of women as the subclass; males occupying the higher echelons of power. She says: '*Ubaba wekhaya lona uyisidala*' (p.137). (This father of the house is outdated). The cause of conflict is that her husband does not accept the modern way of living, post 1994.

In *Imbokode kaMagayisa*, there are males who support women's interests. This proves that not all male characters in *Kungabheja Ezansi!* condemn gender equality: '*Phakathi kwayo kunalawo mavolintiya angabantu besilisa abazwelana kakhulu nabantu besifazane...*' (p.140). (In it there are those volunteers who are males who sympathise greatly with women). In contrast, *Izwi Lamadoda*, is a sexist organization because membership is not given to women. The day came when the public had to vote for or against gender equality. Women won the vote, meaning that gender equality will not be amended in favour of males. Males could not swallow the pill of defeat. They say: '*Siyosebenzisa izikhwepha nje kwaphela*' (p.148). (We will use force). These utterances prove that men become violent when their plans fail. The text here revisits what has been said in paragraph 2 of page 145 of the text: some men will not permit gender equality in their lifetime. Males, in general, are not satisfied with the vote result: they therefore ask to have a revote. They are confident

that there was a third hand that led to their defeat. Their claim is supported by the ballot box that was found thrown in the river. They forward their grievances to parliament. Parliament discusses the matter and sees a need for a revote: '*Siyaphumelela ngaphandle kokunanaza*' (p.156). (It passes without hesitation). One may deduce that women paid those who were transporting the ballot box to the counting station, which ended up being retrieved from the river. This action confirms the stereotype that women are deceitful.

To defend the ideology of patriarchy, males in the text scheme about marrying rural women. Their reasoning is that, in most cases, rural women are submissive because they have been socialised to behave so. They say: '*Ingani phela bona basabambebele emithethweni emidala yasendulo yokuthi izwi lendoda yilona eligcinayo emzini wayo ngenxa yobukhulu eyabuphiwa woNgaphezulu*' (p.159). (It is because they still hold on to the law of the ancient time that says the word of a male is a final word in his house because of his superiority given by God). This method will serve the ends of securing the vote against gender equity. Men highlight three points about rural women being ideal candidates – wives. First, they state that research has proved that rural women choose to marry because they wish to obey their husbands; they choose to be taken care of; to be fed, and to be clothed. Second, marriage gives them the rights to respect. It presents them with a new family, their in-laws. Rural women respect their husbands because they dislike divorce. Divorce comes with negative labelling. Divorced women are said to be marriage quitters, fallen soldiers, and *omabuyemendweni*. Third, marriage gives them a name and popularity, especially if they are married to a man of status (p.160).

Religion: both Christian and African based religion are used as a point of reference in suppressing women. Men who are already married will take an additional wife, subscribing to polygamy. To take a second wife will force the first wife to relook the matter of gender equality. Overall, it is a method of silencing gender equality. Mathontela says: '*Ngempela ukuthatha kwami umfazi wesibili kuzomenza alubuke ngelinye iso udaba lwethu lo mfazi wokuqala*' (p.160). (Really to marry the second wife will make the first wife to look at matters differently). Male characters use women to fight other women; their modus operandi is to support polygamy. This act substantiates the stereotype that women are irrational.

In *Kungabheja Ezansi!* the messenger of God views gender equality as nonsense. He even says: ‘*Ngiyakholwa khona ukukholwa kodwa amanyala wona angizwani neze nawo*’ (p.161). (I believe in God, but I do not tolerate rubbish). Shazi vows to desert his position of being a messenger of God if women are to be equal to men. This proves that men believe that women were designed to be a subclass of men. It no surprise to see the man of God being adamant that he cannot bear to see women as his equals. All is rooted in the Book he carries: it favours women’s subordination. Being loyal to scripture means being loyal to its values. The second vote result favours women: females win the election for the second time, meaning that most people favour gender equality. The resisters are the select few who still stick to the traditional customary law (p.176). What must be noted is that those men who dislike gender equality are educated men, men of status. This puts to rest the long-held outlook that only rural, illiterate men favour inequality between sexes.

In most literary work, women are associated with wearing pink, with flower-picking or floral decoration. In *Kungabheja Ezansi!* women call themselves roses: ‘*Awina amaRosie*’ (p.178). (roses win). These depictions of female characters confirm the binary opposition between sexes. In the previous pages of *Kungabheja Ezansi!* men have vowed to use force if their tactics fail to bear fruit. As men have experienced the second blow of defeat, they become violent towards the victor, women. They echo their sentiments in the form of a slogan: ‘*Ishay’inja isishingile, ishay’inja!... Umfazi yize, yize mfazi*’ (p.179). (Hit the dog it has turned around, hit the dog!.. A woman is nothing, a woman is nothing). To rank a woman on the same level as a dog is a proof that men have a poor opinion of women. In the previous pages, women were associated with pigs. In the eyes of men, women occupy an inferior position that warrants no respect. The text empowers Zodumo with a voice of emancipation, a true defender of her kind. She says: ‘*Phambili ngomoya wobunye wokulwela ilungelo lokulingana phakathi kwamadoda nabesifazane*’ (p.179). (Forward with the spirit of unity of fighting for equality between males and females).

As women celebrate their victory of gender equity, males start to attack them: ‘*Abahlaseli sebhophezu kwabo abesifazane ngemishiza, ngezinsilane nangamaqupha*’ (p.180). (Attackers are hitting women with sticks, whips, and fists). This behaviour of males can be defined as an act of frustration displacement. Males choose a safe target for their frustration; in this case, women are targeted. Men were supposed to attack Parliament for acquiescing in gender equality. However,

fearing the consequences, men have used women as the scapegoat. Men direct their anger towards Gabazile, the leader of the women's organisation. They believe she is the root cause of all ill-discipline they come across in their wives: '*Nguwe lona osonela abafazi bethu njengalokhu bengasathathi lutho nje koluphuma kwezethu izindebe zomlomo*' (p.180). (You the one who spoils our wives: they do not take notice of what we say). Wives are not expected to think for themselves; they are influenced by others who claim that women's status equates to that of a child. Women are easily driven by views of others. These utterances confirm the stereotype that women are irrational and submissive. To beat Gabazile, the activist, is the method used by male characters to dissolve *Imbokodo kamaGayisa*, a women's organisation. Gaidzanwa (1985:11) says the following about such women:

In literature, the bulk of the problem women are those who fall down on their wifely duties and responsibilities. These duties include bearing children, subordinating themselves to husbands, remaining faithful to their husbands and deferring to the husband's mother, father or other relations. Childless domineering or assertive, unfaithful and insubordinate women are despised and socially disapproved.

Gabazile matches the second type of woman illustrated above. She is assertive and insubordinate. For this reason, she is despised by a patriarchal society. She has neglected her wifely duties while indulging in gender politics, championing women's rights. The text invests agency in its female characters. Women fight back in cases of attack. This proves that women are not as passive as most patriarchal men wish them to be. Women are active, defending themselves against the ills of patriarchy: '*Nakuba uGabazile esopha nje ekhaleni, kodwa usephumelele ukumhlala ngamazinyo endlebeni uMathontela...*' (p.181). (Even though Gabazile is bleeding from the nose, she manages to bite Mathontela's ear...). Even though Gabazile defends herself against Mathontela she resorts to using teeth when fighting. This is a stereotype associated with women. In the text, Gabazile is the second woman to use teeth when fighting. On the previous page, it was Simamile. To define the way in which women fight as using teeth is gender stereotype.

Patriarchy has the tendency to use women in furthering its objectives. *Kungabheja Ezansi!* is not innocent of that. For instance, Simamile is used by patriarchy to defend perpetrators. For instance,

she asks Gabazile to drop charges of abuse laid against her husband: '*Uthena mangibomcelela umusa nesihawu kuwe ngokuba uhoxise icala*' (p.184). (He said I should ask you for your kindness and sympathy by withdrawing the charges against him). Simamile's primary concern is to save her marriage at the expense of women's oppression. Simamile's illogical thinking fails to transcend women's oppression directed to her kind. Gabazile stands her ground. She says: '*Anginalo neze igazi likanxese*' (p.185). (My blood is not something to play with). People who abuse women are not to be forgiven; their actions must be condemned so that women will be safe from abuse.

Zimazisa makes tea for his wife and her friend: '*Itiye lenu liyeza emizuzwini engemingaki nje kusukela manje*' (p.194). (Your tea is coming in few seconds from now). Tea-making in the texts I have analysed is gender specific. This was illustrated in paragraph 4 of page 86 of *Kunjalo-ke*. The same holds true in paragraph 5 of page 88 of *Impi Yabomdabu Isethunjini*. Women make tea for their husbands. To associate women with tea-making is what makes it gender stereotype. Zimazisa's behaviour proves that gender roles are social constructs. A man can make tea for his wife.

In the court hearing, male characters, Mathontela and Shazi, argue that the charge of abuse laid against them should be withdrawn on the grounds that the case of women abuse occurred after the 16 days of Activism for No Violence Against Women and Children. In men's minds, women are only exempted from abuse during these 16 days. On other days abuse is permitted (p.202). The 16 days of activism campaign is a campaign backed up by the UN, to raise awareness of violence against women and children. In 1998, South Africa adopted the 16 days of Activism for No Violence Against Women and Children, as one of the state intervention procedures for creating a society free of violence. The text passes a message that violence against women and children did not disappear with the introduction of the democratic constitution, women are still subjected to various forms of abuses: physically, sexually, psychologically, emotionally, and economically and children were not exempted from the same. The court defends women's rights and defends them against violence. In so doing, it sentenced Mathontela and Shazi for their crimes committed against women: '*Kwelokuqala icala inkantolo ibagwebe iminyaka eyilishumi umuntu ngamunye ebhadla ejele*' (p.207). (On the first count the court sentenced them to 10 years behind bars). The court shields women from abuse, moreover, it champions women's rights and dignity. The text plainly

embraces modern law that unequivocally protects women and children from suffering at the hands of males. It also discredits African customary law that places men as oppressors of women and children as a result of the position given to men by Zulu society. The narrative of modern law that defends woman and children is fortified. It triumphs and reigns supreme at the moment when Mathontela and Shazi are sentenced. Women are happy because the court has defended them against the ills of patriarchy: *'Iqophelo lentokozo liphakeme kakhulu'* (p.213). (The level of happiness is very high).

Simamile visits her husband in jail even after all he has done. A police officer questions her behaviour of visiting a man who has abused her. She affirms that he is her husband: she will not give up on him. Mathontela asks for forgiveness: she forgives him. Gaidzanwa (1985:31) is of this view:

Women who are idealised may be those who are obedient to their husbands even if the husband is wrong and unreasonable. They are women who do not complain when they are badly treated. They patiently wait for their husbands to recognise their virtue and they may actually shield their husbands from the consequences of unreasonable or cruel behaviour. It is also noteworthy that it is the “ideal” wives who are most brutalised and maltreated without cause. An ideal wife is judge in terms of how she behaves towards her husband and how she looks after him. She is the one who is totally committed to serving the interest of her husband even at the risk of martyring or sacrificing her own interest.

In the same vein, Mtuze, as cited by Masuku (1994:23), affirms that:

The society's ideologies so condition the view of life that whatever is deemed proper, like marriage for women must be secured all cost.

It is in subscribing to this ideology that Simamile overlooks all the abuse, humiliation, and degradation she is subjected to, soldiering on just to save her marriage. Society praises women of this caliber – the traditional, submissive, tolerant, polite, respectful, and supportive wife to their

husbands. Simamile is a devoted woman who goes to great lengths to make her marriage functional.

Mtuzze (1990:41) is of the opinion that:

Virtue, good conduct, generosity and subservience are important attributes in male dominated society and everything contrary to them is ruthlessly dealt with. In short, women are not only contingent on others but social norms also demand that they exercise whatever power they have behind the scenes only, regardless of their education or social status. ...women are expected to be the same. Any deviation from that is suspect. Stereotyping, with its tendency to generalise, indirectly enforces the pseudo-uniformity. That is why educated women characters are not different from their uneducated counterparts as far as work, conduct and responsibility are concerned.

The text passes the message that African customary law and some scriptures in the Bible are no longer relevant at this time and age. All is governed by the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, which places women and men as equal. Moreover, it does not cater to those who believe women to be a subclass. It fails to tolerate males who behave like dictators to their families.

4.3 Summary of the Depiction of Female Characters

The text presents us with women of opposite poles when it comes to gender equality. Women in marriage are submissive, tolerant, and supportive. Wives are humble to the point that they tolerate abuse rather than lose their marital status. On the other hand, we have activist type of women who overstep the boundaries and become the subject of ridicule, as in the case of Gabazile. Such women's achievements are associated with the use of *umuthi*, a witch stereotype. Submissive women are given plaudits by the text. Simamile fits the criterion of an ideal Zulu wife.

The following literary work to be analysed is *Ngivumle, Baba* by W.M Khumalo.

CHAPTER 5: *Ngivumele, Baba* (2011): W.M Khumalo

5.1 Introduction

Nokulunga is forced by her parents to marry a man she does not love. The underlying factor is that Mgwazeni's father, Manqele, owns a rare breed of cow. Hlatshwayo and MaNdimande, who are Nokulunga's parents, are interested in these cows. Their greed allows them to overlook Nokulunga's emotions. MaNdimande promises Mgwazeni the hand of her daughter even though her daughter is in love with another man, Magomazi. Nokulunga's family did not see Magomazi as a suitable suitor: they know little about him, and his family's financial standing. Based on such, he is not an ideal suitor for their daughter. Mgwazeni fails to win Nokulunga's heart, even though her parents favour him. Mgwazeni then abuses the position of a chosen suitor. He uses all methods he knows just to win Nokulunga's hand in marriage. He even goes to the extreme of kidnapping Nokulunga in the name of *ukuthwala*. Nokulunga does not succumb to his wiles. She regains her freedom and marries the man she loves.

5.2 Analysis of *Ngivumele, Baba*

The untenable situation of a cold-hearted and greedy father is portrayed in *Ngivumele, Baba*. Such ruthlessness is not tolerated and passively accepted by Nokulunga, the leading character, who stands for women's liberation. She acts in a way that encourages other women to stand and defeat the long-held mores and traditions that oppress women and severely circumscribe their freedom of choice. The text does not openly lambast the custom of *ilobolo*. However, it gives space to characters to freely discuss its advantages and disadvantages. Feminism puts it fittingly in arguing that men are not the enemy – the system is. Men become the enemy when they oppress women.

The freedom of choice is championed by Nokulunga in *Ngivumele, Baba*. Such has not been blossoming in Zulu society from time immemorial till the present. Women have, however, been screaming loudly to be heard, as is demonstrated in some textual narratives such as the following: in *Uvalo Lwezinhlonzi*, Bajwayele is adamantly against marrying Zulumacansi, a man she does not love, but her father's choice. Thulisile, in the drama *Ngiwafunge Amabomvu*, questions the right of the king to force her to wed him.

In the first page of *Ngivumele, Baba* we are presented with a female character by the name of Nokulunga. The heroine is troubled by her parents, who wish her to marry a man of their choice, while she already has a boyfriend of her own choosing. She says: '*Yizinkinga engizifakelwa ngabazali bami. Bafuna ukungiganisa umuntu engingamufuni*' (Khumalo, 2011:5). (Hereafter only the page number for this book will be used). (The problem is that my parents want me to marry someone I do not love). The reason for this forced marriage, according to the female character, Nokulunga, is: '*Kuthiwa abazali balo mfana banezinkomo zohlobo oluphambili*' (p.5). (They say the boy's parents have cows of high quality). Hlatshwayo and his wife, MaNdimande, want to use their daughter as means of gaining access to another man's byres – a ticket to riches. Mostly, it is only as a last resort that reasonable people would abandon their own homes: because a home is a place of safety and support. When individuals decide to desert such a comfort, they may be facing worse in the institution called family. When homes become sites of abuse, women often flee from them and seek refuge in the street. The same can be said of *Ngivumele, Baba*. Nokulunga vows to run away from home if her parents persist in forcing her to marry someone she does not love. She says: '*Sengingamane ngiduke nezwe uma bengiphokelela*' (p.6). (I rather run away from home if they force me). Nokulunga's freedom from abuse relies on her deserting her place of birth. She values the love of her boyfriend as worth dying for. This proves that she will not succumb to the scurrilous wishes of her parents. Nokulunga's home has turned against her: her greedy parents now view her as a commodity to be exchanged for wealth. Such wealth will only be secured through forced marriage. Similar to what Gumede (2011:41) and Zondi (2013:170) have found in their analysis of *Uvalo Lwezinhlonzi*, a woman's only resort is to run away from a forced marriage.

Hlatshwayo abuses his wife. MaNdimande complains about the abuse she is living under. She says: '*Nsuku zonke ngiwukudla kwenduku, kodwa lokhu kwayizolo angikaze ngikubone. Ngilaliswe engobeni njengengqatho pho?*' (p.8). (Each and every day I get beaten up, but that of yesterday I have never seen. I was forced to sleep outside). This is blatant human torture. Males treat women in this fashion because they know that women have no place to go. They are not welcome back at their places of birth. If their family accepts them, they will have to pay back *ilobolo*, which in most cases is no longer available. This proves that males treat women as commodities. The bride price encourages men to be cruel, arrogant, insensitive, and abusive towards women.

Ngivumele, Baba portrays MaNdimande as a talkative wife. Such behaviour justifies the violence directed towards her by her husband. Hlatshwayo says: '*Ukuba usudelile kungabe awulokhu ukhononda sengathi ucabanga ukuziphindiselela*' (p.8). (If you had enough you would not be complaining as if you think of retaliating). Zulu (2004:151) illustrates the scenario discussed above when he asserts that the matter of husbands beating their wives in the text is portrayed in terms of the stereotype that marriages turn violent through unacceptable behaviour of the wives. The beating is viewed therefore as a patriarchal validation of male violence against women. An abuser in the text acts as if he was provoked to use violence, therefore his actions are justifiable. Hlatshwayo says: '*Ukhohlwe ukuthi uwena ongiqalayo*' (p.8). (You forget that you are the one who provokes me). In other words, he is a good man who has to deal with an impossible wife; thus, his violent means are justified. Conversely, men are ranked as superior to women. The man's position ensures that their words are final. To permit an exchange of words with a woman is seen as a sign of weakness. In defending toxic masculinity, men will enforce the passivity of women. For instance, Hlatshwayo says: '*Ngiyalibeka uyalibeka*' (p.8). (I talk, you talk). Women are seen not heard; women should follow orders. If they fail to do so, they have ignored their femininity. Mathonsi and Mpungose (2015:34) describe the above scenario, arguing that a man who permits his word to be overridden by that of a woman is mocked: he thus does not gain due respect from other men. If a man is to be respected in the community, he must guarantee that women in his household are kept down, suppressed.

MaNdimande has accepted her position of defeat in the battle against a patriarchal system of abuse. She says: '*Shaya Mhayise sekulamula igodi kule mpi yethu*' (p.8). (Hit me Mhayise its only death that will free me from this fight of ours). MaNdimande has adopted a state of helplessness. She now sees death as her only saviour from the abuse she is experiencing. She lacks agency – she symbolises a doormat under patriarchy. MaNdimande's character fails to liberate other women in her position, by contrast with what is exemplified in paragraph 3 of page 8 of *Kungabheja Ezansi!* in which women fight back in cases of gender violence. In the household of Hlatshwayo, gender-based violence is a common phenomenon. The interesting part about it is that, in most cases, this is one-sided, administered by men to women. It is males who give a whipping to females. Mgaxeni says: '*Usuphinde wamshaya futhi umama*' (p.9). (Once more you have beaten mother). This is the depiction of toxic masculinity where males have to beat their partner to prove that they are in

control or to have power over them. A male is an abuser, while a female is a submissive victim. The issue of men beating women is also displayed in *Kungabheja Ezansi!* and *Kunjalo-ke*. MaNdimande is tired of being beaten up for no reason. Even should some wrongs have occurred, no one has the right to beat a woman, according to the laws of the South African Constitution. Any conflict can be resolved in a dignified manner, particularly through speaking. MaNdimande says: ‘*Ukuba ngiyakwazi ukuziphindiselela awuboni ngani ukuthi ngabe kudala ngakwenza lokho?*’ (p.8). (If I was able to retaliate why you do not see that I would have done so a long time ago?). MaNdimande accepts the stereotype as true that women are passive and powerless, while men are active, powerful, and abusive.

The patriarchal system has the upper hand in determining what ought or ought not to be eaten by women. In ensuring that forbidden food remains forbidden, there are systems in place that sanction the transgressor. In *Ngivumele, Baba*, male characters have the privilege of eating game, while women are not permitted to partake of such: ‘*Nebala wayipheka inyamazane uMgaxeni yavuthwa yathi tobo. Bazitika noyise baze behlisa ngesobho. Wababuka njena uMaNdimande*’ (p.11). (Indeed, Mgaxeni cooked the game until it was well cooked. They eat to excess with his father: they even drink gravy. MaNdimande watched them). This occurred in the privacy of their home: there was no outsider watching them. This proves that patriarchal ideology is safeguarded by males of the family. Mgaxeni is also doing what is expected of males. Mgaxeni, as a boy child, is of superior status to his mother, simply by virtue of being male. Women are on the margins when it comes to game eating: ‘*Phela yena njengomuntu wesifazane akavumelekile kulesi sigodi ukuba adle inyama yenyamazane*’ (p.11). (Actually, she, as a woman is not permitted in this district to eat game). Those who bypass this tradition face persecution: ‘*Kungamhlazane ubizelwa esigcawini, idliwe inkomo lapha ekhaya*’ (p.12). (That will be the day you will be called to the place of assembly. The cow will be taken from this house). Mahlangu (as cited by Machaba, 2011:4) in the same breath, asserts:

The woman is regarded as inferior to her husband. Traditional Vatsonga women do not eat chicken, eggs and certain parts of domestic animals such as the liver as they are considered the preserve of the husband or father of the family.

We now perceive the view that food allocation based on one's gender is a common thing in many African societies. In most African societies, a woman is defined by her cooking abilities. Such makes cooking a prerequisite for a woman. It is not surprising that characters in *Ngivumele, Baba* name this quality of cooking as a prerequisite in a good wife. Nokulunga's father says: '*Sengathi nalapho eyogana khona bayohlomula ngomakoti onekhono lokupheka*' (p.13). (It seems that who she will marry will benefit from a wife who has cooking skills). Gumede (2002:66) says that:

According to the traditional division of labour, the kitchen is the woman's kingdom. Out of the kitchen she has no saying, no expertise, no authority... It is just a worldview custom that assigns women to the kitchen, to be at men's service. Men have made their dominion the more challenging world of war and hunting or of politics and business.

MaNdimande, Nokulunga's mother, reinforces the idea of where her girl child is supposed to go in matters of marriage, since her husband's utterances lack clarity. She says: '*Baba, ungaze uthi nalapho eyogana khona sengathi awazi ukuthi uNokulunga simkethele uMgwazeni umfana wakwaManqe*' (p.13). (Should you have to say whom she will marry, as if you don't know that we have chosen Mgwazeni son of Manqe for Nokulunga). This tells the reader that Nokulunga's parents have seen a suitable suitor for their daughter. The reader is left wondering about the criterion used to come up with such a conclusion. Hlatshwayo addresses this confusion: '*Izinkomo zikayise zibulala inyoko. Ngingajabula kabi uma zingaphelela kulesi esami isibaya*' (p.13). (His father has many cows. I will be very happy if his cows were to end in this byre of mine). This reflects that a boy chosen for their daughter's hand in marriage was not mere a coincidence, but a premeditated effort to gain his father's cow. Nokulunga is a means to an end of receiving wealth. This is legal human trafficking, obfuscated by the label *ilobolo*. Gumede (2002:34) asserts:

In traditional practice, throughout rural society a woman was forced to marry her father's chosen one, whether he was single or a polygamist, an old man or a young stallion; an ugly pretender with financial means or the son of a bankrupt family. This practice also undermined the girl's freedom to advance in the economic and educational spheres. She had no freedom to plan and choose her future; not even any freedom whether [sic] to have children or not.

He further says:

Fathers often look forward to their daughters' wedding in order to replenish their *isibaya* and are anxious to select the highest bidder, rather than the most suitable or the best loved, of a daughter's suitors (2002:37).

In *Ngivumele, Baba*, Hlatshwayo also proposes to offer the bride price to his son so that he will be able to pay for his own wife's *ilobolo*, the bride price. Hlatshwayo says: '*Kumbe sekungaba lula nakuMgaxeni ukuba alobole ngamabheka kadadewabo*' (p.13). (Perhaps it will be easier for Mgaxeni to pay for his wife using the bride price of his sister). The irony is that her daughter will be given to a man he does not love. And *ilobolo* received from that transaction will be given to a boy child who will make use of it when paying for his bride. Boys therefore have the right to choose their love partners, while girls are denied that privilege. This method of operation under the patriarchal system is gender biased on all sides against girl children. Properties, inheritances, commodities, women, and currency always pass from one male to another. The status of *umnumzane* is viewed as a position which most men wish to achieve, regardless of the cost, be it selling their daughters to men they don't love just to become *umnumzane*. MaNdimande underlines the above point: '*Usuwumnumzane ngempela udla kusale*' (p.13). (Become a real rich man).

Getting married is not a matter of a bride and a groom: their love for each other counts for little if the groom does not have deep pockets. Parents want the biggest payer to win the hand of the daughter. Such will see to the comfort of the parents, overlooking the love of the couple. For instance, MaNdimande says: '*Izingane zethu ziyeke ukuhlupheka zihambe zigana abafokazana abangabizwa ngalutho*' (p.13). (Our children should stop marrying poor men who have no title). This reflects that some parents are capitalists: they view the groom as the cash cow. Machaba (2011:63-64) asserts:

It is every mother's wish for her children to be successful... This is generally praiseworthy, but in this context, it is not, as the mothers over-emphasise wealth as the most important factor at the expense of love in their daughters' relationships.

In addition to that Machaba (2011:67) argues:

Any parent would wish the best for his or her child; however, the parent's wishes should always be balanced with those of the child. No matter how good the parent's wishes are, if they are unilaterally imposed on a child, they will have a negative impact.

MaNdimande continues: '*Njengalokhu wena baba uzithandela nje amasi isisu siyoqhumuka kakhulu kunalokhu esiyikho namhlanje*' (p.13). (As you father likes sour milk, your tummy will be bigger than it is today). The concern is that the parents must eat well at the end of *ilobolo*, the cash transaction; the welfare of their daughter is less of a concern to them, as long as the parents are rich. What is surprising in this conversation is that the mother is the driving force. One would think that, as a mother and a woman, she would be defending her daughter. However, instead she is furthering the ends of patriarchy.

In Zulu culture, children are expected to observe the words of their parents. Nokulunga is expected to fit this patriarchal box of *ukuhlonipha*. This custom is sometimes abused by parents who want to enrich themselves. MaNdimande says: '*Ngiyazi ukuthi ngeke afune ukusiphoxa*' (p.14). (I know that she will not want to disappoint us). Surely MaNdimande uses the custom of *ukuhlonipha* as her point of reference, that children should not question the word of their parents, including in matters of love, or "forced love."

Hlatshwayo is troubled by his moral compass. He understands that forced marriage will affect his daughter; the father-daughter relationship will be spoiled forever. He says: '*Yebo zona izinkomo ngiyazifuna, kodwa ilungelo lengane yami lihamba phambili*' (p.14). (Yes, I do want cows, but the right of my child is the first priority). This utterance falls on deaf ears. Hlatshwayo's wife is more interested in the cows of Manqele. This is the irony – we expect the father to be interested in cows while the mother tries to protect her daughter. However, in this family it is the opposite of what transpired in the novel by Gumede (2011) and Zondi (2013): *Uvalo Lwezinhlonzi*. MaNdimande stands her ground: '*Uyosibonga futhi ngokumphoqelela kwethu ukuthi simganise khona*' (p.14). (She will thank us for forcing her to marry there). The reader understands that it is not about

Nokulunga's happiness. It is about her parents' greed that must come to fruition. No one who thinks correctly will be grateful for being forced to marry someone who is not loved and trusted.

MaNdimande infers that her daughter will be happy when her hand is taken by a wealthy suitor. The matter of heart for this suitor is not considered. She cares not whether her daughter loves the suitor: '*UYoba esebuka ubuhle bodwa esezishaya isifuba ngomuzi wakhe wakwanokusho*' (p.14-15). (She would be looking at only the beauty and being proud of her expensive house). MaNdimande sees wealth as something that ought to outweigh love. She uses forced marriage as a means of achieving this end. MaNdimande makes it clear that women cannot think for themselves. They need someone who will assist them when it comes to decision-making. MaNdimande is the mouthpiece of a patriarchal system. Her words do not support her own kind. She talks and behaves like men who are in the centres of power. '*Uqale nini baba uNokulunga ukukwazi ukuzicabangela eyedwa?*' (p.15). (When has Nokulunga been able to think for herself, father?)

Jobson (2005:22) affirms the above by saying:

Men use undocumented pre-colonial African 'cultural' norms as the base for their judgement. These norms order that females should never be well thought of as adults within the family, but only as teenagers or 'junior males'; not able to inherit property, own land, independently choose marriage partner or act as official guardians to their kids.

Hlatshwayo takes a different stand from that of his wife; he believes that a girl child should be given space to think things through for herself when it comes to matters of marriage: '*Akusikhona MaNdimande ukuthi ngiyamvuna umntwana kodwa ngithi kuwena ake simyeke azicabangele*' (p.15). (It not that, MaNdimande, I favour the child, but what I am saying to you is that let us leave her to think for herself). Hlatshwayo, even though he wishes to receive wealth from giving his daughter to a wealthy suitor, also considers the welfare of his child. His voice in this context empowers those who are marginalised. Hlatshwayo understands that women are not children, as conceded by Jobson (2005:22): women know what they truly desire, and no one has the right to dictate otherwise.

Nokulunga knows that forced marriage will not serve her interests: instead, she will be subjected to conditions she has never thought of, putting her life into someone's hands who was not her choice. In such a case, one is more likely to be abused, because the marriage foundation has been built on deceit. '*Impoqo ayikaze iphumelele ebantwini ababili abathandanayo kodwa uthando oluletha impumelelo*' (p.16). (Force has never succeeded with two people who are in love, but it is love that brings success). Nokulunga debates her way through: '*Ngiyalidinga ithuba lokuke ngisebenzise owami umqondo ngingazange ngiboniswe yinina*' (p.16). (I need the opportunity to use my own mind without your assistance). In these utterances, Nokulunga demands her space as a woman. She demands liberty to be on her own. She disempowers the centres of power who have power vested in them to think on behalf of women. Nokulunga is a true champion of women liberation, a beacon to the struggling women. Nokulunga's character must break the chains of patriarchy, freeing others in her position. Nokulunga puts it plainly that she is not driven by selfish interests that have distorted her mother's mental capacity. She talks about love, which is the determining factor in all relationships.

MaNdimande sees Mgwazeni as their favourite suitor owing to the wealth of his father. She runs after him to discuss the matter of Nokulunga, particularly to spoon-feed him about her daughter. She says: '*Intombi usunayo. Intombi isikuqomile*' (p.17). (You have a girlfriend. The girl has chosen you). MaNdimande fabricates lies that Nokulunga has chosen Mgwazeni to be her man. This plan is in pursuit of fast-tracking their idea of receiving a bride price from Mgwazeni's father. It is thus clear that Nokulunga is viewed as a commodity by the patriarchal system. MaNdimande's behaviour in this context is in accord with the stereotypical mindset that says women are schemers and liars. Mgwazeni is shocked by what he hears: '*Ukhuluma ngokuqonywa? Lutho anti yinto engingakayicabangi leyo*' (p.17). (Are you talking about relationships? No aunt, that never crossed my mind). Mgwazeni views himself as not of a ripe enough age for seeking a girlfriend, let alone for getting married: '*Ngisemncane kabi ukuthi ngingakhuluma ngalokho*' (p.17). (I am still too young to discuss that). MaNdimande is an arch matchmaker who goes to extremes in contradicting the custom of *ukushela*. MaNdimande's action plants the seed of illusionary love in the mind of a boy child.

MaNdimande creates reasons that will ensure her that she wins the debate: *'Ngingajabula uma engagana wena ngoba mina nabazali bakho singabangani'* (p.18-19). (I will be very pleased if she were to marry you, because your parents and I are friends). MaNdimande makes the relationship of parents the binding force that ought to ensure that their children fall in love. The reader understands that the relationship of parents is not a sufficiently binding force to sustain marriage. Whether good or bad relationships amongst them, parents should not interfere in the relationships of their children.

MaNdimande promises to chase away Nokulunga if she will not comply with her plan of marrying Mgwazeni: *'Uyomthatha yini lapho sengimfaka indlela uma engiphendula intando yakhe?'* (p.19). (Will you take her when I have chased her away for answering me anyhow?) The only reason for MaNdimande chasing away Nokulunga is if she says she will not marry Mgwazeni, the man she does not love. Mgwazeni is unaware of the dynamics behind: *'Kanti niyamphoqa yini ukuba angiqome?'* (p.19). (After all, are you forcing her to love me?). MaNdimande enlightens Mgwazeni that women should be forced to love someone, out of their parents' concern. The marriage choice is not a subject of focus: the patriarchal system overrules such. The person in question is not invited into this discussion, even though all issues concern her. Nokulunga is given the status of a child, where adults have to discuss matters concerning her out of earshot: *'Sikhuthandile wena mfana wami'* (p.20). (We like you, my boy). MaNdimande is not only forcing her daughter to marry the man she does not love: she also influences the boy child to marry her daughter. She uses force against both youngsters: *'Ngithe ungathi uzozama ngithe wenze'* (p.21). (I said: do not say you will try! I said: do it!). MaNdimande forces the boy child to take her daughter. The text here puts into effect what has been illustrated in paragraph 5 of page 20 of the novel: the boy child should follow the instructions of MaNdimande in marrying Nokulunga.

Nokulunga is a means to the end of acquiring Manqele's cows. Nokulunga is treated like commercial goods to be given to the highest bidder: *'Hhayi noma kungathiwa izinto ziyefana uNokulunga kufanele azilande lezi zinkomo zigcwale esibayeni sakithi'* (p.22). (No matter what, Nokulunga should collect these cows to fill up our byres). In gaining these cows, Nokulunga would surrender her liberty; rendering herself the item of trade to a man she does not love. Here we see women's rights being trampled upon. Bajwayele is forced by her father to fetch cows from Bhekokwakhe. MaNdimande's desire to gain cows from Manqele encourages her to treat her

daughter as someone of loose morals: '*Usho ukuthi uma ungahlangana naye endleleni ungamqoma*' (p.23). (You mean if you were to meet him on the way, you would fall in love with him). The reader understands that girls who commit such deeds are those of loose morals, while girls of high standards would behave modestly. To set matters straight, Nokulunga enquires, simply to find common grounds: '*Kambe wena mama kubaba wenza kanjalo?*' (p.23). (I suppose mother, this is what you did to my father?) MaNdimande fails to give an honest answer, meaning this was not what transpired. MaNdimande wants her daughter to commit what she never did: to throw herself at a boy, telling him that she loves him. Without any initiative on the boy's part, one runs the risk of being labelled 'low-hanging fruit'. MaNdimande, dedicated to acquiring cows, does not consider the reputation of her child. She is spoiling the girl's name, dragging it into the mud.

MaNdimande has elevated herself as the minister of intellectual affairs when it comes to the love relationships of Nokulunga: '*Ngeke sikukhethela umuntu ongezukukuphatha kahle*' (p.23). (We will not choose for you someone who will not treat you well). In short, Nokulunga is not mature enough to select a love partner for herself, if the patriarchal society insists that she cannot do so unaided. Boys are seen as mature compared with girls since they exercise the right to choose who to fall in love with. This is a double standard which makes such decisions gender-biased against the other sex, women. Nokulunga knows that decisions of the heart need her consent alone, since they are sensitive subjects: '*Ngiyekeni mama ngizikhethela umuntu othandwa yimina. Musani ukungikhethela*' (p.23). (Hands off me, Mother – I will choose someone that I love. Stop choosing for me). Nokulunga gives words of wisdom to other women in her position. She reminds them that they ought to choose partners for themselves: no one has the privilege to interfere, whether parents or friends. Nokulunga shifts the pole from the centres of power. She empowers the marginalised.

MaNdimande fits the stereotype of women as materialistic creatures. She says: '*Phela umendo uyazenzela*' (p.24). (Indeed, you create marriage for yourself). One must pursue men with deep pockets and long arms so that one will live a comfortable life. MaNdimande builds a relationship on the false premise of enriching herself at the expense of her daughter. The only person that must be satisfied in this union is MaNdimande: she has to be saved from humiliation. She acts as though she is the one getting married. She says: '*Ungangidumazi ndodakazi...*' (p.24). (Do not disappoint me my daughter...). The person in question who is supposed to be defended from humiliation is placed in harm's way just to serve the interests of her parents.

Manqele's children are used as a point of reference to indicate how wealthy he is: '*Ubona ngezingane zakhona baba izisu amadansana*' (p.26). (You see by his children's father their bellies are big). MaNdimande, in speaking of Mgwazeni, holds him in high regard. She admires him: '*Isikhumba sakhe siyashelela. Wubisi*' (p.26). (His skin is smooth because of the milk he drinks). MaNdimande will use her daughter to exploit this situation. MaNdimande and her husband, Hlatshwayo, want to have a share in these cows that produce milk which smooth the skins of children. They choose a wealthy family for their daughter, so that they will receive better returns. The rule they adopt is like the one used for auction sales, where goods are given to the highest bidder. *Umnumzane* is assessed by the number of cattle he has in his byres. Hlatshwayo views the arranged marriage of his daughter as a safe ticket that will secure for him the position, he desires most of being classified as *umnumzane*: '*Nami-ke ngibe wumnumzane oqakambileyo waseMpelamahhashi*' (p.27). (I will become a well-known mnumzane of Mpelamahhashi).

Hlatshwayo, together with his wife, are profit orientated. He says: '*UNokulunga kufanele asilethele izinkomo zekhethele*' (p.27). (Nokulunga should bring for us the best cows). The text here stresses what it has illustrated before in paragraph 1 of page 22 of the novel, that Nokulunga has to bring cows for her parents. A reader may view this as legal human trafficking. Hlatshwayo wants to keep cows of rare quality in his collection: '*UMgaxeni yena ngiyomlobolela ngalezi ezami...*' (p.27). (Mgaxeni's bride price will be paid using these cows of mine). Hlatshwayo's utterances contradict what he has said in paragraph 5 of page 13 of the novel. There he said that it will be easier for Mgaxeni to pay his bride price using the *ilobolo* cows paid for his sister.

Women in marriage should persevere, regardless of the beatings they receive from their husbands. Society in general is responsible for socialising women in this fashion. MaNdimande says: '*Uqinisile baba kodwa-ke bakhona abangakwazi ukubekezela njengawoNokwenana bedliwa yisibhaxu nsuku zonke*' (p.30). (It's true father, but there are women who fail to persevere like Nokwenana when beaten daily). Nokwenana's patience grows thin and she finally divorces her abusive husband. Such is a sign of bravery; however, society views her as a bad person who fails to stay in her marriage. MaNdimande uses her as a point of reference.

Males have the tendency to refer to their wives as children. Women, in response, call their husbands their father. Hlatshwayo says: '*Zingane zami*' (p.32). (My children), when referring to his wife and

children. The text here imposes what it has demonstrated in paragraph 6 of page 29 of the text, where Hlatshwayo says: ‘...MaNdimande mntanami’ (p.29). (...MaNdimande my child). This underlines that a man is the head of the family. The same is also true in *Ubhuku Lwamanqe*. Nkululeko refers to his wife and children as his children (p.16). The custom of *ukuhlonipha* focuses only on women. This custom is gender-biased against females. To refer to one’s partner as one’s child is sometimes seen as an affectionate term. To associate such reference to women only, places this notion in question. Women do not enjoy the same privilege of referring to their husbands as their children. Such implies that males are adults, while women are always seen as children. This is a stereotypical portrayal of women. What makes men adults while women are the children in gender relations? We suspect the payment of *ilobolo* degrades women to the status of a child.

Most societies give their boy children the freedom to explore the world, while women are domesticated. Mgaxeni agrees with the above point. He prides himself on having no boundaries: ‘*Phela lolu olwami unyawo alunampumulo njengalezi ezenu ezigqigqa indlela eyodwa wukuphela*’ (p.33). (In fact, these feet of mine have no boundaries such as those of yours who travel the same path). He continues to say: ‘*Uma zingayanga ethathini [sic] ukuyotheza izinkuni zikuthwala zikuyise emthonjeni*’ (p.33). (If not going to the veld to collect wood they take you to the river). The patriarchal system ensures that women are housebound. Activities they participate in are related to the maintenance of the house; on the other hand, boys have the freedom to go wherever they desire. Rousseau, quoted by Elert (1979:19), argues:

Men and women have qualities that complement each other, and they should not strive to do the same things. The place of women is in the home, that of men in the world.

Gumede (2002:70), still on the same note, attests:

Bearing and rearing children make it necessary for women to be based at home. Therefore gardening, house cleaning, cooking, sewing, become the kitchen chores for women, while men take charge of what they consider as more important, external and mentally challenging tasks, such as politics and government.

This freedom to move is biased towards women. Girls are domesticated by virtue of being women. The freedom to move is also time-bound. At certain times women are not permitted to leave the house, particularly at night, while boys are not restricted by time. As illustrated in the study conducted by Zondi (2013):

Boys may have as many girlfriends as they wish, while girls are not given their rights to their sexuality. Society condemns such actions when conducted by women: such is a man's terrain alone. Mgaxeni says: '*Kuthiwe ixegelwa yisimilo*' (p.34). (They say she has loose morals). In the same vein, males are praised for such deeds. They are called *amasoka*, a man popular among girls. In most instances, women are associated with animals of low status, be it a pig or a snake. In Magomazi's dream, he saw Nokulunga turning into a huge snake: '*Intombi ingaphenduka ugolokoqo lwenyoka ikade imatheka kamnandi kanjena naye?*' (p.36). (A girl can turn into a snake while she was smiling nicely at him). The text relates to the story of Eve and Adam in the Bible: Eve was the first sex to be approached by a snake. This tells us that women have been associated with lowly, dangerous creatures from time memorial. Literature now depicts women as serpents. The point of reference may be the Bible. To equate people with snakes is up for discussion; but to link snakes only to women, makes this concept gender stereotyped.

The text plants the seed that serves to empower women through the character of Magomazi. He raises the issue of gender violence: '*Ungamshaya kanjani umuntu omthandayo?*' (p.39). (How can you hit someone you love?) That tells the reader that men who abuse women do not truly love them. True love is absent from abuse.

To contradict the wishes put to Nokulunga on marrying a man not of her choosing is viewed as disrespectful by her mother: '*Angibhedelwa yini yile ngane baba?*' (p.51). (Is it not the nonsense of this child father?) To follow one's heart when it comes to selecting a partner contradicts the wishes of Nokulunga's parents. To exercise one's mind and rights in matters of relationships is not accepted by the patriarchal system. The system seeks to influence how women choose their partners. Nokulunga has placed her heart in the hands of Magomazi: she sees him as her future husband. In securing her love for him she has ordered him to collect *ucu*, proof of one's love, from *iqhikiza*, a full-grown woman. Nokulunga's mother views this boy as no match for their daughter. They have no knowledge of his father's wealth: '*Makaliswe*' (p.52). (We must instruct her to leave

him). A poor man does not deserve their child's hand in marriage. Nokulunga has to revisit her decision, since it of no value to her parents.

MaNdimande acts as the instrument of patriarchal ideology. She gives power to men: she encourages them to use violence against women. MaNdimande empowers the centres of power while marginalising the periphery: '*Kodwa ukuba bengiwuwena kade ngizosebenzisa isibhaxu...*' (p.52). (But if I were you, I was going to use a whipping....) MaNdimande endorses women's abuse. Her deeds fail to outshine women's abuse and exploitation. MaNdimande is not willing to take no for an answer. She believes her words should be final, whether or not they please Nokulunga: '*Uzomgana baba uyathanda akathandi*' (p.52). (She will marry him, father, whether she likes it or not). Nokulunga has to marry Mgwazeni, regardless of her ideas and feelings. These words depict women's rights being trampled upon.

Hlatshwayo, even though he wishes to gain the rare breed of cows, also considers the feelings of his daughter: '*Angifuni ukuthusa ingane yami ingaze icabange ukuzibulala*' (p.52). (I do not want to scare my child: she may consider committing suicide). Hlatshwayo has the love of his child at heart, while the mother contradicts what a mother should be. Hlatshwayo, in this context, fits the image of a good parent. The irony in the character of Hlatshwayo surfaces when he does not wish to whip his daughter, while being an abusive man towards his wife. In the previous pages the reader is presented with scenes in which Hlatshwayo strikes MaNdimande. He further reveals his toxic tendencies towards his wife: '*Wena ufanelwe yinduku nje kuphela*' (p.53). (You deserved the whipping). Men beating women is also evident in *Kunjalo-ke* (p.38). Nokulunga should be coaxed because there are high returns expected of her. MaNdimande secures no wealth in that regard; she is only fit for abuse. This proves that Hlatshwayo is not safeguarding the interests of women. He merely uses different tactics to achieve his ends: '*Kufanele siyincenge ingane ukuze yenze intando yethu*' (p.53). (We should persuade the child so that she will do what we want).

Nokulunga is not willing to back down. She voices her concerns against all odds. Her heart belongs to Magomazi: '*Kodwa baba ngicela ungivumele ngenze lokhu engicanga ukuthi kuzosiza mina*' (p.54). (However, Father, I beg you to permit me to do what I think will help me). The word that comes from a man's mouth is viewed as final: nothing can be done without his approval. Nokulunga does not ask for such permission. To her mother, this proves that men in families are

given the status of a king. What they say goes; when they object no one has the right to appeal their decisions. Nokulunga's character is constructed to rank men's words as superior to those of women.

The theme that surface in this text is the theme of arranged marriage, the infringement of human rights. Girls are expected to follow the instructions given to them by their fathers even in matters of love. Arranged marriage contravene with the right to choose in girl children. Nokulunga's parents fail to hide their capitalist mindset. Hlatshwayo says: '*Lokhu kuzosilethela izinkomo zohlobo, kuguqule impilo yalapha ekhaya...*' (p.54). (This will bring cows of quality, bringing change to the life of this house). In other words, Nokulunga is a ticket to heaven for her parents. She is simply goods that ought to be sold in order to bring wealth to her home; by selling her they will be changing their lives from indigent to wealthy. Nokulunga's parents view her as a means of obtaining wealth. She is firm in her decision: not bending to patriarchal pressure. She talks her way through, since, in her context, there is no defender of women's liberation. The person who is supposed to protect her is a defender of patriarchal ideas, her mother: '*Nginganijabulisa kanjani mina uqobo lwami ngingajabulile?*' (p.56). (How could I make you happy while depressed?)

Nokulunga puts into effect what she has intimated in the previous pages of the text: '*Ngivumele baba ngigane umuntu engimuthandayo*' (p.56). (Allow me, father, to marry the person I love). This also underlines the thought that, without a man's word, nothing will come to fruition. Women will always have to ask for permission from men. Society has socialised women to behave in this manner. Males have the final say in whatever discussion. Males are depicted as the centres of authority in *Ngivumele, Baba*. Nokulunga highlights the fact that it is better to be poor with the person you love, than to live a lavish life with the person you dislike. She puts feelings as a priority; while her parents put wealth ahead of love: '*Ngiyakuzwa baba kodwa kuyaye kube ngcono ukhulupheka nomuntu omthandayo kunokubusa nomuntu ongamthandi*' (p.56). (I hear you father, but it is better to be poor with the person you love, than to live in luxury with the person you do not love). Masuku (1997:160) asserts:

It should be left to an individual to decide what is best for her as marriage should be a blissful experience for women, and not a bondage.

In *Ngivumele, Baba* women's rights are stepped upon. Women are given instructions on what to do and what not, even in sensitive issues such as choosing one's partner. Hlatshwayo says: '*Siyalufuna lolu hlobo lwezinkomo zakwaManqele*' (p.57). (We want this kind of cow from Manqele). The tone Hlatshwayo uses tells the reader that she is commanding her daughter to do what she says. She has to fetch the cows from Manqele, father of Mgwazeni. Her mother is not pleading with her but dictating what ought to be done. Mgaxeni wants to fulfil his dream of going back to school. He asks permission from his father. He needs to go to the city to find a job and save money that will pay for his education. A male figure in the household runs all discussions. His word is final. This supports what has been illustrated in previous pages: Nokulunga has to ask for permission from her father to be given a chance to marry the man she loves. These two children do not ask permission from their mother. A woman's voice has no value in the patriarchal system. Hlatshwayo uses this opportunity to gain the favour of his son: '*Ukhiye ukudadewenu*' (p.58). (The key is in your sister). Mgaxeni's dream of going back to school will only be determined by the actions of Nokulunga. If she marries Mgwazeni, he will go to school; if not, his plan will fail. The cows they will receive from *ilobolo* will be used to pay for Mgaxeni's education. Hlatshwayo now uses dirty tricks to fool his boy child so that he will assist him in persuading Nokulunga to marry the man she does not love. This will serve both their interests. The father will receive wealth, while the boy will attain his education. Even though this is a different context, it matches with Zulu society. Fonchingong (2006:139) informs:

...in the Igbo society, it was customary for girls to be forced into early marriage and the bride price used in sending boys to school.

Elert (1979:16) is of the view:

Marriage had also, to a considerable extent, tended to become a matter of commercial interest.

In *Ngivumele, Baba* Mgaxeni visualises himself as the future president. In most sectors, men have occupied leadership positions, be it economic, political, cultural, or in the institution of higher learning. In this text that is also true: '*Mhlawumbe ngiyogcina sengiwumongameli wezwe baba ngiyakutshela*' (p.60). (Maybe I will end up being a president, I am telling you, father). Leadership

being associated with men is also pointed to in *Ngiyolibala Ngifile*. Madonsela, a male character, is a minister of health. Themba, a boy child, sees himself as the third Black president after Zuma. In *Kunjalo-ke*, Mzobe, a male character, is a school principal, and in *Impi Yabomdabu Isethunjini*, Bafana sees a picture of Zithelile, a female, on a billboard, where she stands for election: that does not sit well with him. He believes that people elected a female candidate because he was not around. To give such influential positions to male characters only is discrimination against women.

MaNdimande uses all the dirty tricks she can think of. She questions the anger of her husband: ‘*Luphi ulaka lwakho Mhayise?*’ (p.60). (Where is your rage, Mhayise?). MaNdimande understands that it is only the application of force that will make Nokulunga marry Mgwazeni. She calls for violence, so that their plan of receiving the bride price will come about. The image of a proper man in the mind of MaNdimande is the one who forces his way through. If other means of persuading have failed, violence should be implemented. That is a definition of a true man in her perspective. In encouraging her husband to use force she says: ‘*Yiba yindoda, indoda eqotho*’ (p.61). (Be a man, a sincere man). MaNdimande has been exposed to violence at the hands of her husband as the previous pages have proven. Now she fails to differentiate between what is right and wrong. She is psychologically distorted by the conditions she is living under. MaNdimande vows that the tables will turn if Nokulunga will not succumb to their plan of taking Mgwazeni as her husband, even though she does not love him: ‘*Koba ongaphansi nongaphezulu siklinyana kunjeyaya*’ (p.61). (I will beat her). MaNdimande has been so exposed to violence that she has adopted the style of her abuser, her husband; she now transfers such to her daughter.

Zulu tradition has assured that a man’s word is final, including on any discussion that deals with matters of women. Men become irritated if this “right” vested in them is not recognised by women. Hlatshwayo says: ‘*Kuqale nini ukuba izwi lakho kube yilona elingumnqamulajuqu lapha ekhaya?*’ (p.61). (It started when your word became final in this house). This proves that a woman’s voice carries no weight: it is like that of a child, seen but not heard. Women do not enjoy the same privilege enjoyed by men in society. Mathonsi and Mpungose (2015:34) portray the scenario discussed above aptly, when they argue that “[t]he majority of Zulu men are of the shared belief that a woman’s word carries little weight when compared with that of a man.”

Mgaxeni returns home with a rabbit he has hunted. The text here revisits what it had said in previous pages that certain meals are gender specific, this being illustrated in paragraph 3 of page 11 of the text. Game is for men to eat, men alone. Those who contradict this, must pay a penalty. The fine ensures that this behaviour stays intact. Hlatshwayo orders his wife to take a chicken from the crate. A chicken will serve to replace the game they will not be receiving: '*Singehubuluze isobo [sic] sodwa nina ningadli lutho*' (p.67). (We will not be drinking gravy alone while you are not eating). To reserve game for men alone stresses gender bias against women.

Mgaxeni, a boy child, supports women's liberation. He goes to extremes to challenge his father in what he is doing – forcing his sister to marry a man who is a stranger in her heart. He says: '*Musa baba ukushaya sengathi thina lapha ekhaya siyathenga siyathengisa*' (p.68). (Father stop acting as if in this house we are buying and selling). Mgaxeni now understands that his parents have put a price tag on Nokulunga. He wants them to stop treating his sister as if she is a commodity. He continues: '*Myekeleni udadewethu azikhethela umuntu amthandayo*' (p.68). (Let my sister choose the person she loves). Mgaxeni comprehends that Nokulunga has all the rights to choose her soul partner; and that no one ought to interfere with that decision, be it parents or anyone else. A first step towards liberation is to be able to make one's decision without the influence of others. MaNdimande, who should be defending women's rights, ignores what her boy child is saying concerning the rights of Nokulunga to choose her own husband without parental influence. MaNdimande says: '*UNokulunga kufanele asilandele izinkomo kwaManqe*' (p.68). (Nokulunga should fetch cows from Manqe). MaNdimande does not consider the feelings of her daughter; her goal is to receive cows.

Mgaxeni assures his sister that he would not be persuading her to change her mind on marrying a man she does not love: '*Kade ngingakwenza lokho ukuba angicabangeli ikusasa lakho*' (p.69). (I would do that if I were not considering your future). Nokulunga is fully aware that love is not one-directional: both partners should love each other. If one person is not fully engaged, love withers away: '*Ngithande ngikuthande*' (p.69). (Love me; I love you). The text proves that times have changed: women are now heard. In the old days, the word of a woman was overlooked by society as a whole: Thandazile says: '*Ngenhlanhla thina sesiyakwazi ukuyibeka imibono*' (p.72). (By luck we are able to give opinions). Thandazile has a word in his family because there is no father. Her father has died. The text implies that men prevent words of women to be valued. In the absence of

men, women would be heard. Their words would enjoy the same status as the words of men. The reader is not sure whether Thandazile would have the same views if her father was still alive. Thandazile lives with her mother and brother; that is why her voice is heard. Her mother creates a platform for her to be heard; meaning that women, not men, will ensure that other women are heard. The absence of a father figure has created a democratic family. The right enjoyed by Thandazile in the text does not cut across to all women in the village. Nokulunga is subjected to all forms of discrimination based on being a woman. Thandazile's words are heard in her family; she is able to participate in discussions held by her mother and brother. However, other things have not yet changed; the kitchen is still the domain of women. She says: '*Ngiiyeke ngobeka amabhodwe...*' (p.73). (Leave me alone I am going to cook). The same is true in *Impi Yabomdabu Isethunjini*. It was demonstrated in paragraph 4 of page 129 that women are subjected to cooking. Machaba (2011:1) says:

Women's responsibilities include being mothers, wives, and home administrators. In these roles, they undertake all domestic duties, including cooking, feeding family members, keeping the home tidy, and above all, childbearing.

Elert (1979:26) supports the idea of Machaba (2011) when she says:

Women were naturally the custodians of these sacred places. They were seen as the priestesses or the angels of the home.

Any person can cook: to link cooking with women only, sparing men, results in gender stereotyping. To participate in discussion and still be trapped under the yoke of domesticity, the unpaid labour of nurturing: that is not what freedom should be. Women need to be equal to males. Men should also assist women in taking care of the household. That alone will transform the way in which society sees women, not as hired help, but as an equal partner in marriage.

Magomazi is saddened that his father has unexpectedly died. He associates his father's death with witchcraft. His primary suspect as the cause of his father's death is Mcanukelwa's father: '*Futhi akekho angakwazi lokho ukuthi ubaba wakho uwumthakathi*' (p.77). (They all know that your father is a witch). *Ngivumele, Baba* presents us with a male character who is a witch. This contradicts the well-known stereotype of women as witches, as it was depicted in paragraph 1 of

page 147 of *Kunjalo-ke*, and in paragraph 4 of page 70 of *Kungabheja ezansi*. The text here routs the notion that women only are associated with witchcraft. This proves that witchcraft is not gender specific. Gender roles are portrayed clearly in the text: there are no grey areas. Women cook, while men hunt. In defining his father, Mcanukelwa says: ‘*Uzithandela izinyamazane*’ (p.78). (He loves games). *Ngivumele, Baba* confirms the idea that males are hunters as exemplified in page 6, 66 and 67 of the text.

Zimbili lives in an emotionally taxing environment. She even wishes to run away from her in-laws. What keeps her back is that her parents have eaten all the cows of her *ilobolo* – they will not be able to return them. Zimbili is now forced to live with the man she has never loved. She is saddened that she allowed her parents to choose for her whom to marry. This has resulted in her deserting the man she loved: ‘*Bazidla izinkomo zasemzini*’ (p.82). (They have eaten the cows of the in-laws). The reader now understands that some women are forced by circumstances to remain in abusive marriages.

Interests of women in marriage are overlooked. Women have to persevere at all costs, because society stands watching. Its focus on married couples tends to be biased. It is swift to point towards woman as the cause of the failure of marriage. Men are exempted from blame for the failures of marriages. Women carry the burden, even when it was the man who spoiled the marriage. Nokulunga says: ‘*Bathi hlazo lini leli olenzayo uphoxe abantu basemzini*’ (p.82). (Saying what a disgrace you are committing, disappointing the in-laws). A similar sentiment also appeared in paragraph 5 of page 51 of *Kungabheja ezansi*. Women are blamed by society for the disunity of marriage. Ntuli (as quoted by Zulu, 2004:153) states:

when it comes to a woman, society develops sudden amnesia and starts to speak in tongues. A woman’s sins are magnified and subsequently condemned by labelling her with insinuating [and] derogatory tags.

The patriarchal tactic of blaming the victim forces women to accept the unacceptable, so as to exonerate themselves from naming and shaming.

Zimbili pinpoints the loophole in the patriarchal mindset when it comes to matters of divorce: ‘*Kuyakhalwa ngezinkomo ezikhishwe abasemzini, kube kungakhulunywa ngezinto ezinhle umakoti*

afike azenze emzini’ (p.82). (They complain about the cows given by the in-laws while not talking about the good things the wife has carried out in the in-laws). This reflects that work done by women is not of high regard, because the patriarchal system views such tasks as a woman’s duty. The system regards such work as what women were paid for through *ilobolo*. The patriarchal system endorses that women are “purchased” to fulfil certain duties, be it cooking, washing, or bearing children. Women are viewed as servants of men, more gender stereotyping. The issue of men paying *ilobolo* for their wives creates the illusion that they now own their wives. Women are devalued to the price of eleven cows. Zimbili enlightens this mindset: ‘*Bangagabisi ngezinkomo zabo sengathi ngangidayiswa mina kubona*’ (p.82). (They should not pride themselves about their cows as if I was sold to them). Zimbili’s character tells society that to pay *ilobolo* does not mean you have bought that person: eleven cows do not guarantee the ownership of another person’s life.

Zimbili’s patience has grown thin. She runs away from her in-laws. She threatens to end her life if she were to be instructed to return to the in-laws: ‘*Lokho kuyosho ukugcina kwakho ukungibona emhlabeni ngisaphila*’ (p.83). (That would mean it is the last time you would be seeing me alive). Zimbili finally regains her freedom. The dedication of Zimbili empowers Nokulunga, who is facing a similar condition of forced marriage. Zimbili’s character underlines the importance of making one’s choice when it comes to issues of marriage. Nokulunga raises a question that empowers all women on the fringes: ‘*Kufanele ngizilande izinkomo kwaManqeke mina bese ngitholani kulokho?*’ (p.84). (I must fetch the cows from the house of Manqeke; what would I receive from that?) She poses this question to the representative of the centres of power, her father. Nokulunga understands that women receive nothing in this transition: it is merely a transfer of wealth from one man to another. The woman in question will service the debt given to her parents through *ilobolo*. Replying to the question posed by Nokulunga, Hlatshwayo says: ‘*Ukuhlonishwa*’ (p.84). (To be respected). The same views were shared by male characters in *Kungabheja ezansi*, as it is demonstrated in paragraph 1 of page 160. The patriarchal system takes it as true that women receive respect through the institution of marriage. Outside of marriage, women do not deserve respect. The problem with this statement is that it does not include males, being gender biased against women. Men are respected by virtue of being males; and marriage adds to that. The reader understands that there are fewer chances that Nokulunga would receive the respect she deserves. The case of Zimbili proves that, under forced marriage, women are subjected to humiliation. Hlatshwayo will receive respect through the cows he will obtain. This will secure for him the status of *umnumzane*. People

will respect him for the wealth he would accumulate through his ill deeds of selling his girl child. Nokulunga will have no word and no ownership of those cows.

Nokulunga defends her case of not wanting to marry the suitor chosen for her by her parents. MaNdimande sees such actions as contrary to what is expected of her: '*Kade ngingazi ukuthi wena uzogcina usidumazile*' (p.85). (I was not aware that you would end up disappointing us). Nokulunga understands that there is no logic in entertaining her parents' views, while she is dissatisfied. Nokulunga rejects her parents' choice of Mgwazeni as her marriage partner. Therefore, she discards her father's authority over her future. She questions the rights of a patriarchal society to choose partners for girl children.

Women's oppression in *Ngivumele, Baba* is apparent through the demonic forces of patriarchy that make up the unruly character of Mgwazeni. Mgwazeni is a dictatorial and conceited young man who sees the need to intervene in his older sister's love affairs. In fact, the control that Mgwazeni exhibits leads him to beat up his sister's boyfriend, Mgaxeni, a depiction of toxic masculinity: '*Azingeni kuMgaxeni kuphela izinduku kodwa zigamxela nakuNtombilezi*' (p.89). (The whipping does not end with Mgaxeni; it also extends to Ntombilezi). The patriarchal system has vested power in the character of Mgwazeni. He chooses who should fall in love with his sister, and who should not, no matter that his sister is older than he is. His being a male count, where age does not. Mgwazeni does what is expected of a man: that is how boys are socialised by the patriarchal system: '*Ukuthi umdala kimina akusho lutho. Akusho ukuthi kufanele ngikuyeke uthandane nomuntu ongenakusasa*' (p.89). (The fact that you are older than me means nothing. That does not mean I should let you fall in love with someone who has no future). Society gives power to boy children over girl children.

Mgaxeni is promised a reward by his father if he helps him convince Nokulunga to marry Mgwazeni. Now, for the second time, Hlatshwayo uses this method. At first, he promised to fund his son's education using the bride price. Now he promises to finance him when he pays for his bride. Mgaxeni turns down the offer for the second time: '*Angizwisisi baba, ngihlomule ngento ezophatha kabi udadewethu?*' (p.96) (I cannot hear you properly, to benefit from something that will depress my sister?) Mgaxeni refuses to be used as a tool in suppressing a woman's right to choose her own husband.

Nokulunga highlights the way in which society ill-treats women when they get married. Women tend to be isolated from their place of birth, left alone in wilderness with no option of returning home. Society says: ‘*Ungabuyi noma sekwenzenjani... Yithina esizoza kuwena uma sikukhumbule*’ (p.101). (You should not return, no matter what... We are the ones who will pay visits when we miss you). Nokulunga relates that some even burn beds to prove that brides have no place to return to. Women are not allowed to visit their families even if they miss them dearly. Men are not subjected to this treatment, because their families live close by. This is how badly society treats women. Society does this simply to protect the wealth they have accumulated through the institution of marriage, whereby girl children are given to the in-laws. The return of a girl child to her former home, will mean parents have to return the *ilobolo*, bride price.

Another theme emerges here- the theme of *ukuthwala*. It is the abduction of women. It acts in contrast with what Human Rights campaign, UN, South African government, and Women organizations fought for, which is gender equality, and elimination of gender-based violence. Women are taken by force if they resist, they are beaten up then coerced to love people they never intended to love. A human rights violation. The electing of a suitor for Nokulunga causes Mgwazeni to abuse the situation. He takes Nokulunga by force, a method known as *ukuthwala* in which women are taken by force to be kept in the house of the intended boyfriend. Mgwazeni does this because Nokulunga’s parents favour him of all the suitors. Favouritism causes him to go to extremes: ‘*Anginaso njalo isikhathi sokuchithwa, ngena indlela*’ (p.105). (I have no time to waste, go). Women’s rights are infringed in this process because men take women without their consent. Nokulunga is not submissive to the demands of forced marriage. Her running away from her captor in the middle of the night half naked proves that she is a fearless woman who will not be tamed by patriarchal strictures and structures: ‘*Wathola ithuba lokuphulukundlela abambe indlela eqonde ekhaya*’ (p.105). (She got hold of the chance to free herself and takes the way back home). To run away from one’s captor is a symbolic effort to break out of the oppressive pattern known as *ukuthwala*, an oppression that gives men rights over women. Nokulunga redeems her freedom as proof of a woman not having simply to slide into submission.

Mgwazeni’s family pays *ilobolo* after the failed attempt of kidnapping Nokulunga. This is how society covers up the maltreatment of women. A case of kidnapping equates to eleven cows: that is how women’s lives are devalued by men. The problem arises when the cows they give as *ilobolo*

are not the cows expected by Hlatshwayo. He was not aware of the family dynamics. The cows he covets most were not of the Manqele's family: they belong to Sithole. The cows were given as a token of support to children who had lost both of their parents at a young age. The cows were to be returned when the children grew older. Cows provided food for these children. They will not be used to pay *ilobolo*. Hlatshwayo fails to hide his selfish interests: '*Mina kwaManqele kade ngibheke izinkomo zohlobo*' (p.117). (I was expecting cows of higher grade from Manqele).

Customary law is well known for its oppression of women. The text tells us that it is not all bad: there are positive aspects as well. Customary law defends women's rights against ills of society: Induna says: '*Ukuthwala akuvumelekile kulesi sigodi nanokuthi kulicala elibomvu elihambisana nesigwebo...*' (p.119). (To take and keep a person without her consent is not permitted in this district and it is a serious offence that demands punishment). Customary law proves that it is not one-sided in favour of males, as most people may think. In good hands it can defend women, as in the case of Nokulunga.

The role of traditional leaders in the text acts in line with that of judiciary. They protect women against the ills of patriarchy. Moreover, they intervene in people's private lives if there is human rights violation as it is in the case of Nokulunga. The novel *Ngivumele, Baba* condemned women's oppression through the character of the headman. The narrator says: '*Ayaze yakhetha iphela emasini induna yasola nesimilo sabazali abazikhathalela bona bafune ukuceba ngezingane zabo...*' (p.120). (The headman did not choose sides: he questioned morals of parents who are egocentric, who used their children to enrich themselves). Men bully women in treating them as subhuman. Women can be kidnapped and be transferred to a foreign place, not considering their feelings: '*...UNokulunga ukhala ngendlela ezwe ngayo ubuhlungu ngokuhudulwa njengento engenamphefumulo*' (p.120). (...Nokulunga cries about the way she felt pain when dragged like a lifeless thing). Nokulunga's rights were trampled on.

Before they kidnap Nokulunga, the kidnappers fabricate and spread lies to their society. The lie is that Nokulunga has given her heart to two men. This is unacceptable; therefore, people will not take her side. Nokulunga will be viewed as someone who has called for what was about to occur. Nokulunga says: '*Ngokuqanjelwa amanga kuthiwe uhlanganise izinsizwa...*' (p.120). (They created lies saying she has cheated). The headman condemns such a barbaric act:

'*Alicatshangelwanga ilungelo layo*' (p.120). (Her rights were not considered). Mgwazeni and his friend were ordered to pay the fine.

Society always equates toughness with males, equating weakness with the female sex. Males should not reveal any sort of weakness. This includes crying. Such is the form of masculinity that society subscribes to. The one who cries is viewed as less of a man. To weep, bruises a man's character. To be in good standing as judged by men, tears are not permitted. *Ngivumele, Baba* cuts this notion down to size. It is evident that all human beings, since they are emotional beings are subject to weeping: The narrator says: '*Zehla izinyembezi zendoda endala*' (p.120). (Tears of the old man fall). This is in line with paragraph 2 of page 166 of *Impi Yabomdabu Isethunjini* where a boy cry.

Some women, in times of hardship, and defying patriarchy, resort to suicide, fleeing from one's home or resorting to prostitution. Nokulunga does not use the above-mentioned methods: she debates with and fights with men. The character of Nokulunga ignites the fire of revolution against patriarchy. She emancipates women from the chains of patriarchy. Nokulunga resists forces of oppression from the word go to the bitter end. She towers above women's oppression and she defeats the centres of power. In the end she stands as victor: she marries the man she loves. MaNdimande fits the image of a pawn in a men's game: women's issues are not her priority. She is an agent who serves patriarchy. At all costs, MaNdimande is heading a men's agenda.

The overriding theme in *Ngivumele, Baba* is forced marriage, in the same vein as in *Uvalo Lwezinhlonzi*. The former presents a female character who is a driving force behind compulsory marriage – MaNdimande, the mother to Nokulunga. In the latter it is the male character, Manamuza, who forces his daughter to marry someone she does not love. The common denominator in both these novels is the creation of wealth, using girl children.

Some novels depict customary law as a law that suppresses women's liberation. *Ngivumele, Baba* does not follow this well-known trajectory. It proves that customary law is not all evil. It does defend women against the ills of a patriarchal mindset.

5.3 Summary of the Depiction of Female Characters

The text gives us two female characters of opposite qualities. The older, traditional women act contrary to what we expect. For instance, they conspire with men in pushing girl children to marry people not to the woman's liking, motivated by greed, as with MaNdimande. Such women are insensitive and materialistic, moreover, lacking in genuine sisterhood. On the other hand, the younger generation is unapologetically against the oppressive system. They are of the view that marriage is a culmination of love for one another. Without love, a marriage cannot prosper: forced marriage is an abuse of women. These women defend their rights to choose a love partner. The epitome of this is the character of Nokulunga.

The following literary text to be analysed is *Ngiyolibala Ngifile* by E.D.M Sibiya.

CHAPTER 6: *Ngiyolibala Ngifile* (2010): E.D.M Sibiya

6.1 Introduction

The main character is Khanyisile. She was raped by her father in the absence of her mother. She then bore her father's child. Madonsela, her father, threatened to kill her if she were to tell a soul. Khanyisile is then forced by circumstances to blame the birth of the child on her boyfriend. The boy refutes the claim because they never had any sexual contact. Khanyisile is then forced to confess. She tells her mother what had occurred. Her mother wants to cover up the rape because she feels they will lose what they have: her husband is affluent, a minister of health. MaKhoza fears that if Madonsela were to be arrested they will be subjected to poverty, since she does not work. Khanyisile runs away from home because her mother does not favour the idea that Madonsela should be arrested. She then lives on the streets. There she receives support from a stranger who encourages her to open a case of rape against her father. Justice prevails and her father is arrested.

6.2 Analysis of *Ngiyolibala Ngifile*

Khanyisile, in *Ngiyolibala Ngifile* is portrayed as a bold, fearless rape victim, who is on a task of informing the public about her perpetrator. She does not bend to any circumstantial requests and demands. Zulu women ideally have to swallow the pain and pretend to live a normal life, remaining a silent victim. Khanyisile has the spirit of a fighter: she is not willing simply to overlook wrongdoing. She has nothing to lose except chains of patriarchal oppression. Khanyisile scorns women who harbour cases of rape. She strives to stand on high ground to let the world know her plight and her response to it. In so doing she frees other women in a similar condition to act boldly. Khanyisile becomes a leader in women's liberation. She is prepared to sacrifice the comfort of her home rather than to succumb to men's demands. She does not tolerate agents of patriarchy, women who bury their heads in the sand when things go wrong. She unsettles women who enjoy patriarchal benefits, being taken care of, at the expense of their daughters.

Khanyisile tells her mother that the child she is nurturing is a product of rape committed by her father while the mother was absent. MaKhoza finds it difficult to accept that as the truth: '*Uthi uyihlo wayengayenza kuwe ngempela into enjalo mntanami?*' (Sibiya, 2010:1). (From now on only

the page number for this novel will be used). (You say your father would do such a thing to you, my child, really?). MaKhoza's behaviour proves the stereotype that women are the last persons to believe that their child has been raped, particularly if the culprit is the man they are married to. MaKhoza underlines the above point: *'Angiyikholwa ngempela! Lutho! Lutho, Khanyi! Hhayi, ngiyaphika!'* (p.2). (I do not believe it truly! Never! Never, Khanyi! No, I disagree). MaKhoza has the audacity to deny the claim that her husband has raped her daughter in her absence. She is defending her husband at the expense of her girl child, her only child. Her mother implies that Khanyisile is fabricating the story.

Khanyisile insists that her father has raped her; however, her mother is stuck in denial. Khanyisile is forced to tell her mother in detail how and when it occurred, so as to convince her mother. Khanyisile is now subjected to double victimization: she had to relive the traumatic event just to win her mother's support: *'Umama wayengekho esedolobheni eThekwini eyothenga izimpahla lezi ayezithengisa uma kunomholo wezalukazi namakhehla. Ubaba wathola ithuba lokungiba-...bamba angidlwe-...!'* (p.3). (Mother was not around: she was in eThekwini to buy goods that she sells to old people when they receive their government stipends. Father got the chance to gra-...b and rap-...!). MaKhoza, after cross-examining her daughter, still finds it difficult to believe that her husband could rape their daughter: *'Okusho ukuthi wakwenza ngempela?'* (p.3) (It means he did it truly?). The question mark raises the level of uncertainty. To put the matter straight MaKhoza says: *'Akufani nje neze noMadonsela ukunukubeza. Ubengafane ashele intombi, aqonywe?'* (p.5). (It is not like Madonsela to rape. He would rather court a girl, as a preference). MaKhoza argues with her daughter. She sees her husband as an innocent man whose name is being dragged in the mud. MaKhoza fails to accept women's abuse, even when the person in question is her only daughter. MaKhoza understands that men are disloyal; however, she fails to consider that they sometimes rape their daughters. MaKhoza treats Madonsela as the exception in cases of rape: *'UMadonsela wakhe ubengeke nje ayenze leyo nto'* (p.5). (Her Madonsela would never commit such an act). Her use of the possessive implies that Madonsela belongs to her therefore such an act would be impossible. MaKhoza fits the image of women who hide the fact that their husbands are raping their daughters. The victims are instead accused of lying or ruining the family.

Gender stereotype is reinforced in *Ngiyolibala Ngifile*. For instance, when MaKhoza speaks of her grandchild she says: ‘*Uma ukubuka wena ongazi ungaze uthi yintombi kanti phinde*’ (p.6). (If you look at him not knowing you could say he was a girl, although not). This demonstrates that boys are not expected to be beautiful; beauty is a feature reserved for girls. If one has this feature, society is more likely to classify one as a girl. To be beautiful is an attribute commonly linked to women; this expresses the masculine/feminine poles of ideology. The text depicts gender roles plainly: women are confined to nurturing: ‘*Akwenzele ubisi*’ (p.6) (She makes milk for the child). *Ngiyolibala Ngifile* is in line with *Kungabheja Ezansi!* Women are nurturers of the human race. Such is demonstrated in paragraph 2 of page 10.

In most cases, women are associated with emotions: they tend to cry frequently. The text presents us with this scene: ‘*Athi angabeka ingane uMaKhoza zehle izinyembezi zithi co co*’ (p.7). (MaKhoza, after laying the child down, sheds tears). The text correlates with *Kunjalo-ke* as it points to paragraph 6 of page 37, where women cry. People are subjected to crying because they are emotional beings. To link crying with one sex, females, excluding males, makes this gender stereotyping. MaKhoza wishes to hide the fact that Khanyisile was raped by her father: ‘*Kungakuhle ngempela ingaveli emphakathini le nto eyinzukazikeyi ngale ndlela*’ (p.7). (It would be better indeed if this thing would not be reveal to the community as it is complex). MaKhoza does not end there. She wants to hide the rape case even from family members: ‘*Ngisho umndeni wakwaMadonsela uphelele akumele ukwazi lokhu*’ (p.8). (Even the family of Madonsela should not know about this). MaKhoza believes that to let the truth surface will destroy their reputation. This is which she fears most. Reputation carries such weight that it eclipses the rape of her daughter, Khanyisile: ‘*Ngeke akuvumele. Ngeke akumele ukufana nabemindeni yalezi zikhulu nosaziwayo okuhlale kukhulunywa ngazo kabi imihla namalanga*’ (p.8). (She will not permit it. She will not tolerate to be like the other families of ministers and famous people who are frequently spoken badly of).

MaKhoza wants to mediate this issue. She goes to extremes to safeguard the privileges she is enjoying as the wife of a minister: ‘*Kumele ahlambuluke futhi axolise ngeqiniso uMadonsela yikhona noKhanyisile ezoxola*’ (p.8). (Madonsela needs to come clean and apologise sincerely so that Khanyisile will be at peace). MaKhoza bypasses the work of police and courts so as to retain

the lavish lifestyle she is now accustomed to. MaKhoza matches the image of women who are so materialistic that they care nothing for moral values. MaKhoza takes the rape of her child as a family matter that needs to be swept under the rug so that life will continue as usual. Her actions in such an issue are indefensible. No mother should allow such crime to go unpunished. She should rather be poor, or lose all privileges, than sideline such a horrific crime. The case demands radical action, not the turning of a blind eye. Instead of taking up the cudgels on behalf of her wronged daughter, MaKhoza resorts to self-flagellation. She says: '*Yingoba engamenelisi yini? Yingoba engasemuhle? Yingoba esegugekakhulu yini?*' (p.8). (Is it because she no longer satisfies him? Is it because she is no longer beautiful? Is it because she is too old?). MaKhoza tries to justify the actions of her husband. It is not unusual for people under severe stress to blame themselves for the actions of others.

Relying on men financially forces women to accept the position of underdogs. This even extends to permitting the husband to be promiscuous. MaKhoza says: '*Bekuyoba nani-ke nje ukuba umyeni wakhe ubevele waqonywa uma esazibona eyinsizwa?*' (p.10). (It was not going to be a crime if her husband were to get a girlfriend if he still sees himself as a young man?). The text here revisits what other texts have expressed. For instance, in paragraph 3 of page 93 of *Kunjalo-ke*, men are given rights to promiscuity by their wives just to avoid conditions of despair, wrecking of marriages. This is how far women often go in saving their marriages. Khanyisile presents signs of post-traumatic stress disorder; she has flashbacks to what occurred when her father raped her; she relives the past: '*Ngisho nanamuhla lokhu usasibona isithombe sikayise esephenduke isilwane esesabekayo ngezenzo*' (p.11). (Even today she still sees the image of his father who has turned into a fearsome animal through his actions). To be raped is a traumatic event; however, it is ten times worse when perpetrated by someone who ought to protect you. In the case of Khanyisile, Madonsela is supposed to protect his daughter, not to rape her.

In *Ngiyolibala Ngifile*, Madosela uses the power vested in him of being a male, a father and breadwinner. In being a male, he is powerful compared with a girl child. In being a father, his daughter is used to follow his commands. In being a breadwinner, he understands that the family will not survive without his assistance. The reader sees the power relations between sexes – men are powerful while women are powerless: '*Amehlo akhe agxila kakhulu emathangeni*

kaKhanyisile' (p.12). (His eyes concentrated on the thighs of Khanyisile). Such thoughts should not occur to a father. There is no real father who will look at his daughter in such a manner. This illustrates the domination of men over women's bodies. Madonsela, in pursuit of his foul deed speaks ill of his wife to her daughter: '*Usewahlala esendleleni mina ngisala ngedwa uma engekho*' (p.13). (She is always far away from home I am alone when she is not around). That has nothing to do with Khanyisile – Madonsela is supposed to address his grievances to his wife, not discussing such with his daughter, Khanyisile. Madonsela chooses words which tell the reader that he wants his daughter to fill the gap of her mother, worst of all, his sexual needs. To be alone does not warrant that a father rapes his daughter. Madonsela only pretends to be a father to his daughter.

In most African societies, including Zulu society, culture dictates that children should not look adults in the eyes when conversing. To look in the opposite direction when speaking to an adult is a symbol of respect, *ukuhlonipha*. McCutcheon, Schaffer and Wyoff (1994:90) affirms this by saying:

In many tribes, it is rude to look an older person in the eye. Respect is shown by avoiding eye contact.

To look an adult in the eyes when speaking is a sign of disrespect, let alone to look at one's father. When Madonsela speaks to Khanyisile, a well-brought up girl, she looks down, in observing the custom of *ukuhlonipha*: '*Wamane amehlo wawambela phansi nje, wathunga umlomo wakhe uKhanyisile*' (p.13). (She just faces down, closes her mouth). The second reason that causes Khanyisile not to look at her father's eyes is that he shares secrets that are not designed to be shared with one's daughter. The third reason that she becomes silent is that she senses that her father refers to issues of grownups. She says: '*Akumele ungixoxele izinto ezinjalo*' (p.13). (You should not tell me such things).

Madonsela crosses borders when he asks Khanyisile whether she is in a relationship; such topics are restricted to a girl child and her mother. It is not common in African society for a father to ask her daughter about her love life. This brings embarrassment into the person in question. The behaviour of Khanyisile is common in such instances: '*Athi uyise uyambeka, uKhanyisile amane*

awambele phansi amehlo' (p.14). (As his father is looking at her, Khanyisile looks down). The topic that Madonsela raises makes Khanyisile deeply uncomfortable. She hides her eyes because she cannot discuss such topics with her parent, let alone her father. Madonsela sees Khanyisile's behaviour as a sign of disloyalty. He distorts the interpretation of a custom to further his aims.

Since the beginning of time, people who conduct virginity tests in girls have been women; even in this day and time it is still women. Women are well versed in this behaviour. Even in myths one never hears of man who conducts a virginity test on girls. Virginity testing is not the profession of a gynecologist, where a man can become a gynecologist. If need be, the mother of a girl child can conduct a virginity test if she had knowledge of it. Males have no expertise in such an area. Madonsela bypasses the custom. He wants to commit an act unheard of even in myths: '*Sondela wena ngifuna ukubona ukuthi usaphelele yini!*' (p.15). (Come closer so that I will check that you are still a virgin!). Women's rights to privacy and dignity are trampled upon. In that wrongful process Madonsela then rapes his daughter in the absence of his wife: '*Wathi uyakhala wamuthi ngqi emlonyeni*' (p.15). (As she was about to cry, he silences her by pressing his hand against her mouth). The text presents power relations between sexes, where men take what they want.

Madonsela threatens his daughter so as to cover up what he has committed: '*Uma uke wathi nkente, ngiyokunquma intamo ngomese ufe nya*' (p.15). (If you were to talk, I will cut through your neck with a knife: you will die). Khanyisile is being raped at home where she ought to feel protected from harm. The attacker is the man who is supposed to defend her, her father. Some males use their power, be it social, political, or economic to exploit those on the periphery, women. The power invested in them can be used to hide their crimes or erase what they have done. Madonsela uses financial power in trying to erase the rape memory in his daughter: '*Kwakwala noma uyise ecubuza ngayo yonke inhlobo yezinandinandi*' (p.15). (It did not work even if her father tried to erase what occurred by giving goodies). Madonsela is so arrogant that he thinks that giving sweets to Khanyisile would help her forget about what he did. A traumatic memory cannot be erased by a gift of sweets: it is only the justice system that will put Khanyisile at peace, even though she will not forget what took place. Madonsela places a price on Khanyisile's virginity; since he has money, he thinks he can buy his way out. This illustrates Madonsela's low opinion of Khanyisile, and women in general.

Khanyisile is in a state of PTSD: '*Wayemphupha usuku nosuku uyise uMadonsela emnukubeza*' (p.15). (She dreamt of her father raping her). It did not end there – the rape left a psychological scar for Khanyisile: '*Akaphumelelanga nakwesisodwa isifundo kulezo zifundo ezazibhalwa*' (p.16). (She failed all the subjects that were written). One would expect such to occur when one has been raped by her father. Khanyisile's goal was to focus on her studies for her matric. Sex had no time and place in her calendar: she was still a virgin. There were things that were of importance in her life. One was to pass matric with flying colours. However, that dream was short lived. Madonsela, father to Khanyisile, broke his marriage vows by raping her. Themba, the boyfriend of Khanyisile did not comprehend what he was seeing because he respected what Khanyisile had asked of him: '*Angithi savumelana ngokuthi singayi ocansini ngoba usafuna ukugcina ubuntombi bakho? Angithi ngikuhloniphile lokho?*' (p.17). (Is it that we agreed to not have sex, because you wanted to preserve your virginity? I respected that). Themba is forced by the signs of pregnancy he observes at Khanyisile to raise such questions. Themba feel betrayed by the love of his life.

The theme of crying is most often associated with females. *Ngiyolibala Ngifile* proves that it cuts across all sexes; as it was also true in *Impi Yabomdabu Isethunjini* and *Ngivumele, Baba*: '*Noma engeyena umuntu otetemayo uThemba kodwa ngalelo langa izinyembezi zagcwala amehlo qede zathi qatha qatha phansi, zishisa*' (p.17). (Even if Themba was not a person who would easily cry, on that day, tears fill his eyes and drop down, while hot). The text overturns the gender stereotype that boys do not cry. Now we know that all people cry. Crying is not associated with one's biological makeup. The rape of Khanyisile by her father forces Themba to blame Khanyisile. In the mind of Themba, Khanyisile has cheated on him. It is also difficult for Khanyisile to tell him that she was raped by her father. Themba says: '*Ngeke ngikumele ukuthandana nonondindwa mina! Asehlukane okungcono!*' (p.18). (I cannot bear to be in love with a woman of low morals! We had better stop the relationship!). Khanyisile is forced to accept the naming and shaming caused by her father's action of raping her.

MaKhoza, Khanyisile's mother, discovers that her daughter is pregnant. She then asks about the father of the child: '*UKhanyisile wagcina eseshilo ukuthi isoka lakhe kwakunguThemba Nxumalo waseDiepkloof*' (p.19). (Khanyisile finally told her mother that her boyfriend was Themba

Nxumalo from Diepkloof). The reader knows very well that it is not Themba who made her pregnant – it is her father. The reader also understands that Khanyisile is forced by circumstances to tell lies. Khanyisile was threatened by her rapist father that if she were to tell a soul, worse must be expected. She was forbidden to tell her mother that she was raped by her father. MaKhoza, together with Khanyisile, visit Themba at his home to report Khanyisile's pregnancy. Themba says: '*Angiyazi mina ingane! UKhanyisile owazi uyise wengane*' (p.19). (I do not know the child! It is Khanyisile who knows the father of a child). The response MaKhoza receives from Themba angers her because she believes that Khanyisile would never lie on such serious matters. MaKhoza even attempts to attack the boy. Nxumalo, Themba's father, comes to his rescue (p.20). Khanyisile's educational prospects are threatened by her pregnancy: '*Nasesikoleni wagcina ngokuyeka ngoba esekhulelwe*' (p.21). (She ended up leaving school because she was pregnant). Madonsela's deeds of raping Khanyisile did not end at that scene; it even denied her right to education, since circumstances forced her to abandon school.

Male characters have the right to explore the world, while women are confined to the home setting: '*Naye-ke umnumzane uNxumalo wayezitohela esitolo sezicathulo khona edolobheni*' (p.24). (Mr Nxumalo was also working in a shoe shop in town). Nxumalo's wife was selling chickens at home. She had to stop this after being diagnosed diabetic. Men work outdoors while women are confined to domestic chores. In *Ngiyolibala Ngifile*, Themba tries to court Khanyisile, but Khanyisile rejects his request: '*Cha ngeke kulunge, Themba. Ake uzame nakoZodwa: uyazi bayaqomana*' (p.27). (No, it will not be okay, Themba. Try Zodwa and others: You know they like boys). The text here molds the character of Zodwa and other females to fit the stereotype that girls love more than one boyfriend, that women are promiscuous. *Ngiyolibala Ngifile* underlines the theme that girls have loose morals. This is portrayed from page one to the last page of *Kunjalo-ke*.

Male characters believe that leadership positions are designed for them. They are the ones who should lead, and women should accompany them. This mentality is ingrained in them through socialization. Themba says: '*Kanti ucabanga ukuthi ngiyadlala yini uma ngithi yimi umongameli wakusasa*' (p.28). (You think I am joking when I say I am the future president). This line corresponds with paragraph 1 of page 274 of *Impi Yabomdabu Isethunjini* and paragraph 2 of page 60 of *Ngivumele, Baba*. Male characters visualise themselves as future presidents. It is no surprise

that in South Africa we have never had a female president. Female characters are best suited for being wives of people of high standing: *'Nguwena oyobe ususeduze kwami, uyi-first lady ngiyakutshela'* (p.28). (It is you who will be next to me, as the first lady, I am telling you). Elert (1979:53) asserts that:

... Married women are often society women, in themselves not intellectual, but wives of scholars or politicians. They are stately middle-aged women of remarkable beauty and charm, ideally suited to perform the role of the hostess.

The mentioned texts show high regard for men occupying prominent positions in society. Men are expected to become presidents rather than women. This reflects a low regard for women in general. In *Ngiyolibala Ngifile*, MaKhoza suffers from diabetics: *'...ukuze angacabangi kakhulu funa kukhuphuke noshukela kanye nomfutho wegazi kume ngezinyawo'* (p.30). (So that she will not think deeply; this may result in rising of the level of diabetics and blood pressure). This is also true of Mrs Nxumalo who is a diabetic, as confirmed in paragraph 2 of page 24 of the novel. Diabetes is a human sickness; it is not gender defined. To ascribe such a disease only to the domain of women makes this gender stereotyped.

Gender stereotyping in *Ngiyolibala Ngifile* is portrayed even in the TV programme that MaKhoza watches in the comfort of her home: *'Lo mdlalo kamabonakude ubuye ukhulume ngensizwa eyasindisa intokazi ethile emlonyeni wengwenya ibhekene nokufa'* (p.31). (This TV programme also speaks of a young man who saved a certain woman from the mouth of a crocodile who was about to die). The reader sees masculine/feminine poles of ideology. Males are strong and fearless, while women are weak; therefore, men ought to save women from harm. Women are waiting to be saved by men. Without that "superman" women will perish. This is a stereotypical definition of women as a whole. There is no agency invested in female characters. In most narratives, women pay back their saviour by falling in love with him. The same applies in the TV programme watched by MaKhoza: *'Emva kwalokho kwaqala uthando oluvutha amalangabi phakathi kwaleyo ntokazi nensizwa'* (p.31). (After that the flame of love begins between the woman and the man). Being a woman means making payment after being saved by offering herself to her saviour. This shows a low regard for women in general. Women cannot save themselves from the dangers they come

across. Men act as protectors of women. The woman in the TV programme wanted to marry her saviour: '*Kodwa abazali bentombi kabafuni nakuyizwa le nto ngoba le nsizwa inguphuya nje kanti bona bakhomba ngophakathi*' (p.31). (Parents of a girl did not want to hear because the boy is poor while they are rich). This proves that girl children are given to men of affluence, as is illustrated in *Ngivumele, Baba* and *Uvalo Lwezinhlonzi*. Girls are used by their parents as means of acquiring wealth. The woman in question did not allow her parents to define her life through choosing for her whom to wed: '*Intokazi ivele ibone kungcono ukubaleka nesoka layo, ishiye umcebo wakubo*' (p.31). (The woman sees fit to run with her suitor, leaving her family's wealth). An escapist mode is depicted in *Uvalo Lwezinhlonzi*. The female character in a TV programme rides above women's oppression; she does not permit a patriarchal system to define her destiny. This character matches that of Nokulunga in *Ngivumele, Baba*.

MaKhoza does not want to refer the matter to the police. She uses all means to water down the damages caused by her husband, specifically of raping her daughter: '*Kumele kube yisijeziso abazovumelana ngaso bebobathathu njengomndeni*' (p.33). (It should be the punishment that three of them will agree upon as a family). MaKhoza acts as though she knows the punishment worth giving to the rapist. MaKhoza fails to meet her standards as the female, moreover, the mother of the victim of rape. She is just a tool for a patriarchal purpose fit to oppress women. MaKhoza does not stand firm for women's liberation against the shackles of a patriarchal system. We may say that MaKhoza is a man trapped in a woman's body. In continuing to hide the fact, she says: '*Uma kuthiwa eyomndeni kayingenwa kushiwo into enjena. Amaphoyisa angonamba bani wona engangenelela?*' (p.33). (When they say you do not interfere with family matters, they mean something of this kind. Who on earth are police to interfere?) MaKhoza is using this proverb out of context. She employs it in a totally different context. This proverb refers to minor arguments between family members; it does not include rape cases. MaKhoza takes this proverb out of context to gloss over a rape case.

MaKhoza does not empower the marginalised. Instead she defends the centres of power, the males. She is a vanguard of a patriarchal system at the expense of her child. She says: '*Kuzofanele ayikhombise uthando kakhulu indodakazi yakhe kulezi zinsuku yikhona izogcina ikhohliwe impela yikho konke okubi okwenziwe uyise kuyo*' (p.33). (It would be necessary that she shows great love

to her daughter in these days so that she will end up forgetting the bad things that her father did to her). MaKhoza uses her love as the remedy for solving the rape case. She believes that by showing love to her child that will help her forget. The true love that she is supposed to show to her daughter is of ensuring that the rapist is apprehended. There is no other remedy in such circumstances. Justice must prevail. MaKhoza's love is therefore not a genuine love. Madonsela being around, there is no certainty that he will not rape her daughter for the second time. He needs to be arrested so that Khanyisile will be safe. True love involves protecting the one you claim to love. MaKhoza matches the image of women who love their husbands more than their children. MaKhoza even suggests organising a boyfriend for her child: '*Mhlawumbe ayitholele nesoka elilungile nje nelizoyinika uthando oluphelele*' (p.33-34). (Maybe she should organise a kind boyfriend for her that will give her all the love). MaKhoza misinterprets the cry of Khanyisile. Khanyisile is not searching for fake love. Her cries demand justice, love, and, of course, support from her mother. MaKhoza fails to give true love and support to her daughter. Instead, she replaces her role with that of other people. She fails to search for love within herself, resorting to looking for supplements.

The child Khanyisile has acted as a constant reminder of what took place in the absence of her mother. '*Ubukhona bengane yibona kanye obabenza uKhanyisile angakhohlwa yisenzo esinyantisa igazi sikayise uMadonsela*' (p.38). (The presence of the child reminded Khanyisile of the ugly deed committed by his father, Madonsela). The presence of a child now acts as the trigger for a trauma; she cannot overlook the rape occurrence. Khanyisile is now a mother to a boy child who is also a brother to her. Khanyisile wants to open a rape charge against her rapist father: '*Kumele aboshwe impela, senginqumile*' (p.40). (Indeed, he is supposed to be arrested; I have decided). MaKhoza does not see the arrest of Madonsela as a solution. Instead, she proposes another solution which will spare him the long overdue punishment for raping her child. MaKhoza is a mother and woman. By virtue of such, we expect her to protect her daughter, a woman whose rights have been trampled on. A reader expects that she ought to empower her own kind by taking the matter to the police. MaKhoza's character is inexplicable. She fails to transcend women's abuse. She says: '*Mina ngibona kungakuhle ukuthi uyihlo abizelwe emhlanganweni oyobe uphakathi kwethu sobathathu, siluxoxe lolu daba njengomndeni*' (p.40). (I think I will be better to call your father into a meeting that will include the three of us, to discuss this matter as a family).

The above point underlines what MaKhoza has said in paragraph 2 of page 8 of the novel. This proves that MaKhoza is not willing to change her position. In addition to that, she sensitises her daughter on what they will have to forgo were Madonsela to be arrested: *'Ngubani ozosondla nokudla sekubiza kangaka? Ngubani ozokhokhela le ndlu njengoba sobabili singasebenzi nje?'* (p.41). (Who will buy us food as it is so expensive? Who will pay for the house since we both not working?). This proves that women who are financially dependent on their partner will forgive anything that might cost them their privileges, such as financial support. They will even defend the culprit in their midst just to keep the benefits flowing. The reader understands the situation MaKhoza is facing; however, it does not mean that she should not act. MaKhoza was a street vendor before her husband became the Minister of Health. She does not visualise herself reliving that life: *'Angisaziboni nje ngithengisa'* (p.41). (I don't picture myself selling). She is now accustomed to a lavish lifestyle. To lose it does not cross her mind. MaKhoza hides the fact that her daughter was raped by her husband just to safeguard the resources she is accustomed to: *'Cabanga ukuthi igama lethu lizohuduleka phansi kanjani, uyihlo avele ngobubi emaphelandabeni!'* (p.41). (Consider that our name will be dragged in the mud, your father appearing bad in newspapers!). MaKhoza and her husband's name, status, are what matters in her life. She overlooks what her husband has done to Khanyisile, her daughter.

MaKhoza tries to make her daughter aware of what will occur were Madonsela to be detained: *'Kodwa Khanyisile, mntanami, uyalubona ukuthi lunjani usizi esizongena kulo uma uyihlo angase aboshwe?'* (p.41). (Khanyisile, however, my child, do you see the sorrow we will plunge into it if your father were to be incarcerated?). MaKhoza thinks the life she is enjoying is of most importance to her and her daughter. This is, however, not the case with Khanyisile. She says: *'Mina anginendaba nalutho mama. Ubaba wayevele engakhombisanga ukungikhathalela ngesenzo sakhe'* (p.41). (That does not concern me, mother. My father failed to prove that he cares for me through his action). MaKhoza still clings to the past. She fails to consider the present moment; that her daughter is a victim of sexual abuse. Madonsela is inhuman and needs to be treated as such. Jail is the only place suitable for people of his caliber. Khanyisile's stance speaks volumes for all women under abuse either by their father, spouse, or members of the family. Khanyisile rises above women's abuse. She does not allow anyone to hinder her agenda. She comprehends that a rape is

not a family matter; it should not be linked with what one may lose. It is a public concern that demands justice to take its course.

MaKhoza fulfils the stereotype of women as materialistic. Some women will do whatever they can to maintain their comfort. They will even hide a case of rape or abuse of whatever nature: '*Ngizokwenzela konke okudingayo Khanyi mntanami uma nje wethembisa ukuthi angeke umbophe uyihlo*' (p.42). (I will do whatever you need Khanyi, my child, if you were to promise that you will not lay charges against your father). Khanyisile does not want to be bribed or persuaded. She stands her ground: '*Ngisho unganginika isigidi ngeke ubumina bubuye mama, ngeke!*' (p.42). (Even if you give me a million rand, my virginity will not be restored mother, it will not!). Khanyisile speaks for the voiceless. She tells her mother that a price cannot be set on her virginity. Khanyisile is not swerving from her rightful intention: '*Kungcono aye ejele aboshwe, noma angafela khona anginendaba*' (p.42). (It is better that he goes to jail: even if he dies there, that is none of my concern). Khanyisile proves to be the true defender of women's liberation from the chains of patriarchy.

The text gives male characters the power to put food on the table. When men occupy such a position, women are forced to be underdogs by the mere fact of dependence. The power invested in men breaks the moral compass of women, as in the case of MaKhoza: '*Wazimisela ukuthi uzokwenza konke okusemandleni akhe ukuthi umyeni wakhe agcine engaboshwanga*' (p.42). (She ensures that she will do all in her powers to defend her husband from being arrested). MaKhoza compares the past with the present. She is not willing to return to the poverty she once experienced. The present suits her needs and demands. She now lives in a suburb as a wife of a minister of health. MaKhoza sees the rape case as something that will make her poor: '*Ngahlupheka kakhulu Khanyisile, mntanami ngeke ngisalunga ukuphinde ngibuyele ekuhluphekeni*' (p.44). (I have suffered a lot, Khanyisile, my child. It will not be fitting for me to go back to suffering). MaKhoza allows wealth to influence her moral compass, downgrading the rape of her child. Khanyisile puts it plainly that material things are useless when one suffers emotional pain: '*Kungcono khona ukuphila uhlwempu enyameni kodwa uthole umnotho nemfudumalo emphefumulweni*' (p.44). (It is better to be physical poor but receive emotional wellness and comfort). Khanyisile's principle is genuine, unlike that of her mother. MaKhoza does not match the role of a parent. As a woman, she

is expected to protect and defend one of her kind against maltreatment of a man; instead, she wants to secure her own interests: '*Khanyisile, mntanami, ngicela ungihloniphe mina. Ubaba wakho siphila ngaye lapha ekhaya*' (p.44). (Khanyisile, my child. I beg you to respect me. Your father is our means of survival in this house). MaKhoza is abusing the custom of *ukuhlonipha*. She wants her child to respect her by hiding the fact that she was raped by her father. In this way the mother can continue to enjoy her lavish lifestyle. The custom of *ukuhlonipha* does not permit parents to rape their daughters, nor to hide rape if it has occurred. MaKhoza calls for respect, although her husband did not respect her daughter's rights when raping her. The same mindset of distorting the ends of *ukuhlonipha* is pointed to in paragraph 6 of page 14 of the novel. Madonsela distorted the custom of respect just to rape Khanyisile. MaKhoza tries to persuade her daughter to forget the incident: '*Asigwinye intshe, sicabangele ikusasa lethu nenhlalakahle yethu*' (p.44). (Let us accept it as it is and forget. We need to think about our future and our welfare). The above thought runs twice on the same page, a stereotypical ideology that marks women as materialistic. It gives the view that a breadwinner should be exempted from the crimes he committed because he is the source of survival. There is no future for Khanyisile in living side by side with her rapist.

Khanyile's question awakes all women who blindly accept the status quo. It also questions women who acts as agents of the patriarchal system, women who save their marriage or privileges at the cost of their daughters. These words demand introspection and immediate reaction. The words of Khanyisile echo the message of sadness to those mothers who turn a blind eye while their daughters are being raped in the home. It questions women who desert the struggle of women's liberation: '*Kungani ungilahla ngokuvuna ubaba ngesenzo sakhe?*' (p.45). (What causes you to ignore me by favouring the actions of my father?). As a protector, MaKhoza has failed her daughter. She has become an accomplice of her husband. Khanyisile is without a defender and a protector. She is left alone: no one feels her pain. She resorts to running away from home: '*UKhanyisile wagijima njalo okohlanya engazi ukuthi uyaphi*' (p.45). (Khanyisile continued running like a mad person, not knowing where she was heading to). Khanyisile abandoned her home because she feels violated by her father; and the last person, her mother, whom she thought would stick by her, is not on her side. It is not surprising to the reader that Khanyisile uses this mode of escape. The narrator says: '*Kungalolo suku lapho okwamkhanyela khona ukuthi ziningi izizathu ezenza izingane zigcine sezihlala emigwaqeni yedolobha*' (p.45). (It was on that day that it became clear to her that there

are many reasons that cause children to end up living in streets of cities). That tells us that before her experience, she had no understanding of why children abandoned their homes to suffer on the streets. Her father's actions and the counter-reaction of her mother enlighten her on at least one reason for children running away from home: '*Walibona iqiniso lokuthi amakhaya asephenduke imigwaqo, kwathi imigwaqo yaphenduka amakhaya*' (p.45). (She saw the truth of homes turned into streets while streets turned into homes). Khanyisile saw it safer to live on the street than to remain at home. Reasons for that are depicted in previous pages of the text. In her home there is a rapist father and a mother who defends her rapist husband: '*Ikhaya waqala walizonda ngalowo mzuzu, walibona lingenayo indawo yokuvikeleka nemfudumalo*' (p.45). (She begins to hate home at that moment; she saw it as no place for protection and warmth). The last resort that women have in fighting patriarchy and its associates is to run away from home. It is the only tool that women can use to regain their freedom: that is how women attain their liberty from the chains of patriarchy.

MaKhoza is persistent in giving support and protection to her husband, regardless of the fact that she is destroying her only child. She stands by the perpetrator instead of the victim: '*Uma esethweswe icala, kuzofanele naye uMaKhoza aye enkantolo ukuyosekela umyeni wakhe*' (p.64). (When he is charged, it will be necessary that she also go to court to show support for her husband). MaKhoza has chosen which side to favour: her husband's. In showing support for Madonsela, Khanyisile will be left stranded by her mother. MaKhoza proves that her marriage is more important than giving support to her child. She is not advancing the cause of women's liberation.

In the previous pages of the text MaKhoza attempted to buy off Khanyisile by promising to do whatever Khanyisile wishes. Khanyisile has stated that even a million rand will not buy back her virginity. MaKhoza says: '*Impela kuzomele athengelwe imoto ayithandayo ukuze athambe, agcine eyiyekile le nto yokucabanga ukubophisa uyise*' (p.64). (Indeed, we should buy the car she likes so that she will be calm, ended up leaving the idea of wanting to arrest her father). MaKhoza believes that an expensive car will do magic. It does not sink in that Khanyisile is not looking for any payments: she demands justice. Material things are a centrepiece of MaKhoza's life. She believes that the same also applies to her child, not knowing she is utterly wrong. MaKhoza would rather lose the trust of her daughter to retain the trust and support of her husband. MaKhoza typifies women who prefer to lose the love of their children than to lose that of their husbands. Love of

one's husband is the priority when weighed against love of their children. It is true that a lavish lifestyle distorts one's mind to the extent that one can even forget about one's flesh and blood, as in the case of MaKhoza. MaKhoza's character is made to fit the stereotypical belief associated with women of being materialistic and insensitive.

Escape is the last method that takes over when discussions have failed. It is the last breath of freedom left in bodies of women in defeating the injustices of a patriarchal system. To become a street child means one is free from bondage of patriarchy. One is free from rape and abuse. Khanyisile says: '*Uzizwa ekhululekile njengoba elapha emgwaqeni nje. Uzizwa esekhaya*' (p.70). (She feels free as she is here in the street. She feels at home). The text here highlights what it has indicated in paragraph 4 of page 45 that a street turns into a home because there is ill treatment of girl children at home. The character of Khanyisile is a beacon of total liberation. It talks to other women who resort to prostitution when life becomes difficult, running back to a patriarchal system, offering their services for a fee. Khanyisile proves that there are other means of survival apart from selling one's body to males. Moreover, she gives strength to those women who resort to suicide as their escape. Suicide and prostitution are not an option. Women need to stand their ground and fight their injustices.: '*Lithi lingavala irobhothi asondele nesitsha sakhe ngasezimotweni ezivalelwe irobhothi*' (p.69). (As the traffic light changes, she approaches the cars that have been denied the right of way with her container). Khanyisile asks for cash when cars have stopped, waiting for the robot to turn green. Khanyisile begs for cash: she does not sell herself to a patriarchal system as occurs in prostitution.

Living the street life, Khanyisile faces a second rape attempt. A male stranger does what her mother failed to do: he defends her: '*Hlukanani nomntanami nina bafana uma ningafuni ukulimala! Kukhuza ikhehla ngokuzethemba*' (p.73). (Let go of my child, you boys, if you don't want to be injured! The old man warned them with confidence). The text here discredits some family men and women. Khanyisile never received any protection from home; instead she was raped by the man who was supposed to protect her, her father. In the street she receives protection from a stranger. It appears that streets have become safer than homes. A stranger in the street resembles a true father figure that Khanyisile so badly needs. The old man offers Khanyisile a place to sleep. He then asks her the cause of her being on the street. Khanyisile tells the old man that it is because her father

raped her. The old man is shocked: '*Nezilwane azikwenzi lokhu akwenza kuwe*' (p.75). (Even animals do not do what he did to you). A stranger informs Khanyisile that what her father did to her is beyond human understanding. He gives Khanyisile support that her mother failed to give: '*Hamba kusasa lokhu okusayo uye emaphoyiseni uyovula icala*' (p.75). (Go in the morning to the police station to open a case).

MaKhoza, as a woman and a mother, has failed to protect her daughter. A male character has taken on her role and perfected it; he stands by Khanyisile. The old man is the first person in the text who thinks as Khanyisile does. He shows respect and empathy for her. The old man gives advice to Khanyisile not to waste time but to open the case immediately. The old man stands for a voice of liberation that is there to break the shackles of patriarchy, so that women will be free from the ills of men. A man is empowering women. Justice should take its due course.

Khanyisile calls for justice regardless of whether the culprit is a stranger or a member of a family. She is the voice of reason for the voiceless victims of sexual abuse: '*Akangabazi futhi ukuthi nabanye abantu besilisa abahlukumeza abantu besifazane babezofunda isifundo ngaleli cala*' (p.77). (She has no doubt that those other males who abuse women would learn a lesson by this case). The case of Khanyisile was going to teach males that women are human beings, not sub humans; and they are not to be toyed with. In addition to that, she is encouraging other women who are still in their closets, afraid of letting their cries be heard when it comes to abuse. There is evidence of agency invested in the character of Khanyisile. There is no doubt that her character does empower women on the margins. In *Ngiyolibala Ngifile*, a police officer is a male character: '*Kubuza usayitsheni Sibisi ngokuthokoza nokulilangazelela leli cala*' (p.79). (Sergeant Sibisi questions with joy and a willingness to take this case). The same was reflected in *Kunjalo-ke* and *Kungabheja ezansi*, where males are police officers. To associate police officers with male characters only makes this gender stereotyping.

Khanyisile, after opening the rape charge against her father, feels empowered: '*Azibone eyiqhawe nomuntu olwela amalungelo abantu besifazane*' (p.79). (She sees herself as a hero and a person who fights for women's rights). Khanyisile gives credit to the street life: '*Abozalo sebeyizitha, kanti abokuhamba sekuyibona abasekhaya*' (p.81). (Relatives are now enemies while strangers have

become relatives). On the street is where Khanyisile has found a sense of belonging and regaining of her dignity. The text here reinforces paragraph 4 of page 45 and paragraph 3 of page 70 of the text: some streets are far better than some homes. At the end of the text, Madonsela is arrested, and justice prevails. The powerless women on the margins are defended.

6.3 Summary of the Depiction of Female Characters

Unemployment forces women to be insensitive in matters that demand agency. The financially dependent status towards the breadwinner destroys genuine sisterhood between the mother and child. Mothers become materialistic and apologetic, to the extent that they ignore the well-being of their daughters. Women align themselves with the perpetrator at the expense of their daughters. Instead of addressing cases of rape, financially dependent women engage in self-excoriation, putting the blame on themselves, exempting the perpetrator, as with MaKhoza. On the other hand, the victim is left with no option except to desert the home. Khanyisile is courageous and unapologetic even in the absence of genuine sisterhood, a lack of support from her mother. She makes her cry heard – a (bonfire) beacon of hope for other women in a similar condition as rape victims. A girl child is a true liberator, while the mother defends the perpetrator.

The following section is the conclusion of the study.

CHAPTER 7: Conclusion

7.1 Introduction

This study set out to investigate the portrayal of female characters in selected isiZulu novels published after the year 2000: an African womanist literary approach. The depiction of female characters was investigated in five purposefully selected novels. The texts were chosen from the literary period 2002-2012. The findings are as follows: in almost all the isiZulu novels we analysed that were published after the year 2000 women are still portrayed in a patriarchal setting. Women are seen to fit the patriarchal system. Ideal women in that social system are submissive, tolerant, industrious, and forgiving; while transgressors are heavily punished, verbally, emotionally, and physically. For example, in the novel, *Impi Yabomdabu Isethunjini*, the main characters, Poppie and Zithelile, appeared at loggerheads with the patriarchal system. Poppie is portrayed as disrespectful and arrogant because she persists in wearing trousers in front of her in-laws while being married – a taboo in the Zulu culture. Poppie also argues, which again is contrary to what is expected of married women. A lack of a submission is unacceptable to a patriarchal system, an ideal feature in married women. Bafana, Poppie's husband, a mouthpiece of patriarchal discourse, holds the view that educated women are threat to the fabric of a family. He affirms that men will not tolerate being argued with by women, educated wives, He refers to illiterate women as kings, furthering the stereotype associated with literate women: impolite, outspoken, disrespectful, and unapologetic. In saving her marriage, Poppie must study in secret. Moreover, Poppie cannot use her hard-earned money as she wishes. She must first consult her husband, so that the transition will be legitimate. She buys a car for her children without her husband's permission. This is viewed as a sign of disrespect, resulting in a dissolution of their marriage. Such confirms the stereotype that highly educated women, PhDs, for instance, are not ideal marriage material. Poppie is not willing to face the same fate as most women under a patriarchal regime. Such women live under the yoke of women's oppression. Poppie challenges the unfair treatment of women by men in general. Her activism is short-lived because she must choose between being a wife and an activist. She chooses the former; because women hold high the status of being married in a Zulu society. Furthermore, they fear being labelled *omabuyemendweni*, *izikawoti*, or returned soldiers. All such terms refer to female divorcees with no equivalent word for males.

On the other hand, Zithelile is depicted as bold, outspoken, and the type of woman who is not afraid to challenge men to a duel, or in public debate. She questions the way in which society views and treats women. At *ekwaluseni* (herding) Zithelile is discriminated against because she is a female. Boys take it that herding is for boys and that girls should mind the kitchen. They police this terrain to the point that violence is echoed to the transgressors. Being a girl in this terrain, Zithelile becomes an outcast. For instance, Khanjana strikes Zithelile with a knobkerrie. The other boys cheer him on, backing Khanjana in lecturing Zithelile that herding is not for women. Zithelile is of the view that women's oppression emanates from patriarchy. Her activism is not a smooth ride. Men in the texts suppress her political endeavours by vilifying her, claiming she has a vendetta against men because they failed to recognize her hand in marriage, *zendazamshiya*. Moreover, she intends to spoil other women. Regardless of what men say of her, she adamantly challenges the oppressive patriarchal system. To be able to rise above women's oppression we credit her state of being single. In general, the institution of marriage forces women to be submissive, doormats to their husbands.

In the novel, *Kunjalo-ke*, Dumazile, the main character is depicted as a gold-digger, promiscuous, a femme fatale, cunning, selfish, and irresponsible. Dumazile does not tolerate financially disaffected men. For instance, she leaves Sithole when he becomes a pauper; falling in love with another man who was financially promising at that time. She gives no credit to Sithole who has funded her education. Moreover, what led to the situation with Sithole was of her making. She conspired with thugs in burning down Sithole's shop so that she would profit from the insurance payment. Unfortunately, Sithole has missed a month's payment of the premium, therefore the insurance money could not be paid out. Dumazile is of exquisite appearance. The text permits the character of Dumazile to prove the case associated with beautiful women. For instance, she consumes the forbidden fruit in women, she engages in extra-marital affairs – a man's business. The text does not permit such behaviour to go unchallenged. It reprimands such behaviour especially when conducted by a woman. Dumazile is sanctioned: HIV/AIDS becomes her penalty: she dies of the disease. The text has therefore achieved two goals. First, it castigates women who use their beauty to deceive men. Low morals and women's delinquency are discouraged. Second, the character of Dumazile affirms the Zulu proverb: *ikhiwane elihle ligcwala izibungu* (a beautiful woman always has a blemish in her character, promiscuous). Dumazile's beauty comes with a

price – it destroys a man’s marriage; men are sucked dry of their material belongings; and last, men lose their lives because of her.

In the novel, *Kungabheja Ezansi!*, the main character, Simamile, appears as a literate, submissive, loving wife, forgiving, tolerant to the extent that she bottles up her abuse for the sake of saving her marriage. Simamile affirms the saying: *emendweni kuyabekezelwa* (in marriage you persevere). Simamile perseveres under serious forms of humiliation and degradation. She becomes the object of verbal, emotional, and physical abuse. Simamile remains a victim even when Gabazile tries to free her from patriarchal bondage. She is manacled by what society expects from married women. To be labelled as *umabuyemendweni* (marriage quitter) is what she fears most. *Ilobolo* payment plays a crucial role in the way in which Simamile views the world. She feels obliged to tolerate her husband’s wrongdoing on grounds that he paid *ilobolo* for her. In the eyes of Simamile, a real man is one who can pay a bride price for a woman. The buying power vested in men through *ilobolo* payments instils submission in women. Simamile observes traditional mores. She sticks by her husband even when he is found guilty of abusing women. She visits her husband, saving him time in prison. Simamile is a true portrayal of a traditional Zulu woman.

In the novel, *Ngivumele, Baba*, the main character, Nokulunga, is portrayed in this manner: a ticket to riches. Her parents force her to marry the suitor of their choosing on the grounds that he comes from an affluent family. Nokulunga is expected to respect her parents’ decisions. To go against such is to disdain the custom of *ukuhlonipha*. Nokulunga’s mother even goes beyond what is expected. For instance, she persuades Mgwazeni to wed her child, claiming that Nokulunga loves him while that is not the case. She commits what is never heard of in Zulu society. In a traditional situation, a woman does not approach a man. If such occurs, that woman runs the risk of losing her credibility. She places her moral compass in jeopardy. It is taboo in a Zulu society for a woman to tell a man that she loves him, without his having approached her first; let alone for this to be done by the mother of a girl child. In taking such initiative, MaNdimande’s compromises her character as well as that of her child. Hlatshwayo promises his son that he will use Nokulunga’s *ilobolo* to fund his education. Nokulunga is not passive. She informs her parents that she already has a boyfriend whom she loves and intends to marry. Her parents are not impressed, because her boyfriend is no match for her; moreover, they have little knowledge of his father’s kraal. They have earmarked the highest bidder for their son-in-law – a man with a bigger kraal, Mgwazeni’s

father. Pushing Nokulunga onto Mgwazeni makes him arrogant to the point that he forces himself on Nokulunga. He resorts to *ukuthwala* just to get hold of her. Nokulunga does not permit the patriarchal system to define her life. She runs away from her captor – a form of defiance. She reports the matter to the traditional court, and the punishment is rendered. In the end she emerges a victor.

In the novel, *Ngiyolibala Ngifile*, the main characters appeared in this way: Khanyisile is a rape victim who is struggling to have her voice heard – her cry is silenced by those who have benefited and continue to benefit from patriarchy. MaKhoza, Khanyisile's mother, is insensitive, selfish, and materialistic. She waters down the fact that her husband has raped her daughter; and that the child she was having was by her husband. She argues that if the man of the house were to be detained, they would all suffer – no one would put food on the table. She asks for forgiveness on behalf of her husband. Khanyisile, on the other hand, is resolute that her father is a criminal: he ought to be treated as such – his case must be brought to book. The battle of ideas between the two women makes Nokulunga feel betrayed by the very person whom she expected would be of support. The home has lost its value and flavour for Nokulunga: she heads for street life. It becomes evident to her why many children leave their homes for the streets. MaKhoza's behaviour is fueled by her economic dependence. She cannot imagine life in the absence of her husband, who is the only breadwinner. That toxic dependence forces her to ignore thorny issues that demand her immediate attention and support. She fails to address women's abuse. In both roles, as a mother and a woman, MaKhoza fails as a stereotypical loving nurturing mother. Khanyisile finds support from a stranger in the street, who encourages her to speak out. Finally, the perpetrator is detained. Khanyisile does not permit fear and intimidation to derail her. She gives voice to other women in a similar situation. Nokulunga puts across that rape survivors should let their case be known. The following section is a comparison of the five literary works.

Men have direct control over women. In *Impi Yabomdabu Isethunjini*, Poppie is not allowed to spend her hard-earned wages. She must consult her husband first. On the other hand, in *Kunjalo-ke*, Dumazile is not allowed to speak to people of the opposite sex. She is beaten up by her husband after he sees her talking to another man. Poppie and Dumazile are both literate and live in urban areas. Domination of this sort is not restricted to rural and illiterate women: it extends to urban and literate women. One may think that urban and literate men favour gender parity. The selected

novels prove that even urban, literate men still oppress women in the 21st century. They use culture or religion as their point of reference be it Bafana in *Impi Yabomdabu Isethunjini* or Mtalaselwa in *Kunjalo-ke*.

Women are defined in relation to men. Men are independent, while women are dependent. Women cannot survive in the absence of men. In *Impi Yabomdabu Isethunjini*, Melody wants to commit suicide because her mother does not like the man she chooses to marry. In *Kunjalo-ke*, Dumazile takes a man she works with so that she can live with him after her boyfriend has been arrested, a quick replacement. Female characters in the two novels are depicted as selfish individuals, women who destroy the lives of their partners. For example, Poppie, in *Impi Yabomdabu Isethunjini*, burns the books of her husband. This results in him losing his job. Dumazile, in *Kunjalo-ke*, schemes with other men to rob her boyfriend's shop, resulting in his bankruptcy.

Males deny women the right to education. In *Kunjalo-ke*, Mr Kheswa believes that it will be better if Dumazile were to get married and forget about schooling. His primary focus is to gain *ilobolo*, the bride price. Moreover, Mr Mzobe expels Dumazile from school on the grounds of her being pregnant, excusing the perpetrator, Mr Moloi, the teacher. In *Ngivumele, Baba*, Hlatshwayo intends to fund his son's education using the *ilobolo* of his girl child, Nokulunga. The bride price does not fund the education of a girl child: it is directed to the boy child. In *Impi Yabomdabu Isethunjini*, Bafana discourages his wife, Poppie, from taking her PhD. He views educated women as spoiled. The same is found in studies conducted by Zulu (2004) and Zondi (2013).

To be a police officer demands that one be fit, able to use a gun, and to keep it in the waist. Gender has no influence on such. However, society associates fitness with males, therefore male characters only seem fit to be employed as police officers. Males are seen as strong, while women are taken to be weak. In *Ngiyolibala Ngifile, Ngivumele, Baba, Kungabheja Ezansi!* and *Kunjalo-ke*, men are police officers. On the same note, to be a nurse is simply an extension of nurturing viewed as a profession. Texts endorse such stereotypes. For instance, in *Kungabheja ezansi, Impi Yabomdabu Isethunjini*, and *Kunjalo-ke* females are nurses. Patriarchal terms of reference confine female characters to the terrain of domesticity (Rwafa, 2011:47). In the study conducted by Masuku (1997:81), it becomes evident that male characters are assigned the role of doctors.

Dumazile, in *Kunjalo-ke*, Zithelile in *Impi Yabomdabu Isethunjini*, and Gabazile in *Kungabheja Ezansi!* are all vilified because of the stance they take as the voice of the downtrodden. These women are accused of spoiling other women. The favourites of the patriarchal society are the submissive, tolerant, and forgiving women. A woman in literature is not an ideal woman if her beauty is not illustrated in detail. These features should mingle with what Zulu men perceive beauty to be. For instance, an ideal Zulu woman should not be thin; she is of a round face with dimples, her body should resemble an hourglass. Poppie in *Impi Yabomdabu Isethunjini*, Dumazile in *Kunjalo-ke*, Nkumbulo in *Ubhuku Lwamanqe*, Zodumo in *Kungabheja Ezansi!* and Khanyisile in *Ngilyolibala Ngifile* are all defined in superficial terms.

In the five novels examined, the cooking is performed by only one man – in one novel, *Kungabheja Ezansi!* Even in that novel a woman is suspected of using *umuthi*, a love potion, to steer her husband. This proves that men do not normally cook. Those who cook, resort to such through sorcery. These five novels endorse the traditional belief, or stereotype, that women's role is to cook. In the texts observed, there is a clash between qualities of African womanism and patriarchal ideology, with no clear-cut victor. It is as though texts maintain the balance between patriarchy and African womanism, with no intention to grade them.

My selected novels demonstrate that traditional men sometimes see girl children as a ticket to riches. In fast-tracking the transaction, fathers choose the highest bidder for their children. Women are treated as commercial goods (*Ngivumele, Baba*). They are often treated as tools to service men's sexual demands (*Ngilyolibala Ngifile*). Ideal women are industrious, submissive, tolerant, and humble. Patriarchal society gives credit to these women. They fulfil their wifely duties. These women stand by their husbands in difficult times because divorce is not an option (*Ngingabheja ezansi!*). Promiscuity is not tolerated. It is a punishable crime (*Ngivumele Baba*). Women's oppression does not only affect traditional and illiterate women: it cuts across modern and literate women (*Impi Yabomdabu Isethunjini*). Women in these novels are depicted as caricatures and stereotypes who are merely fulfilling patriarchal ideology.

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