

FEMALE STEREOTYPES IN SELECTED ZIMBABWEAN NDEBELE
NOVELS (1975-2016)

By

SANELISIWE SAYI

Submitted in accordance with the requirements for the degree of

DOCTOR OF LITERATURE AND PHILOSOPHY

in the subject of

AFRICAN LANGUAGES

at the

UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH AFRICA

PROMOTER: PROFESSOR D.E.MUTASA

CO-PROMOTER: DR.S.MANDUBU

NOVEMBER 2022

DECLARATION

Name: Sanelisiwe Sayi

Student number: 63588420

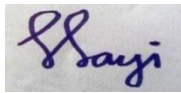
Degree: Doctor of Philosophy in Languages, Linguistics and Literature

Female Stereotypes in selected Zimbabwean Ndebele novels (1975-2016)

I declare that the above thesis is my own work and that all the sources that I have used or quoted have been indicated and acknowledged by means of complete references.

I further declare that I submitted the thesis to originality checking software and that it falls within the accepted requirements for originality.

I further declare that I have not previously submitted this work, or part of it, for examination at Unisa for another qualification or at any other higher education institution.



SIGNATURE

NOVEMBER 2022

DATE

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The study is a product of various contributions from various people, ‘umfula ugcwala ngezifudlana bakwethu’. I am greatly indebted to my promoters Professor D.E.Mutasa and Dr S. Mandubu for their encouragement and constructive criticism that saw me to the end of this research. I owe my thanks to the University of South Africa for the Bursary which enabled me to carry out this research. My appreciation goes to my mentors in the undergraduate and postgraduate studies the late Dr Matshakayile-Ndlovu and the late Prof. I. Muwati as well as Prof. M.Musiyiwa. I am grateful to my friends Dr E. Ndlovu, Ms. L.Ndebele and Nobandile. To Mrs M Chipara and Mr T.L.Gopo thank you for reading my work. My colleague, Dr.R. Marongedze, I appreciate the assistance I got in registering this degree. I also thank colleagues I had useful; discussions with, Dr Chikonzo and Mrs R.R. Chivandikwa (University of Zimbabwe). I am grateful to Prof G.Ncube, a brother and friend who read my thesis and encouraged me throughout this journey. My gratitude also goes to the novelists I interviewed, Mrs B.C.Makhalisa and Mr M.Sitsha-Tsheza. I am also grateful to the literary critics that I interviewed at University of Zimbabwe and Majiji High School. I am profoundly grateful to my parents who encouraged me to pursue this research. To my sisters, naRudo, sisFa, sisThe, sisNta and my brothers bhud Goddy, bhud’Nqo and bhud’ Gabhu, I am grateful for the various kinds of support. I am equally eternally indebted to my late mother who laid the foundation on which I derive inspiration through her adage, ‘ukulala akulalifa’. Above all I am thankful to the one who Arts above and on earth for protection and guidance.

DEDICATION

To my lovely daughter, Jerosa Lwandile Valerie and my late parents Mr and Mrs L.B.Sayi.

ABSTRACT

The research examines gender stereotypes accorded to women in different socio-historical periods in selected Ndebele novels published in (1975-2016) written by both men and women. Eriksen (1994:29) defines stereotyping as “the creation and consistent application of standardised notions of the cultural distinctiveness of a group”. The study derives impetus from the fact that studies on gender in Zimbabwean literature such as those by Chitando (2011), Mangena (2013) and Nyanhongo (2011) have laid disproportionate emphasis on literary works written in Shona and English at the expense of Ndebele language ones. It was found that there is change and continuity in stereotypes accorded to women in different historic periods where both external and internal forces such as colonialism and patriarchy respectively play a major role in the stereotypes accorded to women. Information for this study was gathered through an analysis of data collected through interviews with literary critics and authors. Ndebele narratives demonstrate various representations of women where Ndebele novelists enforce stereotypes about women. Women are depicted as mothers, mother warriors, immoral and inferior to men. The research made use of the socio-historic approach and African feminism to argue that stereotypes depict unjust gender relations and cultures tend to place boundaries on the gender spaces of maleness and femaleness so as to stereotype expectations associated with masculinity and femininity and novels enhance gender stereotypes in Ndebele society.

Keywords: Gender, representation, stereotypes, culture, patriarchy, women, masculinity, femininity, colonial, post-colonial.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

AIDS: Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome

AMPP: Association of Motion Picture Producers

DNA: Deoxyribonucleic acid

ESAP: Economic Structural Adjustment Programme

ESS: European Social Survey

GNU: Government of National Unity

HIV: Human Immuno Virus

MDC: Movement for Democratic Change

MHS: Matabelel and Home Society

NMO: Native Marriage Ordinance

NOW: National Organisation for Women's Rights

STEM: Science Technology Engineering and Mathematics

STIWANISM: Social Transformation Including Women in Africa

UNESCO: United Nations Educational, Scientific & Cultural Organisation

WOZA: Women of Zimbabwe Arise

ZANU-PF: Zimbabwe National Union Patriotic Front

ZWW: Zimbabwe Women Writers

CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	ii
Dedication	iii
Abstract	iv
List of Abbreviations	v
CHAPTER ONE	1
PREAMBLE	1
1.1 Background	1
1.2 Statement of the problem	4
1.3 Aim of the study	5
1.3.1 Research objectives	6
1.3.2 Research Questions	6
1.4 Research justification	6
1.5 Definition of key terms	8
1.6 Literature review	9
1.6.1 World perspectives on the condition of women	9
1.6.2 African perspectives on women and their lives	10
1.6.3 Zimbabwean perspectives on the condition of women	11
1.7 Conceptual framework	16
1.8 Research methodology	20
1.8.1 Research design	20
1.8.2 Case study	20
1.8.3 Population sample	21
1.8.4 Non-probability sampling	21
1.8.5 Purposive sampling	21
1.8.6 Research instruments	22
i) Interviews	22
iii) Desk research	22
1.9. Scope of the study and chapter layout	23
1.10 Ethical considerations	23
1.11 Conclusion	24
CHAPTER TWO	25

LITERATURE REVIEW	25
2.1 Introduction	25
2.2 Stereotypes about Africa	25
2.3 Stereotypes about females: World perspectives.....	32
2.3.1 Review of representation of women as mothers and cultural custodians	32
2.3.2 Development of sex role stereotypes associated with the female gender	34
2.3.3 Development of stereotypes associated with the female gender in education	39
2.3.4 Review on works on women motherhood and domesticity	40
2.3.5 Stereotypes of women at work	44
2.3.6 Women in politics	47
2.3.7 Women as Victims	48
2.3.8 Women and sexualisation.....	49
2.3.9 Women and morality	50
2.4 Stereotypes about females in Africa.....	50
2.4.1 Development of sex role stereotypes	50
2.4.2 Development of stereotypes in education	53
2.4.3 Women in mothering and domesticity	53
2.4.4 Women and work in Africa.....	56
2.4.5 Women and politics.....	57
2.4.6 The sexualisation of women.....	58
2.4.7 Women and Immorality	59
2.5 Stereotypes about females: the Zimbabwean experience.....	60
2.5.1Development of sex role stereotypes	60
2.5.2 Development of stereotypes in education	64
2.5.3Women and domesticity.....	65
2.5.4 Women and work	68
2.5.5 Women as victims	71
2.5.6 The sexualisation of women.....	72
2.5.7 Women and immorality.....	73
2.5.8 Conclusion.....	75
CHAPTER THREE	76
CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK.....	76

3.1 Introduction	76
3.2 Theory and background.....	76
3.3 The socio-historic approach	78
3.3.1 The socio-historic approach in the understanding of female stereotypes	83
3.4 African feminism.....	85
3.4.1 Background of African feminism.....	87
3.4.2 African feminism in the analysis of stereotypes accorded to women	92
3.5 Complementarity of Socio-historic approach and African feminism	98
3.6 Conclusion.....	99
CHAPTER FOUR.....	100
RESEARCH METHODOLOGY.....	100
4.1 Introduction	100
4.2 Research design.....	100
4.2.1 Qualitative Research versus Quantitative Research.....	100
4.2.2 The Nature of Qualitative Research	102
4.2.3 Ethnography	106
4.3 Research methods.....	107
4.3.1 Sampling.....	107
4.3.2 Data-gathering techniques.....	108
4.3.2.1 Interviews	108
4.3.2.2 Semi-structured interviews.....	110
4.3.2.3 Content Analysis	111
4.4 Ethical Considerations.....	111
4.5 Conclusion.....	112
CHAPTER FIVE	113
PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION.....	113
5.1 Introduction	113
5.2 The Plot of <i>Laphuma Elinye Lingakatshoni</i> (Ndlovu, 1992)	114
5.2.1 The Plot of <i>Umbiko kaMadlenya</i> (Sibanda, 1986).....	116
5.2.2 The plot of <i>Lifile</i> (Mlilo, 1975)	117
5.2.3 The plot of <i>Umendo</i> (Makhalisa, 1977)	117
5.2.4 The plot of <i>Etshabhini</i> (Sigogo, 1990).....	118

5.2.5 The plot of <i>Lokhu Akungeke Kwenzeke</i> (Sodindwa-Ncube, 1997)	118
5.3 Presentation and Analysis of Data from Interviews	119
5.3.1 Authors' perspectives on stereotypes of women	119
5.3.2 Interviewee A	119
5.3.3 Interviewee B:	123
5.4 Critics' Perspectives on Stereotypes of Women	125
5.4.1 Interviewee C	125
5.4.2 Interviewee D	126
5.4.3 Interviewee E	128
5.5 Sex Roles and Stereotypes: Implications on Gender and Identity	129
5.5.1 Background to nationalism and nation building	130
5.5.2 Women and Nationalism	132
5.6 The depiction of women in <i>Laphuma Elinye Lingakatshoni</i>	133
5.6.1 Women as advisors in <i>Laphuma Elinye Lingakatshoni</i> (1992) and <i>Umbiko kaMadlenya</i> (1986)	133
5.6.2 Women as flexible role players in <i>Laphuma Elinye Lingakatshoni</i> (1992)	137
5.6.3 Women as mothers and cultural custodians in <i>Laphuma Elinye Lingakatshoni</i> (1992)	138
5.6.4 Women as fighters in <i>Umbiko kaMadlenya</i> (1986)	140
5.6.5 Discourses of nationalism in Ndlovu (1992) and Sibanda (1986)	141
5.7 Writings in the Colonial Period	150
5.7.1 The image of the female figure in the city	151
5.7.2 Rural women as supposedly pure in <i>Lifile</i> and <i>Umendo</i>	153
5.7.3 Rural women as model mothers in <i>Umendo</i>	159
5.7.4 Prostitution in <i>Lifile</i> and <i>Umendo</i> (The Urban space)	161
5.7.5 Problematizing the presentation of women in <i>Lifile</i> and <i>Umendo</i>	165
5.8 Impact of Missionary Education and SRLB on Works Published During the Colonial Period	168
5.8.1 Early writers and the conventional approach	172
5.9 Writings in the Post-independence Period	180
5.9.1 Women as morally decadent in <i>Etshabhini</i> , <i>Lokhu Akungeke Kwenzeke</i> and <i>Esilojeni</i>	182
5.9.2 Women as evil in <i>Etshabhini</i> and <i>Esilojeni</i>	192
5.9.3 Women as victims of the system in <i>Etshabhini</i> and <i>Lokhu Akungeke Kwenzeke</i>	196

5.10 Conclusion.....	203
CHAPTER SIX.....	206
FINDINGS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION.....	206
6.1 Introduction.....	206
6.2 Research Findings.....	206
6.3 Recommendations for future research.....	210
6.4 Recommendations for future practice.....	210
References.....	212
LIST OF APPENDICES.....	239
APPENDIX A.....	239
INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR AUTHORS.....	239
APPENDIX B.....	240
INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR LITERARY CRITICS.....	240

CHAPTER ONE

PREAMBLE

1.1 Background

The study establishes and interrogates the different gender stereotypes accorded to women in different historical dispensations in Zimbabwe's Ndebele fiction. It specifically examines the politics of representation of women in selected Ndebele novels from the pre-colonial to the post-colonial historical epochs. The research interrogates the stereotypes that can be deduced from the politics of representation of women in the selected novels. It analyses the social, cultural and economic dynamics that have influenced the novelists' depiction of women in pre-colonial, colonial and post-colonial socio-historical contexts with the intention to evaluate the ramifications of stereotypes on gender discourse in Zimbabwean literature. The study unfurls in the area of gender representation in literary studies. For this reason, the inquiry is preoccupied with the clash of ideas, conceptions and interests in presenting gender especially within the matrix of the imaginative (de/re) construction of gender in diverse historical periods.

The study examines how gender is (de/re)constructed in different socio-historical periods, as imaginatively depicted in Zimbabwean Ndebele fiction. This study contends that even though research has been carried out on gender representations in Zimbabwean literature in general, to the researcher's knowledge no major systematic studies exist on the gender representation in Zimbabwean Ndebele literary works, with a particular focus on stereotypes accorded to women from (1975-2016). Existing studies on gender in Zimbabwean literature such as those by Chitando (2011), Mangena (2013) and Nyanongo (2011) have laid a disproportionate emphasis on literary works written in Shona and English at the expense of Ndebele language ones. The yawning gap reveals the lack of consistent, active and critical analysis of literary works written in Ndebele. Such a gap in scholarship and intellectual engagement calls for a broader examination of gender relations in Ndebele language fiction.

Gender relations can be understood through representation and as observed by Hall (1997:1), representation "connects meaning and language to culture and is, therefore, an essential part of

the process by which meaning is produced and exchanged between members of a culture and it does involve the use of language, of signs and images which stand for or represent things”.

Representation in this study refers to the overall depiction of women by authors in various historical periods, and stereotypes, as a form of representation, offer multiple and significant entry points into the scrutiny of gender in Zimbabwean literature. The study therefore traces the representations manifested in stereotypes used in the narratives and how they change over time as they are influenced by socio-historical issues.

Under representation the study has a particular interest in stereotypes and looks into ways in which women have been continuously represented. The study relies on Eriksen’s definition of stereotypes, Eriksen (1994:29) defines stereotyping as “the creation and consistent application of standardised notions of the cultural distinctiveness of a group”. Gender, on the other hand, is defined by Rabichev (1996:105) as “a category which people tend to stereotype; opinions about differences between the sexes...”. Cultures tend to place boundaries on the gender spaces of maleness and femaleness so as to stereotype expectations associated with masculinity and femininity. Eriksen (1994:33) rightly notes that in some societies, “male centred (or androcentric) ideologies of gender tend to justify the subjugation of women by referring to ideals of complementarity”. Gender stereotypes in Ndebele language fiction drew the researcher’s interest as a possible research topic because representations of women in expressive cultures in Ndebele fiction tend to be stereotypical.

There is, without doubt, an intricate relationship between gender-based roles and stereotypes, since some gender-based stereotypes emanate from culturally bound gender based roles. Stereotypes do not only emanate endogenously from culture but can also be fashioned and imposed by scholars such as Furusa (2006) and Mguni (2006), who are Shona and Ndebele respectively. This study focuses on female stereotypes in the following selected novels where we find women in the domestic space and in the workplace: *Lifile* (1975) by O.S.Mlilo, *Umbiko kaMadlenya* (1986) written by Mayford Sibanda, *Umendo* (1977) authored by Barbara Makhalisa, *Etshabhini* (1990) by Ndabezihle Sigogo, *Lokhu Akungeke Kwenzeka* (1997) by Bekithemba Sodindwa-Ncube (1997), *Laphuma Elinye Lingakatshoni* by Bernard Ndlovu (1992) and *Esilojeni* (2016) by Mihla Sitsha-Tsheza. The study looks into ways in which women are stereotyped in the above-mentioned historical periods; the pre-colonial, colonial and post-

colonial period as reflected in the novels. Stereotypes probe into ways in which the history of the Ndebele nation is depicted, by noting the relations between men and women in the nation building process when Mzilikazi broke away from Shaka, Hadebe (2007). The study taps into the way early authors like Makhalisa, Sigogo and later traditions like Sodindwa-Ncube and Sitsha-Tsheza depict women. The issue of the depiction of women cannot be studied outside the context of the birth of the Ndebele novel. There are various factors that led to the birth of Ndebele literature in general: the encouragement given to early graduates who had attended South African universities and studied Zulu language felt the need to write and read literature written in their native languages, the Southern Rhodesia Literature Bureau also encouraged the writing of novels, through writing competitions Matshakayile - Ndlovu (2001). Since early writing started in the colonial period the study assesses how the contribution of the Southern Rhodesian Literature Bureau (S.R.L.B.) with its emphasis in didactic literature and moralistic works of art had a bearing on the imaginative depiction of men and women. Chiwome (2002:23) argues that the Literature Bureau, “directed the novel along, the path of least ideological resistance to the Rhodesian government...”, this resulting in novels based on idealistic morality. Thus the S.R.L.B. had a bearing on works published in the colonial period and this generally translated to the depiction of male female relations in that period especially women in that period.

As depicted above, generally, gender relations are closely linked with and affected by political and economic issues. It has been observed that different periods in Zimbabwean history (such as the colonial period, the Structural Adjustment Programmes of the 1980s and 90s, and the land reform crisis of (1999-2008) have had a multifold effect on these relations. Following these political, economic and cultural issues associated with gender in different societies make gender a contested terrain and literary texts centred on the various historical eras in Zimbabwe have therefore become a ‘mirror’ of society in their depiction of women and their experiences.

The study looks into ways in which various factors that affect gender representation in the Ndebele novels, such as culture, and as well as political and economic issues come into play. Literature acts as a mirror of society and the culture of a people is often reflected in the literature produced by the artists. In this study, culture is interpreted from P’Bitek’s (1986:16) viewpoint, namely as a “philosophy as lived and celebrated in a particular society”. It should be noted, however, that although society may peddle its cultural codes, hybridity is inevitable when

external forces such as imperialism and internal forces such as contact with other cultures come into play. It is these internal and external forces that continue to shape literature and the development of stereotypes associated with the female gender. The definition of culture therefore tends to be slippery within ethnic boundaries, as noted in Eriksen's (1994:110) argument that "it has been stressed repeatedly that ethnic identities, groups and beliefs of shared culture and history are creations through historical circumstances, strategic agency or unintended consequences of political projects". Since culture changes from time to time, therefore, it can be deduced that notions of pure culture can only be willed into being through acts of bad faith, since culture itself is diverse and constantly changing. The present study therefore unravels how culture continues to have a bearing on the representation of women. It also traces the development of stereotypes accorded to women and unravels the implications of this on the development of Zimbabwean literature and the nation at large. The study therefore hopes to re-educate society through deconstructing and demystifying these long-standing stereotypes with the aim of contributing to a change in perception towards women among scholars of African culture, literature and gender studies as well as the society at large. The study therefore looks into ways in which literature contributes to the fight against gender disparity and how literature can influence policy in terms of the gender movements globally seeking women emancipation and gender parity.

1.2 Statement of the problem

Over the years, representation has been a common subject for scholarly investigation worldwide. It has been examined by different scholars in cultural studies, anthropology and sociology, as well as by literary scholars such as Gaidzanwa (1985), Moyana (1988), Hall (1996) and Berndt (2005), who have written extensively on the representation of women in Zimbabwean literature. Its popularity as a focus of study highlights its significance in engaging wider issues relating to gender relations and the plight of women in changing circumstances. Stereotyping is a form of representation and we observe some stereotypes through the continuous representation of maleness and femaleness in a particular society. Cook and Cusack (2010:1) opine that "stereotypes affect both men and women; however, they often have a particularly egregious effect on women". Systematic studies have not been undertaken on the depiction of women and how stereotypes have evolved in pre-colonial, colonial and post-colonial settings, as depicted in

Ndebele language fiction yet the representation of the female constitute a fundamental premise on how they participate in any sphere of life. In this regard, stereotyping as a form of representation becomes a critical canon in tracing the historiography of the narrated and narrating experiences of the female gender. Alive to the realisation that literature rehearses societal experiences, (re) tracing the antiquity, coloniality and post coloniality of female stereotypes becomes an imploring research inquiry in the context of the Ndebele literature. It is against this backdrop, that the current study fills the research gap of the long overdue comprehensive work which problematises gender through female stereotype, as a heuristic construct, a measure of development and social engineering tool. Most studies that have been carried out on the novel - such as those by Gaidzanwa (1985), Berndt (2005), Furusa (2006), Mguni (2006) and Hadebe (2006) – lay more emphasis on the representation of women during the colonial period. Mguni (2006) and Furusa (2006), among others, highlight the positive roles that women play in Zimbabwean society. Furusa (2006:4) asserts that, “colonialism bracketed women into the roles of wife and mother with her staging area being the kitchen”, suggesting that before the advent of colonialism, males and females related well and their worldview and gender relations were only destroyed by colonial structures.

These studies have presented a one-dimensional picture of gender relations, with men and women playing gender roles in which they are comfortable, suggesting that patriarchal structures do not affect women negatively. This monolithic approach to gender does not allow for self-awareness and positive change in society, as people continue to blame external forces, ignoring the internal forces that continue to threaten gender relations in the society and the nation at large. Female participation in national developmental processes is unthinkable outside the context of their representation in a society. So, the fact that novels rehearse the experiential realities of communities makes them reliable sources for establishing and interrogating female stereotypes in the quest to critique and correct the misrepresentation of women.

1.3 Aim of the study

The aim of the study is to establish and interrogate the different gender stereotypes accorded to women in different historical dispensations in Zimbabwe’s Ndebele fiction.

1.3.1 Research objectives

This research seeks to:

1. Examine the representation of women in selected Ndebele novels from the pre-colonial to the post-colonial historical epochs.
2. Interrogate the stereotypes that can be deduced from the representation of women in selected novels.
3. Analyse the dynamics that influence the novelists' depiction of women in pre-colonial, colonial and post-colonial socio-historical contexts.
4. Evaluate the ramifications of stereotypes on gender discourse in Zimbabwean literature.

1.3.2 Research Questions

The study answers the following questions:

1. How are women represented in selected Ndebele novels from the pre-colonial to the post-colonial historical epochs?
2. Which stereotypes can be deduced from the representation of women in the selected novels?
3. Which dynamics influence the novelists' depiction of women in pre-colonial, colonial and post-colonial socio-historical contexts?
4. How do stereotypes affect gender discourses in Zimbabwean literature?

1.4 Research justification

This research is carried out against the background that although there is a growing corpus of work on gender, no systematic studies have been carried out on stereotypes associated with women in Ndebele language fiction from 1975-2016. The study contributes to this growing corpus of representation of women by giving a holistic approach to the issue of stereotypes by traversing various historical periods in the country's history in Ndebele language fiction from 1975-2016.

In the study of women in the pre-colonial to the post-colonial setting, the researcher adopts the socio-historic approach. Even though this approach has been deployed by many literary scholars over the years it is relevant to this study, as it tracks the changing representations of women as a result of the prevailing socio-historical circumstances in Zimbabwe. These representations span different periods in the country's history, namely, the pre-colonial period, the colonial period, the war of liberation (second *Chimurenga*) and the 1999-2008 decade of crisis. The study, therefore, traces the stereotypical representations used in the narratives and how they change over time as they are influenced by socio-historical circumstances. The study's use of the socio-historic approach to female gender representations in the form of stereotypes is something that Berndt (2005:57) acknowledges that her study does not:

Although I do not want to measure the impact of political and cultural developments on literature, I assume that there is an effect... Yet this study has no socio-historical character....

The study also differs from Berndt's (2005) because it examines Ndebele language fiction, whilst Berndt's examines novels and short stories written in English by Zimbabwean writers. Focusing on novels and short stories written in English only would not be fully representative of the imaginative expressions of the diverse cultural works which exist in Zimbabwe.

Previous studies such as Hadebe's (2006) focus on the portrayal of urban women in a specific period, based on Makhalisa's (1977b) play *Umhlaba Lo!* The current study draws insight from Hadebe's study about how colonial rule affected women in both the rural and urban environments. Hadebe focuses narrowly on how colonialism affected women, ignoring patriarchal stances that have always held women down, seemingly ignoring that colonialism might have reinforced structures that already existed in Ndebele society. This study is not merely confined to one historical period but stretches from 1975-2016 to give a clear view of the development of different gender-based stereotypes of women in Ndebele society and how selected writers respond to political, religious, social and economic factors impinging on the overall depiction of gender stereotypes in Ndebele.

Previous studies carried out on women such as Furusa (2006) have focused their attention on external imperialist forces and downplayed internal forces that can influence and reshape adjacent indigenous cultures. Such studies have been somewhat silent on internal political issues

such as the Economic Structural Adjustment Programme (ESAP) and the decade of crisis 1999-2008, which had a serious impact on gender relations in Ndebele society. This study, therefore, calls for a broader and more inclusive examination of the depiction of roles of women, as projected by writers from 1975-2016.

The current research, therefore, helps change the mindset of both readers and educators of literature on gender-based stereotypes. This can be achieved by adopting a holistic approach to the issue of female gender stereotypes through focusing on both external forces and internal forces that continue to affect women so that emancipation of women is achieved. Stereotypes are detrimental to women's progress in society and thus a holistic approach is needed in order to help curb stereotypes in society. In the study of stereotypes the research makes an intervention and exerts influence in discussions taking place on women's empowerment and emancipation.

1.5 Definition of key terms

Gender- "a social construction of masculinity and femininity." Dover (2005:174)

Woman - an adult human female.

Representation - "use of language, of signs and images which stand for or represent things." Hall (1997:1)

Stereotype - "the label of groups of people with generalised and oversimplified characteristics." Rabichev (1996:100).

Masculinity- societal attributes and behaviours characteristic of males.

Femininity- societal attributes and behaviours characteristic of females.

Culture - "philosophy as lived and celebrated in a particular society." P'Bitek (1986:16)

Colonial - a period when Zimbabwe was under British rule (the period before 1980)

Post-colonial - a period after Zimbabwe gained political rule from British rule (a period after 1980)

Patriarchy - a society where men hold power and exploit women.

1.6 Literature review

Literary texts present a prism through which diverse phenomena in human societies may be observed. The stereotyping of women is not exclusive to Zimbabwean Ndebele language literature as there are similar tendencies in Shona language literature. In this section, the perspectives from African and non-African scholars on stereotypes are reviewed before the focus narrows down to the Zimbabwean and Ndebele experiences, as presented by some Ndebele language literary critics. The type of literature reviewed focuses on women's roles in the pre-colonial period, colonial and post-colonial and how these roles have changed over time due to political and economic reasons. The literature also focuses on works written by scholars in Africa, outside Africa and in Zimbabwe in particular. Particular focus is given on how women are portrayed in various spaces that is, the domestic space, work and politics. Critical works also depict how issues to do with colonialism affected male and female relations.

1.6.1 World perspectives on the condition of women

Steen (1981), writing about European and African stereotypes in twentieth-century fiction, makes observations on the relationship between the coloniser and the colonised. She acknowledges that stereotypes are used by the dominant group to satirise the dominated group, causing divisions between the coloniser and the colonised, and resulting in the alienation of the latter. The current study is somehow similar to the previous one in its focus on stereotypes, which finds that stereotypes can also serve as a device which creates distance between men and women, as they are labelled differently.

Glazer (1981) produces a historical analysis in the United States of the factors that led to NOW movement (National Organisation for Women's rights); which was established in the 1960s' in response to the perceived invisibility and oppression of women in professional activities. This movement was supported by the international church communities of feminist scholars. This study is of use to the present study and maintains the same aim of tackling issues concerning women. This study also focuses on the various factors leading to the creation and validation of stereotypes relating to women depicted in Ndebele novels in various historical periods.

Lisa (2002) writes about the various representations of women in contemporary fiction by South Asian women. She highlights how women are socialised from a tender age to a marriageable age

to become good citizens by being custodians of their cultures. The previous study is useful to the current one as it highlights points of convergence in that there are some of the cultural roles that continue to affect the representation of women. The current study differs from Lisa's (2002) study as it not only focuses on the representation of women in contemporary fiction but also in pre-colonial and colonial settings in Ndebele novels, establishing the various stereotypes associated with women who also divert from these cultural roles.

Mandelbaum (1986) writes about the different sex roles and gender relations in Northern India. She notes that women are subordinate to their male counterparts as they do not actively participate in conversations with men and keep their gaze lowered in the presence of men. Of note is that women were encouraged to respect men and this was not always reciprocated by their male counterparts, who could behave as they pleased. What is striking is the fact that the same scenario occurs in Ndebele context, as reflected in the saying '*indoda yinhloko yomuzi*', which denotes men as commanding respect in the home. Failure by women to show men respect in the home earns women negative stereotypical labels such as '*amaqhalaqhala*' 'the one who is hot headed'. The present study differs from Mandelbaum's as it focuses on women and the stereotypes; they are accorded in different historical periods in Ndebele language fiction.

1.6.2 African perspectives on women and their lives

Dipio (2008), writing about the Ugandan experiences and the Malian people and their art, highlights that gender stereotypes can be reinforced in folktales and performances. She notes that in these performances and folktales the mother as the custodian and primary transmitter of societal values is bestowed with this natural tendency to nurture. This study acknowledges that the same tendencies are found in Ndebele society, as reflected in the proverb *izambane liquntwa kunina* (a nut is usually harvested by being plucked from its mother). The mother is regarded as the source of life because she raises the child in a culturally acceptable manner. The present study highlights similarities with the previous one, in which women are in the domestic space, performing their gender obligations by taking care of their husbands and children in selected novels. This study differs from the previous one, as it further identifies that women who step out of line are stereotyped negatively, and thus different stereotypes have emerged owing to the changing role of the woman, as depicted in Ndebele novels within a colonial and post-colonial setting.

Tumusiime (2012) focuses on the representations of women by male artists in Uganda in the contemporary period, where she sees the representation of women as a tool to establish men's power and superiority over women. She offers various representations of women during the pre-colonial period and colonial period, where women in the public space are depicted as agents of immorality and disease. This she sees as a strategy to validate certain ideologies about a particular gender in society. The current study benefits from the previous one as it notes, as the previous study does, that representation is informed, by and large, by cultural and political ideologies which are pursued for a particular reason, that of undermining women. The ongoing study diverges from the previous one as it seeks to focus on stereotypes in particular as a form of representation and how writers in Ndebele language fiction represent women in various historical periods (1975-2016).

1.6.3 Zimbabwean perspectives on the condition of women

Weiss (1986), writing about the Zimbabwean experience, is of the view that during the pre-colonial period, women occupied the position of the subject and not object, as they contributed meaningfully to the political, economic and social wellbeing of the entire family. The current research bears similarities with the previous one in its focus on the representation of women in the pre-colonial period but is not confined to this period only but also extends to the colonial and post-colonial period. The present study notes that with political, cultural and economic changes, women's position in the family and the society at large could not remain static. Hence the study's intention to analyse stereotypes accorded to women during different historical periods.

Nyathi (1994) makes reference to the roles played by the king's wives in issues of governance in ruling the kingdom in pre-colonial Ndebele society. He reveals, for example, that Mzilikazi's wives, who lived in different places, served principally as advisors and also as the king's informants. Nyathi's study is relevant to the present study as it identifies some of the roles that women played in pre-colonial Ndebele society. While Nyathi focuses on the roles that royal women played in the pre-colonial period, the current research goes a step further in depicting the different stereotypes associated with women in different historical periods.

Matshakayile-Ndlovu, Ndlovu and Sodindwa-Ncube's (1995) study of the different traditions and customs practised and celebrated by the Ndebele starts by defining who the Ndebele are and

tracing their origins. The authors detail how a home was started, how a child was raised, and the different ways of marrying. The focus of these writers is to depict how these cultural practices affect the lives of the Ndebele as a people. Their study, which focuses on the collective culture of the Ndebele, accords little visibility to gender, which the current study explores. Their study is narrow in its focus on nation building, ethnic identities and how the Ndebele came to be what they are today.

Musiyiwa and Matshakayile-Ndlovu (2005) examine ethnic stereotypes in Shona and Ndebele culture; unravelling the different stereotypes associated with Shona and Ndebele people, as depicted in different novels. Musiyiwa and Matshakayile (2005: 77) observe that while the Shona are depicted “as peaceful, the Ndebele are portrayed as highly militarised and aggressive...”. The current study benefits from the previous study, which has a marked interest in stereotypes. Where the above-mentioned scholars depict stereotypes within ethnic groups in Zimbabwe and how stereotypes affect the relationship of these ethnic identities, with a particular focus on the male gender, as representative of both Shona and Ndebele society, the present study focuses specifically on female gender stereotypes in Ndebele fiction and how these stereotypes affect the overall depiction of women in Ndebele society.

Musiyiwa and Chirere (2007) analyse the stereotypical images of fatherhood and motherhood in pre-colonial and colonial times. They note that fatherhood is associated with family responsibilities and leadership in the family. It can be argued from this basis that such stereotypes adversely affected women who assume the role of ‘father figures’, giving rise to such terms as *umazakhela* (a woman who built her own home), a Ndebele term used to deride single women, because society has attributed responsibility for, and leadership in, the household to males rather than females. The assignment of such terms to women only reveals a belief, within Ndebele culture, in strictly defined gender roles. The previous study is useful to the current one, which traces the source of cultural stereotypes, focusing mainly on stereotypes accorded to women in different historical periods, following the ever-changing and different roles assigned to men and women in society.

Ranger (1993:2) writes about cultural change because of colonialism and notes that with the coming of colonialism, “some customs ceased to evolve”. It is a fact that the performance space of women before the advent of colonialism was less restricted, as women were not completely

tied down to the home, working in the fields and making an economic contribution within the household. It is for this reason that scholars such as Furusa (2006:4), who have a romantic view of pre-colonial Africa and its treatment of women, blame colonialists for distorting gender relations. It is worth noting that colonialism reinforced pre-existing ideologies of gender in colonial Africa, because even though women were able to provide for the family, the man had sole charge of the household wealth, which was based on cattle, whilst women were responsible for domestic chores and taking care of the children. This study benefits from the previous ones by acknowledging that cultural transition took place as a result of colonialism, but interrogating further how this affected representations of women in changing circumstances, as depicted in Ndebele novels, (1975-2016).

Schmidt (1992) and Jeater (1993) examine the movement of women from the rural to the urban environment in Shona and Ndebele societies respectively as well as the passed laws used to control women during the colonial period. They argue that most of the women who went to the city and occupied 'men's' space were stereotyped as prostitutes or accused of committing adultery. In taking measures to deter such transgressive behaviour, colonial legislation was harsher on women than it was on men. Most Ndebele language writers in the 1970s associated rural women with purity, whilst urban women were associated with immorality. This study benefits from the works of Schmidt (1992) and Jeater (1993) as they lay bare the factors that led to the stereotyping of women in urban spaces. It can therefore be noted that women who digressed from traditional roles of mothers and wives were labelled negatively. This study looks at the pre-colonial, colonial and post-colonial setting, focusing not only on external forces but also on internal forces that have always affected women and the stereotypes generated in these different historical periods.

Bull-Christiansen (2004: 23) discusses writers, such as Yvonne Vera, who write out of a colonial condition. Although the present study benefits from Bull-Christiansen's, which notes how colonialism affected women, it is not confined to the colonial tradition, as it analyses works written out of a post-colonial tradition, tracing the representation in stereotypes in different historical periods of Zimbabwean history.

Gaidzanwa (1985) focuses on the portrayal of female characters in Shona, Ndebele and English literature, examining different images of women, including the portrayal of women as career

women and father figures. Gaidzanwa's study is of relevance to the current one as it identifies some of the images accorded to women during the colonial period. The present study differs from Gaidzanwa's as it concentrates on stereotypes of women and is not restricted to a single historical period but traverses different historical epochs.

Hadebe (2006) analyses the portrayal of urban women, noting that women were depicted as immoral during the colonial period. The present study draws insights from Hadebe's study in terms of how colonial rule affected women in both rural and urban environments. It is not merely confined to one period, but stretches from 1975 to 2016, to have a clear view of different stereotypes accorded to women in different historical circumstances.

Matshakayile-Ndlovu (2006) analyses literary works written by women and how they perpetuate stereotypes about Ndebele women. He examines novels such as *Lifile* and *Bantu Behadlana* by O.S. Mlilo. The current study differs from Matshakayile-Ndlovu's study as it not only focuses on the position of women but also on the different stereotypes accorded to them across time and space. Hadebe's (2006) study and Matshakayile-Ndlovu's (2006) study are striking in their marked interest in the depiction of women in the colonial period, even though they focus on one or two books, which does not allow for conclusive insights to be drawn, since there are different stereotypes perpetuated by Ndebele language writers. The present study differs from the previous one as the present one focuses on several books published by both male and female authors in different historical periods, allowing for a comprehensive investigation of stereotypes perpetuated by Ndebele language writers both during the colonial and post-colonial periods.

Muchemwa and Muponde (2007) observe that continuous change in societies has resulted in more flexible role playing for men and women both in the workplace and at home. There are no longer fixed roles for men and women, as women, by becoming international migrant labourers while men are left at home, assume the 'roles of men'. This study argues that women who assume the roles of 'men' are accorded negative stereotypical images and labels. Labels such as *omazakhela*, given to 'women who decide to live without a man', suggest that Ndebele and Shona societies do not seem to fully appreciate that women can be self-sustaining individuals who can survive without the assistance of men. Muchemwa and Muponde's study is beneficial for the current one in its depiction of the complexities of the post-colonial period, in which

women are no longer confined to the home. The current study focuses on Ndebele novels and the stereotypes generated in different historical periods, as depicted in Ndebele novels.

Berndt (2005) opines that the identity of men and women is constantly being negotiated as it is a continuous process that is never complete. Berndt's study is of relevance to the current one as it highlights how representations of women continuously change as circumstances in the economic and political sphere change. This study argues that as diverse cultural identities emerge, so do varying stereotypes within spatial and temporal frameworks, and an examination of these stereotypes in Ndebele literature during various historical periods is essential.

Muwati, Gambahaya and Chabata (2013) analyse the novel *Highway Queen*, focusing on the mothering role of the character Sophie during the period of economic hardships (the so-called "decade of crisis"). The study by Muwati et al., brings to the fore the fact that it is not only the man who is capable of being the breadwinner in the family, as Sophie fulfils this role by selling goods and through prostitution. The present study draws insights from the one by Muwati et al., on the role of women in the home and family at large and the position of women in the post-colonial period. The current study, however, focuses on more than one novel and the stereotypes accorded to women in Ndebele novels from the colonial to the post-colonial period.

Muwati, Mguni, Gwekwerere and Magosvongwe (2012) present a collection of essays on gender, assuming an Africana Womanist perspective in their approach to gender issues, representing the positive male-female relations that existed even before colonialism. The previous study is of use to the present one as it reveals the relations that existed between men and women prior to colonialism, which constitutes one of the focal points of this research. The current study differs as it focusses on Ndebele novels using African feminism in different historical periods, and in particular the various stereotypes that emerge during these different historical periods.

Ndlovu (2011) studies the family, which shapes overall gender relations in society. He studies the presentation of the family in Mungoshi's work, arguing that it is crucial to understanding macro institutional forces that have shaped and continue to shape gender relations in Zimbabwe. The present study benefits from Ndlovu's study as context, space and history are central points in both. It takes the view that the family – be it nuclear, single parent or extended family – shapes

gender relations in society, since there are specific roles for males and females as they grow up in it, and this later shapes and perpetuates stereotypes within society. The present study is not confined to the family, but extends to society as a whole, highlighting that it is not only family but also patriarchal structures that have a bearing on female gender representations.

Moyana (1988) draws an analysis of selected novels from East Africa and Zimbabwe, noting that the economic base of the traditional, colonial and post-colonial periods had a direct influence on the position of African women. The current study identifies similarities with this research, but goes further to interrogate how diverse political, social and economic factors influence the different depictions of women. It is concerned with how women are stereotyped by various Ndebele authors in Ndebele literature, whilst the major thrust of Moyana's study is on the diverse roles of African women in general. The current study presents the counter argument that women's changing role did not impact positively on society in general, as evidenced by the numerous stereotypes that emerged as a result of their changing roles. In the different historical periods considered, women were no longer merely housewives but became career women and freedom fighters, fighting shoulder to shoulder with their male counterparts during the liberation struggles.

In view of the foregoing discussion, it is argued that an examination of the representations of women in Ndebele literature is not only overdue, but indeed relevant, if the discursive space for women in Zimbabwe in particular, and in Africa in general are to be opened up, to promote their emancipation and eradicate gender discrimination.

1.7 Conceptual framework

The research adopts the Socio-historic approach and African Feminism. Foregrounding socio-historic perspectives in this study allows for a comprehensive interpretation of the selected novels, uncovering embedded historical and social elements relating to gender, its construction and representation. Some scholars who subscribe to the social nature of literature are Hegtvedt (1991) and Pereira (1975). In the socio-historic approach, it is argued that every literature bears the stamp of its age, as it has an operational context, being influenced as it is by social, historic, economic and political issues in which the literature is produced.

In the same line of thought, Mannheim (1955:134) argues:

[s]ocial structures (or in the case of the socio-historic approach, social processes containing structures) are self contained entities with lives of their own which largely determine both the behaviour and consciousness of the individual human beings within their orbit. Marx, says, ‘the essence of man is no abstraction dwelling within the isolated individual. Actually it is the totality of his social relations’.

Irele (1981:5) points out, concerning the socio-historic approach, that it:

[a]ttempts to correlate the work of art to the social background to see how the author’s intention and attitude issue out of the wider context of his art in the first place and, more important still, to get to an understanding of the way each writer or each group of writers capture a moment of historical consciousness of the society.

The socio-historic approach would help to trace the experiences of women and societal issues affecting the representation of women in Ndebele language fiction, as depicted and reflected in the narrative. White (1978: ix) argues that the narrative can be used “to represent real events”. Hodgson and McCurdy (2000:3) argue that “being a man or a woman has everything to do with the history and the culture of a people”. From McCurdy’s submission we learn that gender is a social construct, which refers to those acceptable modes of behaviour that a particular society has set down for its men and women. In most societies, there is rigidity in role playing, such that one can conclude that there is a close link between the socially constructed roles of men and women and the stereotypes that are associated with these roles. Once a woman or man behaves in a manner that goes against societal expectations of gender orientation, they are very likely to be labelled or stereotyped.

Muchemwa and Muponde (2007: xv) argue that “gender discourses in Zimbabwe traditionally inhabit essentialist spaces from which emerge descriptions and distinctions that stress ideologically infected binaries, polarities and exclusions”. Stereotypes, therefore, emerge from socially constructed roles, and gender stereotypes in this study are considered to be evolving from typical male and female roles or characteristics. In most societies, roles are divided based on sex.

To fully appreciate the literary construction and representation of women in the selected literary works written in Ndebele, the present study is also informed by the African feminist theory. While some societies, such as the Tonga society, are matrilineal, Ndebele society is patriarchal,

which could be one of the reasons why Ndebele authors depict women as subordinate to men. African feminist theory advances the view that unlike other types of feminism such as radical feminism, men are not the enemy, but the “subordination and oppression of women is” (Steady, 1981:50). This theory identifies the system - be it colonialism, neo-colonialism, social attitudes and patriarchal structures - as the cause of the problems faced by African women. Steady (1981:50) defines African feminists as a group of women who believe that “through theory and practice, women are going to be rediscovered in the social arena, through the creation of social transformations”.

Even though African feminism has come under criticism from different gender movements, this study applies those aspects of African feminism that are relevant, such as those relating to ‘social transformation’. African feminism has come under criticism from Hudson-Weems (2004:23), who feels that the terminology of the theory is too similar to that of European feminism. Even though Africana Womanism advances an African agenda in gender issues, its major weakness is that it places in the forefront “race and class issues before the ‘absurd’ notions of female subjugation” (Hudson-Weems, 2004:23). Unlike Africana Womanism, African feminism is “purposefully detached from the notions of race and class to avoid arguments in pre-colonial times that African women had equal access to resources like men and that authentic African culture and tradition did not oppress women”. “African feminists feel the need to expose gender inequalities that existed in Africa before colonialism and slavery”. (Goredema, 2009:36). Nicolaidis (2015:203) agrees with Goredema as she notes that, “African women need to expose the flaws that existed in their societies and cultures”. It is the need to keep women in the domestic arena through the naturalisation of ‘roles and duties’ that becomes a cause for concern as women who act against these naturalized roles become stereotyped. McFadden (2016:2) refers to this as, “the incarceration of women through normalised roles”.

What is therefore interesting about African feminism, as compared to Africana Womanism, is the binary nature of the theory. The term ‘African’ identifies it with Africa, the location of the novels, while ‘feminism’ refers to a movement set to position women in all spheres, be it the workplace and the home. African feminism relates African women’s issues to their social experiences and goes on to present alternatives that “improve women’s situations” (Oyekan, 2014:8)

The existence of different types of feminisms within the broad area of gender studies is proof (Ogundipe-Leslie, 1994) that women all over the world have diverse experiences. Major voices in African feminism are Steady (1981), Arndt 2002, Nnaemeka (2004), Goredema (2009), McFadden (2016), Oyekan (2014) and Nicolaidis (2015). Ogundipe-Leslie (1994: vii) is of the view that “African feminism is about women, therefore about the world in its diversity of problematic oppressions and representations”. The binary nature of ‘African feminism’ has been misunderstood by some scholars, who are of the view that, “feminism is unAfrican” (Dosekun, 2007:41). This scholar sees the need to “move beyond the discourse of African authenticity and inauthenticity, to radically shift the terms of the debate. What should be of concern to us as Africans is less the origins of a theory or practice, but its potential relevance and benefit to us”.

This study advances the view that the liberation of women would result in the liberation of the entire society and that social attitudes are subject to change if society develops a positive attitude. Ogundipe-Leslie (1994:14) observes that some schools of thought argue that there is no need for the African woman to be liberated because she has never been in bondage. If this is indeed the case, where are the stereotypes and the gender imbalances and labels emanating from? Ogundipe-Leslie identifies six insurmountable challenges faced by women of colour: oppression from outside (colonialism and neo-colonialism); oppression from traditional patriarchal structures; their backwardness (attributable, in, part, to neocolonialism); men; the colour of their skin and themselves.

Having noted that women all over the world have different concerns, Ogundipe-Leslie sees it plausible to give African feminism a new designation, Stiwanism, an acronym standing for “Social Transformation Including Women in Africa”. Ogundipe-Leslie (1994) is of the view that there is a need to include women in the social transformation of Africa, as do scholars like Tegomoh (2002), who argue that women must know how to negotiate for change within a given social context. The present study uses African feminism because it is relevant and seeks to unite African men and women under one agenda of social transformation. Arndt (2000:3) advances the view that, “African feminists view gender relationships in the context of other political, economic, cultural and social forms and mechanisms of oppression”. They see the need for social transformation in line with changing social realities, viewing women beyond the traditional roles assigned to them. Masuku (2005:46) is of the view that African feminism must include issues

relating to “society, nation and her continent”, since these factors contribute to the representation of women in different spaces.

1.8 Research methodology

1.8.1 Research design

Methodologically, this study adopts a qualitative approach. Borg and Gall (1989) note that “the qualitative approach is descriptive; it is analytical and interpretive as it focuses on the depth of information as opposed to breadth”. The qualitative approach helps in examining stereotypes depicted by the author and the motive behind them. Creswell (2014:13) highlights that “the historical origin for qualitative research comes from anthropology, sociology, the humanities and evaluation”. This research, therefore, analyses different stereotypes accorded to women in different historical periods in selected novels written by both male and female authors. Although they are by no means exhaustive in terms of the general stereotyping in Ndebele literature, they constitute a representative sample. The qualitative approach helps in the analysis of the factors that influenced authors in their gendered approaches in the novels under discussion. Heyink and Tymstra (1993:293) note that research is called qualitative if it is about determining “what things exist” rather than determining how many such things are. Kumar (2014:104) notes that, the main focus in qualitative research is to “understand, explain, explore, discover and clarify situations, feelings, perceptions, attitudes, values, beliefs, and experiences of a group of people”. Such an approach is relevant in the analysis of societal views regarding the representation of women and the reasons why certain stereotypes are accorded to women and not men and in certain instances, the factors that influence change in certain stereotypes. Thus, this study adopts a qualitative approach, which is ‘open-ended’ so that people in the field can give various responses and societal values and attitudes that lead to the gender stereotyping of women in selected novels.

1.8.2 Case study

The research utilised seven literary works of art and this is the case study. Kumar (2014:126) notes that a case study could be an individual, a group, a community, an instance, an episode, an extent, a subgroup of a population, a town or a city. In this study the novels under study were carefully selected, across the gender divide and each historical period selected, that is, pre-colonial, colonial and post-colonial setting. Kumar (2014) argues that a case study is an approach

in which a particular instance or a few carefully selected cases are studied intensively. The novels also depict various gender representations of women and stereotypes generated from various forms of representation.

1.8.3 Population sample

This study is a textual analysis of both male and female authored novels ranging from 1975-2016. The research uses seven literary works of art. Cutting over the gender divide and a focus on different historical periods that are, from the pre-colonial setting over to the post-colonial settings gives an in-depth study on stereotypes in Ndebele fiction. The choice of different historical periods in Zimbabwean history gives enough room for different gender stereotypes that changed or did not change over time.

Three literary critics were interviewed; they were chosen to participate on the assumption that they have read the novels at high school and university level and are likely to be able to identify the different stereotypes accorded to women and the reasons why women and men have such stereotypes in Ndebele society. Of the seven authors of the texts that were analysed, two authors were interviewed since some of the authors were unreachable and others have passed on.

1.8.4 Non-probability sampling

In non-probability sampling, participants are not randomly selected to participate in a study. The novels that were chosen for the case study were those written by prominent writers in Ndebele society, and some of them have won awards. These novels are currently being studied by students at secondary school and university level. They were selected because several people have read or are familiar with them.

1.8.5 Purposive sampling

Karmel and Jain (1987:52) argue that “a sample design aims to provide a sampling scheme that uses the available information most effectively to produce estimates of population parameters”. In this study, the researcher interacted specifically with literary critics and authors of the novels. Tongco (2007:147) avers that, “the purposive sampling technique also called judgement sampling is the deliberate choice of an informant due to the qualities the informant possesses”. The authors of the novels and literary critics were interviewed solely because of the knowledge

on Ndebele literature and stereotypes accorded to women in various historical periods. Such a sampling approach saves time as merely approaching people who have not read the novels would not give the best results. In this case literary critics would be in a position to comment on the various representations of women and the impact of this fiction in Ndebele society and gender development at large.

1.8.6 Research instruments

i) Interviews

Interviews were carried out with authors of the novels (where possible) to gather information about the different representations of women in Ndebele fiction. A selected number of lecturers who have read Ndebele novels and who are literary critics were interviewed. They were asked how stereotypes have negatively or positively impacted Zimbabwean society and gender discourse at large. Magwa and Magwa (2015:72) argue, “that an interview is a powerful means of obtaining information and gaining insights into people’s behaviours, beliefs and attitudes”. Interviews helped in the interrogation of stereotypes levelled against women in novels and also made it possible for interviewees to relate these stereotypes in our day-to-day experiences.

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with the authors and literary critics of novels to get a glimpse of whether space and time have negatively or positively affected the representation of women. Examining the way in which selected novels inscribe themselves in the continuum of Zimbabwean literature written in English, Ndebele and Shona ultimately allow for the consideration of lacunae in relevant scholarship and how they are filled.

ii) Desk research

The study examines the different gender stereotypes accorded to women in different historical periods. For this reason, different texts related to gender were consulted. Textbooks that look at gender from an African cultural perspective and textbooks on stereotypes were consulted.

The agenda on African women’s issues for development has been perpetuated by scholars of African descent, who view patriarchy as the main obstacle impeding the development of women. They suggest how the overall issues of gender disparity within the African context can be resolved. The study considered it important to consult major canons of gender from an African

perspective since the novels under study depict the African and Ndebele way of life. Major African feminists consulted include Ogunديpe-Leslie (1994), Steady (1981), Arndt 2002, Nnaemeka (2004), Goredema (2009), McFadden (2016), Oyekan (2014) and Nicolaides (2015).

1.9. Scope of the study and chapter layout

The study focuses on female gender stereotypes in selected Ndebele novels written by both men and women from 1975-2016. The study interrogates through the socio-historic approach and African Feminism the stereotypes accorded to women by selected authors in novels written from 1975-2016 and the impact of these stereotypes on the emancipation of women and development of literature at large.

Structurally, this research comprises of six chapters. Chapter one provides the **Introduction** to the research, which consists of the background to the study, statement of the problem, aim of the study, justification of the study, the literature review, the theoretical framework, the research methodology and the scope of the study. The **Literature review** is the second chapter, the **Methodology** is the third chapter, the **Theoretical framework** is the fourth chapter, the fifth chapter is the **Data presentation and analysis** and the sixth chapter is the **Conclusion**.

1.10 Ethical considerations

Kumar (2014:241) argues that, “all professions are guided by a code of ethics that has evolved over the years to accommodate the changing ethos, values, needs, expectations of those who hold a stake in the professions”. Most professions have an overall code of conduct that also governs the way they carry out research.

The Collins Dictionary (1979:502) has it that ethical means “under principles of conduct are considered correct, especially those of a given profession or group”. This research did not cause any harm in any way to the participants, who were told that the purpose of the research was to research on novels produced within the period 1975-2016 and perceptions about a particular gender and how it is portrayed in the novels. The participants however were free to withdraw anytime from the study if they so wished. In this study, the interviews carried out with the participants were done at their informed consent, which, as Bailey (1978:384) notes, is probably the most common method in medical and social research.

1.11 Conclusion

This chapter outlined the major concerns of this research. The background, the aim, objectives and justification of the research have been discussed. The research methods and theories used in the study have also been highlighted. Definitions of key words and ethical considerations have also been outlined in this chapter. The scope of this study has also been brought to the fore. What has also been discussed is the critical literature that has been accumulating over the years in different historical periods in different continents on gender representations and stereotypes. The chapter sets the stimulus for the analysis of female gender stereotypes in this study.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Introduction

This chapter undertakes a review of relevant literature. Even though the present study focuses primarily on Ndebele novels, this review of existing scholarship considers works that are pertinent to understanding how stereotypes are constructed in different social contexts. Since there are multiple stereotypes about femininity, to better understand them, the chapter reviews literature on the representation of women in the adverts, fictional works, politics and domestic spaces. Such a review generally allows for an understanding of stereotypes associated with women from a global perspective, an African perspective and a Zimbabwean perspective.

The issue of time in the study of stereotypes about females is of paramount importance, as time determines the prevailing stereotypes in various historical epochs within pre-colonial, colonial and post-colonial settings. Tracing the development of these stereotypes makes it possible to ascertain whether there is any change or continuity in these stereotypes, which impact the development of Ndebele literature as a whole and the emancipation of women in particular. Since Ndebele literature, which is the focus of this study, is located in Africa, it is also important to trace the historical position of African people from the lenses of Western scholars to understand how this eventually gave rise to some of the stereotypes accorded to men and women in Africa in general and Ndebele society in particular. Even though this study specifically focuses on women, it is important to consider instances in which men are stereotyped to get a better understanding of stereotypes of women.

2.2 Stereotypes about Africa

This section presents an overview of the stereotypes associated with Africa from a historical perspective. Stereotypes are not only gendered but are also shaped by race and class and Said (1979:38) writes about the production of the Orient, politically, sociologically, ideologically and imaginatively, noting that “Orientals or Arabs are shown to be gullible, devoid of energy and initiative”. In a way, the perspective of the Orient is evident in the creation and validation of stereotypes about it. Said (1979:76) argues that, “orientalism is the Western attention to the Near

East through academic study, imaginative literature and commerce, and all this attention to non - Western societies reveal the cultural role played by the West". It is worth noting that the Western views about the Orient put Orientals in a compromising position as they are viewed as uncivilised and barbaric in comparison with their Western counterparts. Even though Said's study is not directly related to the representation of Africans, similar experiences can be drawn from it in terms of the way Africans were viewed by Westerners.

Steen (1981) asserts that, Africans were reduced to the level of primitive savages and silly children and when they happened to grow, could only develop to the level of large children. Dominant stereotypes about Africans in the colonial period were that they are "savages, silly or large children" (Steen, 1981:11). Steen (1981) refers to the civilisation of Africans, which did not include literature, art or science, but some atypical form of civilization peculiar to Africans alone. These are some of the judgments made by early travellers from the West when they first came into contact with Africa. In the same manner, Conrad (1995:3) in his fiction makes clear reference to his first contact with Africa and highlights that "we were wanderers on a pre-historic earth, on an earth that was the aspect of an unknown planet". Such negative stereotypes about the underdevelopment of Africa suggested that Africans were receivers rather than originators of knowledge and civilisation. Such a devaluation of Africans suggested that it was the Europeans who were to be valorised, making colonisation a necessary tool for civilising Africans (in terms of African religion, way of life, etc). Such stereotypes produce (d) and perpetuate (d) negative stereotypes about Africa. They, therefore, are not merely simple statements: they have power relations embedded in them since those who produce them are usually in a privileged position as compared to those to whom they refer. Stereotypes associating Africa with backwardness and filth have strong links with colonialism, during which blacks and everything about Africa were viewed in a negative light. Such writings highlight power struggles and the groups with less power tend to be subject to negative portrayals and numerous stereotypes formulated by the dominant group. A study on stereotypes about females is considered beneficial since women in Europe, Africa and Zimbabwe generally continue to be lowly ranked despite global efforts to promote gender equality and equity.

Even though the works cited above are not directly related to stereotypes about females, it goes a long way in informing the arguments that are raised in the present study, that those in power are

the ones who have a lot to say about their social and political subordinates. Likewise, the woman in Ndebele society occupies a low position within a hierarchy in which the man is viewed as *inhloko yomuzi* (the head of the house), which is decisive in the way that Ndebele women are viewed by Ndebele men. It is significant to note the stereotypes they are accorded in changing circumstances and various historical periods under study.

It can be argued that the stereotypes perpetuated by settlers created a platform for Africans to be controlled culturally. Africans were controlled in mines in Southern Africa, where new recreational activities were introduced to occupy the leisure time of black mine workers to control and reshape the thought patterns of urban and rural Africans. Badenhorst and Mather (1997:475) note, “that leisure activities differed across the boundaries of race, ethnicity, gender, class and age”. Sporting activities such as tennis and soccer “encouraged team spirit....music and cinema shows kept them indoors” Badenhorst and Mather (1997:476). Thus, the culture of the Africans was reshaped in the environment in the mines in Southern Africa which later translated to the social environment in general, and their leisure time was gendered and the way women spent their leisure time gave rise to stereotypes, which might explain some of the stereotypes associated with women during the colonial period, in instances where they spent most of the time outside drinking beer like their male counterparts. Badenhorst and Mathers’ (1997) study, therefore, depicts changes in cultures in Southern Africa.

Diagne, Mama, Melber and Nyamnjoh, (2001) argue that there is no group with a given monolithic, traditional identity, but rather only simple, unpredictable forces, which compose and recompose themselves all the time in history. This study acknowledges that culture is constantly changing through time and space. This study, however, focuses on how through changing circumstances women have been represented in the form of stereotypes. The study focuses on novels written in the period 1975-2016, examining what new images, both positive and negative, were created of women and how writers generally respond to these changes in their literary works of art.

Still on the study of African culture, Oyebade (1990), meanwhile, refers to the African-centred paradigm as a theory – which originated in the United States – that is concerned with the study of African experiences from an African perspective, with major Afrocentrist theorists including Molefi Kete Asante, Tsheloane Keto, Maulana Karenga and others. Oyebade sees the need to

study anything concerning Africa from an African perspective, and Africa as the point of departure for African studies. This has to be done in opposition to hegemonic Eurocentric theory, which places Europe at the centre of intellectual thought. As Oyebade (1990:234) argues:

[i]In the history of intellectual thought, the Eurocentric paradigm has often assumed a hegemonic universal character; European culture has placed itself at the centre of the social structure, becoming the reference point, or yardstick by which every culture is defined.

Just as Oyebade posits that Africa and African experiences are placed at the centre in anything concerning the study of African experiences, this study rejects gender theories that are not based on African experiences but is grounded in African feminism. African feminism rejects the balkanisation of women's experiences and validates non-hegemonic perspectives that capture the experiences of African women as concerning culture. The issue of cultural centredness is important as the theory speaks to these concerns under the various historical periods that this study considers, that is 1975-2016. Gender disparities and colonial experiences become central in the analysis of novels by male and female writers in different historical periods in Ndebele novels between 1975 and 2016.

Stereotypes carry social beliefs about a certain group whether real or imagined and are perpetuated by different factors, for example films, novels, plays, and power have been exercised based on stereotypes. Still on the view that Africa was primitive, by way of example, African religion has been negatively stereotyped as uncivilised and heathen. Reynolds (2010:467) writes about the way Africa is depicted in faith-based AMPP films that portray the encounter of early missionaries with Africans. He gives the example of the story of Bomba, which was the first film shot in Africa by the AMPP crew. The story is centred on a variant of the Mr Wise and the Mr Foolish morality trope, which was common to colonial film making throughout the Sub Sahara in the 1950s. In this story, the power of Western bio-medical success in healing the sick is foregrounded while the weaknesses of African medicinal practice are exposed. Such a depiction stereotypes Africans as being backward and lacking the ability to innovate or invent. Reynold (2010: 460) aptly observes that “such stereotypical images and perceptions have historically functioned as a central means of cultural subjugation”, and in this way, African culture is devalued through such stereotypical films, entrenching a culture of subordination where the

dominated – and in this case, the Africans and their medicine – are concerned. Reynolds’ (2010) study is of use to the current one, which highlights and provides insights into the dominant stereotypical images perpetuated by the dominant group.

Stam and Spence (1983:7) also write about colonialism and racism in films and how it is intertwined with representation in various spaces. They note that the language of the colonised was reduced to an incomprehensible jumble of background murmurs as “in films, native characters are consistently obliged to meet the coloniser on the colonisers” linguistic turf. Racism and colonialism sought to destroy the culture and memory of the colonised through the introduction of new languages and films portraying blacks in a negative light. Likewise, through the study of novels, we can trace and understand the stereotypes and the background against which these stereotypes about females are formed.

Traore (2004) also places media at the centre in the construction of images in a case study at Jackson school, where both African and African American students who regularly attend classes together are stereotyped the same way by the media in their school and home environments. He notes stereotypes associating Africans with the jungle and savagery. African American students are seen as “violent, disrespectful, unintelligent, hypersexual and threatening” Traore (2004:350). The African students are also subjected to the same stereotypes that have always oppressed their African American peers for many years. What is interesting is how African American and African students view each other: African Americans are of the view that Africans are primitive and ignorant, whereas Africans view African Americans as lazy and rude. From this study, it can be noted that the media plays a major role in the transmission of ideas associated with colonial ideology. Significantly, how stereotypes associating Africa with backwardness and the jungle are still prevalent, such viewpoints are relevant to the current study, where Ndebele authors, irrespective of their different backgrounds and genders, depict stereotypes which are somewhat condescending towards the female gender.

Paget (2012) narrates the story of the renowned anthropologist, Albert Schweitzer, who dedicated a greater part of his life to Africa, performing a “humanitarian task”. Paget (2012:281) notes that “out there in the colonies there is wretched Lazarus, the colonised folk, who suffers from illness and pain. The West, therefore, must assist Africa”. Paget (2012:290) also opines that

the African is a child of nature, who flourishes best in his village rather than away from it, by noting that:

[t]he negro thrives when he is under moral control of family and relatives...outside this sphere, he goes out of hand and easily goes to the bad, both morally and physically. The negro is lazy and unreliable.

Significantly, there were only negative stereotypes relating to African men and women, and negative stereotypes about Africa were not just statements as they were intended to control men and women. Verwey and Quayle (2012:566) are of the view that, “whiteness is not about race but power and privilege”. Under colonialism black men and women suffered, and women suffered more because of the double yoke of colonialism and patriarchy and this led to the perpetuation of negative images of women.

Lisenby (2014) writes about the stereotypes of the black male, even long after slavery. He opines that stereotypes are based on exaggerations and are never easy to put an end to. He talks of the way in which the negative image of blacks continues to influence the negative stereotypes associated with them to this day. As Lisenby (2014: 338) argues, [r]esidual elements of the slave-holding past shape the treatment of black male bodies in contemporary literary and artistic works”. In artistic works, for example, the black male body is satirised, Lisenby (2014: 330) argues that “the black male penis is substituted with metal blades which is a representation of the black body in the arts”. Lisenby (2014:330) points out that “men are stereotyped as hypersexual and violently threatening.” The major contribution from this study is that stereotypes tend to endure since they are continuously repeated and they play a major role in devaluing and marginalising a group of people. Bhabha (1994:3) argues, in this regard, that:

[i]t is the force of ambivalence engrained in stereotypes that ensures its repeatability in changing historical and discursive conjectures, informs its strategies of individuation and marginalisation, produces that effect of probabilistic truth and predictability which, for the stereotype, must always be in excess of what can be empirically proved or logically construed.

The major contribution of Bhabha’s study to the current one is that it highlights the fact that stereotypes are used for the sole purpose of exaggerating such that the stereotyped group is mocked, devalued and dominated. However, in as much as the current study focuses on stereotypes, its major thrust is on stereotypes relating to females and not males, as reflected in

Ndebele novels published from 1975-2016, establishing change or continuity in the various historical eras under study.

Still, on the issue of race, Pape (1990:717) focuses on the fear of black peril, which was a stereotype centred on solidifying “racial and gender differences and thereby constructing a white peril and male supremacist social order”. The black peril could be seen as a way of further oppressing African men and women. African men suspected of being in relationships with white women were severely punished, whilst European men who slept with African women were given light punishment or did so with impunity, leaving women powerless, abused and considered loose, even if they did not have the power to protest the injustice done to them. Pape (1990:717) recounts how[i]n 1912, a Ndebele chief had told a colonial official, that “there will never be peace between the black man and the white man until you give our women the protection you demand your own”. The unequal treatment of black and white women resulted in the overall negative image of Zimbabwean women during the colonial period, as they became associated with promiscuity and immorality. However, it is the protesting nature of African men that led the authorities to tighten their grip and punish African men. Allison and Shutt (2007) argue that native commissioners needed judicial power to prosecute insolent Africans who, if left unpunished, would undermine state and settler authority.

In another study on sexuality, Reid and Walker (2005) focus on stereotypes of sexuality in Africa, where sexuality in Africa is depicted more from the perspective of the observers than the observed. This can also be traced back to European hegemony and as these scholars opine, “the legacy of these stereotypes lingers to this day and is evident in the nature and focus of research on sexuality that has been undertaken in Africa” (Reid and Walker, 2005:186). The current study differs from this one as it focuses on stereotypes associated with women in different historical periods, from the pre-colonial to the post-colonial period, and not on sexuality per se, but rather on the continuous use of images that have developed into stereotypes in various places. The current study benefits considerably from the previous one as it outlines the legacy of stereotypes endures from time immemorial. It is therefore important to bring to the fore the history of racism and colonialism and how these continue to affect representations of black men and women in various societies during different historical periods.

2.3 Stereotypes about females: World perspectives

This section of the literature review focuses on world perspectives of stereotypes about females. It highlights the different tropes associated with women the world over such as women as mothers and cultural custodians. It focuses on how these sex roles develop from the home to the other areas of society in which women are located. Particular focus is placed on women and the domains of education, work, politics and how they are perceived in these spaces.

2.3.1 Review of representation of women as mothers and cultural custodians

In the study of the stereotypes about females, the female gender can also be referred to as women. There is a plethora of definitions of the term “woman”, which can be defined as an adult human female and can also refer to those identities that are biologically determined to be male although their gender identities are associated with femininity. Ndebele culture places significance on performativity, which goes beyond biological male and female identities. This is evident in terms such as *indodanfazi* (a masculine female) and *indoda ngamabhulugwe* literally meaning a man because he wears trousers, where attributes of weakness are associated with women. This study appreciates these various definitions of the term “woman” but aligns itself to the female gender from the point of view of biological sex and focus on gender stereotypes associated with women as projected in Ndebele novels from 1975-2016.

To represent something is to describe or depict it. Hall (1997:1) argues that, “representation means using language to say something meaningful.” Representations come in different forms, whether these are images, stereotypes or roles found in novels, films, drama and theatre. The study investigates the representation of women in the form of stereotypes in novels in Ndebele language fiction (1975-2016). By and large, representation is not an isolated field of enquiry, as it is not divorced from the cultural, economic and political context of the society under consideration. Moreover, representation serves different purposes, either to elevate or to degrade.

Where the issue of stereotypes is concerned, writers themselves can impose meaning on the world through a particular type of representation. Representation is all about meaning and Hall argues that all meanings are produced within a specific historical and cultural context. Hall’s study is useful to the current one as it tackles representation from a broad perspective, noting that just like stereotypes, representations relate by and large to the culture and history of the society

concerned. This study differs from that by Hall as it specifically looks at female gender stereotypes in Ndebele society and how they are projected by writers in different historical periods (1975-2016).

Still, on the representation of women, Lisa (2002) writes about the representation of women in contemporary fiction by South Asian women. She highlights the various representations of women and how they are socialised from a tender age to a marriageable age, with societal expectations being ingrained in her. They carry the burden of representation as they are burdened with the role of being pure and of being custodians of their cultures. What is of relevance to the current study is the idea that women carry the burden of representation, which is evident in the way they are castigated when they are found wanting morally and in the different scathing images by authors writing in the colonial period. Lisa (2002) also highlights the fact that the cultural and traditional roles of women continue to influence contemporary women (mother, woman and wife). She opines that in contemporary times, women try to rise above these gender stereotypes. As in the current study, stereotypes associated with women in contemporary times are also examined, as well as how they affect women's potential. The study also traces stereotypes from the pre-colonial setting to gain a better understanding of the evolution, if any, of stereotypes associated with women in different historical periods.

Wilfred and Miller (1998:1) are also of the view that "women are often required to carry the burden of representation, as they are constructed as the symbolic bearers of the collectivity's identity and honour...women, therefore, play crucial roles in society". Yuval-Davis (1997:6) shares this view, attesting that:

women are the ones who are given the social role of intergenerational transmitters of cultural traditions, customs, songs, cuisine and of course the mother tongue and instead of being seen as symbols of change, women are constructed in the role of the carriers of tradition.

Thus, society is often quick to blame women when they act against traditional patriarchal structures of behaviour where "motherhood is seen as a woman's true vocation and thus women working outside the home means the disintegration of the family" (Marsh 1998:90). The foregoing argument shows that women who work against patriarchal structures are stereotyped.

Lips (2001) notes that gender is culture specific and that all aspects of social life are determined by gender, how the males and females are assigned meanings in the workplace, in the family and leisure as well. Lip's study is useful to this current argument as it seeks to understand stereotypes from a gender perspective, noting the stereotypes associated with women in different spatio-temporal dimensions as depicted by Ndebele language writers in different historical periods.

Zalewski (2010) writes about the cultural nature of gender, arguing that there is a distinction between men and women, with men being assigned masculinity and females being assigned femininity. Zalewski notes that the understanding of gender from a cultural context is useful to the present study in which the female gender is studied from its cultural context. Different societies in different spaces subscribe to different views relating to gender. Gender can be viewed from a cultural perspective because it is the culture of a society that determines the gender values of the people in question. Gender is acquired later in life and is not something that one is born with. What is of use from Zalewski's study in terms of gender being a cultural phenomenon is the fact that when a child is born, it does not have a gender and can only be categorized based on sex, as either male or female. Gender is imposed at a later stage in life through socialisation, which manifests itself through different types of games designated for boys and girls. Everyday teaching at home imparts the expectations of the society in question. As the study focuses on the representation in the form of stereotypes, which are entrenched from a young age through gender-specific roles, stereotypes do not, therefore, operate in a vacuum as they feed on the values and culture of the people in question.

2.3.2 Development of sex role stereotypes associated with the female gender

This study contends that to examine in-depth gender stereotyping between 1975 and 2016, one needs to understand that there is an intricate relationship between gender roles and the stereotypes for different gender identities. In this section, the researcher examines different sex roles and the stereotypes in different societies and then zeros in on the Zimbabwean experience, depicting how gender roles affect stereotypes.

Greenglass (1982) talks of behaviours and attitudes and how they influence individuals and opines that the sex of a newborn determines the preconceived ideas about how a newborn should develop into a youngster and later on in life. The conceptualisation of gender is culture-specific

as it is determined by the culture and the members of the society in question. Gender is society specific and is taught and learnt from a tender age. What is of value from Greenglass' study is the fact that gender is learnt and largely determined by culture. The current study argues that the representation of the female gender in different historical periods in the country's history is stereotypical where women are associated with the domestic space.

Marini (1990) acknowledges that there are different behaviours and attitudes associated with each gender and the existence of differences between the sexes, noting that there are roles of both biological and social influences. She emphasises that men have tended to be on the harder side of things, being warriors, hunters and processors of raw materials, while women specialised in the kitchen, cooking and other domestic activities. She also notes instances where women broke cultural codes by becoming full time warriors and hunters. This, she notes, carries different social beliefs about each gender. In this study, the researcher however contends that there are positive and negative stereotypes. Negative stereotypes in certain instances relate to those women who perform genderroles associated with the male gender and this is the nature of gender stereotypes found in the novels under study.

Istemic (2007) writes about the attitudes towards gender roles and gender, explaining the situation in Slovenia, where attitudes towards gender roles are influenced by structural factors such as places of residence and source of income. She notes that farm and rural women differ from urban women, due to the ideologies informing the thinking of each, the current study benefits from Istemic's in that it also notes that women in rural and urban settings as depicted in Ndebele novels are not depicted the same way. As in the case of Slovenia, the position of women in Zimbabwe as depicted in Ndebele novels (1975-2016) has been going through a process of change influenced by factors such as unemployment, economic independence and colonialism in the Zimbabwean experience.

Burra (2001:481) examines the situation in India, with a particular focus on the emancipation of girl children as opposed to the general gender roles that they have to play at home looking after younger siblings, cooking, cleaning, and washing. These roles are known as the natural roles of girls. Burra (2001:482) identifies cultural stereotypes of gender division and role playing as the major culprits in the disempowerment of girls and women, noting that "the girls" need for education conflicts with the mothers' need for assistance within the household." Girls are

disempowered as they have to compromise on their education, which results in their subordination and in them being less focused and lagging behind on their schoolwork. Girls are socialised into domestic roles, because it is believed that this is their best performance space, from a cultural perspective. The situation is similar in Ndebele society, where girls are encouraged to be home emulating their mothers in the domestic roles they play, so that they become better mothers themselves later on. They serve under the tutelage of their aunts and mothers and if they do not perform their household tasks well, they are confronted with Ndebele sayings such as “*uzafika usiyangisa khonale*” (you will embarrass us when you arrive at your in-laws) or “*sizazidla sizibeka mathambo*” (we will not be comfortable in eating your *lobola* cows because we will be asked to return some of it as a result of your wayward behaviour), reflecting the expectation of excellence in their performance of household tasks. The major contribution of this research is its particular focus on girls and women and the cultural stereotypes that continue to hinder women from progressing. The current research also focuses on cultural, stereotypes accorded to girls/ women as depicted in novels authored by males and females between (1975 and 2016).

Xiaojiang and John (2005) note the different changes in China following the reform period, including the equality of men and women in all aspects of social life. Before the reform period, for example, there was no provision for paternity leave, women carried the burden of the domestic work although some men did housework, including cooking and looking after children. This so-called equality did not go down well, however, with Chinese women as they felt that their sense of womanhood was lost and they needed autonomy. The study notes that there was an awakening of consciousness about the inequality between men and women and questioning of a single standard intended to silence women’s sense of self. The Chinese study reveals that both culture and biology place women into specific gender roles. This current study, however, focuses on gender stereotypes as depicted in the novels which fall in different historical settings, arguing that some gender roles change according to space and time.

Butovskaya and Guchinova (2001) argue that male dominance in the 20th century Soviet society was transformed by the Soviet Regime, noting that Kalymit women had their tasks, which included keeping everything intact at home, preparing food and educating children. Men, on the other hand, were responsible for the flocks and herds. Of particular concern is the fact that

women's tasks were more associated with the home and attending to the needs of children. The current study identifies points of convergence but diverges, noting that due to different circumstances in Zimbabwe, women could not be confined to the home alone, as they did both domestic tasks and ones that required them to be outside the home.

Bender (2017:143) focuses on the novel *Little Women*, in which the author uses different characters like Laurie, Jo and Alcott to challenge gender stereotypes. Bender argues that Alcott is depicted as breaking many gender stereotypes, "both characters roles and actions transcend normal gender stereotypes and stereotypical expectations." He opines that biological sex is not what confines a person, but society's gender expectations and stereotypes confine a person. Jo, who is biologically male, "becomes more feminine and no longer seems to mind the female label". Such studies help to reorient societies and appreciate multifaceted identities, and this study is beneficial as it makes individuals aware that identities are not a strait jacket. The current study differs in its particular interest in women and focuses on Ndebele novels and Ndebele women in the period 1975-2016 and the different stereotypes associated with them. Bender (2017:146) argues that "biological sex is not what confines a person; society's gender expectations and stereotypes confine a person."

As Bender (2017) focuses on *Little Women* and characters breaking away from common and ordinary stereotypes and forming new, unexpected gender forms, Gash, Morgan and Sugrue (1993) attempt to do the same when they reveal how some teachers try to modify stereotypes in primary school. They note that children from an early age are quite familiar with stereotypes attached to each sex, as they easily attach adjectives associated with males and females, which include adjectives such as "aggressive, ambitious, stable, confident, cruel etc." The teachers even went to an extent of designing a programme that could help to reduce stereotypes beliefs about gender from infants' class to 5th class (5 to 11 years), making them question existing beliefs. Bender (2017:60) argues:

it was found that rural pupils were more stereotyped than urban pupils and pupils in mixed-sex schools in personal social stereotypes

The children were helped in modifying stereotypes to "female army officers, female veterinary surgeons and male nurses", which helped somewhat to change their mindsets from a tender age. Such a move is also needed in literature. The present study benefits considerably from Bender's

study, which is imbued with stereotypes and reveals that children are introduced to gender stereotypes from a tender age and these stereotypes, may automatically become entrenched. Unless and until something is done to change the mindset of the young, nothing will change as their worldview will be based on stereotypical notions. The current study is different from the previous one as it offers a critique of stereotypes associated with women in different historical periods and shows how literature which attempts to mimic reality reflects on societal stereotypes. The question to be asked is: are the novelists in the current study following the same direction of merely reproducing existing stereotypes or are they trying to modify them?

Rosenmeier (2011) identifies some stereotypes associated with women in Shi Zhecun's shortstories, which present different stereotypes of women, namely: the enigmatic woman, the estranged wife, the prostitute and the inhibited woman. In the identification of these stereotypes in these short stories, Zhecuni aptly notes that the inhibited women, for example, dream of breaking free. The “good girls” are those who support their parents, arguably being those who fall in line with societal expectations. What can be gathered from Rosenmeier’s study and what makes it useful to this one is the fact that women who break away from societal expectations and demands are stereotyped negatively as prostitutes, *omehlomehlo* (a women with roving eyes) and *isifedukazana* (a woman who is not respectful and is lacking in morals).

Dade and Sloan (2000:671) examine sex role stereotypes in the African American experience, noting that during the socialisation process:

[i]n African American families, boys and girls are socialised in a way that allows them to develop appropriately their age and sex groups, which by philosophical and historical definitions are interchangeable, flexible and fluid.

They note that girls are treated differently from boys depending on the different roles that they play in society. Significantly, Dade and Sloan (2000: 687) argue that “masculinity and femininity exist appositionally in the individual.” The major contribution of this study is that it notes the flexibility of role playing - despite the socialisation process, which is strict in the specific roles that it assigns to boys and girls. The socio-historic approach used in this present study traces the socio-historical experiences of men and women. This study also depicts the changing roles of men and women but then focuses on stereotypes about females, as depicted by Ndebele novelists in various historical periods between 1975 and 2016.

Cook and Cusack (2010) opine that gender stereotypes are functional in individual societies, whose members they direct or restrict from doing certain things, especially women, through persistent conceptions of women's roles, qualities and attributes. Cook and Cusack (2010) argue that these stereotypes serve to justify women's subordination in society. Women are thus to be considered in terms of their actual characteristics and not according to general stereotypes, which explain the disrespect for and devaluation of women in different sectors. Cook and Cusack's study may be useful in highlighting how stereotypes serve, in different societies, as a means of subordinating and restricting a particular gender. In the current study, however, the researcher examines how gender stereotypes are presented in Ndebele language fiction by writers and how these stereotypes affect women in different historical periods. The study also examines how political and economic factors affect stereotypes accorded to women.

2.3.3 Development of stereotypes associated with the female gender in education

Kurtz-Costes, Copping, Rowley, and Kinlaw (2014:604) write about gender and age differences and the stereotypes associated with the academic abilities of boys and girls in the USA and other Western European countries. They argue that "gender stereotypes about differences in skills have been recognised as one factor that contributes to gender differences in education and career choices".

Kurtz-Costes et al., argue that studies have depicted that boys are good in Maths and Science and girls excel in the Humanities. Kurtz- Costes' study is based on evaluations made by students. Kurtz-Costes et al., (2014:605) argue:

[a]ge differences in children's reports in late childhood and early adolescence endorse traditional stereotypes about gender differences in academic skills, whether they perceive that adults hold traditional stereotypes and whether children's perceptions of adult's gender stereotypes were related to their own stereotypes.

Findings relating to the perceptions of both adults and children were that they hold the same stereotypes. This suggests that stereotypes are not easy to break and they continue to affect people's capabilities, as girls may downplay and lose interest in their STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics) quantitative skills and those boys who are not good at STEM may feel useless even when they are good in the humanities. The major contribution of this study is the fact that stereotypes may be perpetuated and destroy the mindset of those

affected. The present study, however, does not focus specifically on academic capabilities but stereotypes about females in different historical periods and how such stereotypes continue to affect the development and emancipation of women.

Taylor (2003:300) focuses on gender stereotypes in award-winning children's books such as the Disney series and Berenstain Bears, arguing that the media is responsible for perpetuating stereotypes as it "shapes gender identities". The argument is that men and women are socialised differently, such that "normative roles for women and men require of them different responsibilities and kinds of work". Taylor (2003:304) notes that in these children's books, children are exposed to cultural values and views that are an expression of prevailing cultural ideologies. She argues that children's books teach gender roles with men portrayed in more positive terms than women whilst females are portrayed as submissive, emotional, weak and males as dominant, independent, intelligent, active". What is of major relevance to this study is Taylor's (2003:300) assertion that "through language and interaction children acquire a social self". Likewise, in Zimbabwe Ndebele society and children in particular are instilled with words and sayings that guide them and prepare them for marriage from an early age. These words and sayings are gender ideologies, as seen in the example "*ihlonipha lalapho engayikugana khona*" (a young lady should be respectful to elders because she does not know where she will be married). The current study also notes that literature helps to shape societal ideologies and extends to novels read by children and adults, which further buttresses certain stereotypes in society. It also focuses on how writers in Ndebele literature between 1975 and 2016, and female writers, in particular, perpetuate and buttress stereotypes about females and also what stereotypes are depicted.

2.3.4 Review on works on women motherhood and domesticity

Adams (1974) writes about stereotypes about females in Shaw's books, arguing that motherhood and the domestic career are most suitable for women. Adams (1974:17) opines that "the domestic career is no more natural to all women than the military career is natural to all men and its insistence that female rebellion is the first step to emancipation." Adams laments basic literary tropes of women such as "temptress, mother, goddess and the Eve the cause of Adam's

fall”. Adams talks about female rebellion as a means of emancipation, but the current study argues that rebellion should not merely be a rejection of the domestic space, but one can be a mother and other things outside the domestic space. Women should not only reject but also be aware of patriarchal structures that keep women down and educate men on these injustices on women in keeping with the African feminist approach. The major contribution of this study is the idea that in changing times and different circumstances, women’s performance should not and cannot be limited to the domestic space, while the current research focuses on their changing roles and notes how Ndebele novelists between 1975 and 2016 capture the experiences of women with a specific focus on stereotypes.

The domesticity of women in the colonial period is discussed by Yuval-Davis (1997:61), who argues that “rather than being seen as symbols of change, women are constructed in the role of the carriers of tradition”, noting that “constructions of nationhood usually involve specific notions of both manhood and womanhood”. Anthias (1992) echoes similar sentiments in her analysis of the economic and social position of Cypriots in British society in relation to class, ethnicity, cultural identity and gender. Even when Cypriots migrated to Britain, women were expected to carry the burden of representing Cypriot culture in foreign land. As Anthias (1992:3) observes:

[i]n the construction of Greek-Cypriot identification and position in Britain, women are both the transmitters of the cultural stuff of ethnicity and are its bearers. The traditional skills of women, like sewing and cooking, facilitated the development of an ethnic economy based on clothing, catering and retailing.

Meanwhile, Karim (1993), writing about the Asian experience, acknowledges that in the 1920s, women were marginalised from decision making in rural development programmes, they had poor technological training, which reduced their possibilities for advancement. This peripheralisation of women gave rise to women’s movements all over the world. Karim’s study is relevant to the current one as it brings together the history of gender issues from different continents and how they later translated to the African (Zimbabwean) experience in particular. The current study goes further to locate different stereotypes in different historical periods.

Ghosh (2004) highlights the fact that during colonialism, white women benefited as they were members of the superior races in the colonial project, although they were confined into the role

of domesticity by their men. This study highlights that it is not only European hegemony that influenced gender relations in African countries, as it was not the only force that gave rise to change and transformations in African countries and this could be a perpetuation of a stereotype that African and Asian societies were unchanging and pure. It can be noted therefore that both indigenous and external forces led to changes in gender relations in Zimbabwean society.

Harcourt (1992) study, meanwhile, highlights that with the interaction between the metropolis with its colonies, some gender relations were translated to African societies, especially in cases where African women attended British missionary institutions in the 19th century, giving rise to domesticity and patriarchy of the Christian family. Harcourt's study is of relevance to the current study as it highlights how colonialism indirectly affected the behavioural patterns of women in African countries.

Savitt (1982) talks about stereotypes about females, with a particular focus on Latin American writers, and literature consumed by children and by students in schools, and the stereotypes that perpetuate the sexist myths that prevail in society. Women are depicted in this literature as seen in cages, which are small and unnaturally restricting. The current study benefits a lot from Savitt's study as it centres on stereotypes perpetuated by writers and their tendency to depict women in restrictive roles. The current study agrees with the previous one that literature perpetuates a lot of stereotypes, which become entrenched in the minds of school children who read this literature. This is particularly significant as the novels in the current study are usually set books at high school. The current study focuses on Ndebele literature in various historical periods, to gain insight into the stereotypes therein and what could be leading to such stereotyping.

Schnucker (1994) writes about women and gender in early modern Europe, noting that the biblical Eve was viewed as the source of temptation and the major role of women was to produce children, satisfy her husband and run the household. Such a perspective about women also translated to the African experience, with the need for colonialists to tame and confine women to the domestic space, carrying out mothering and wifely duties. The present study examines stereotypes associated with women who broke away from such rules as they are depicted by Ndebele novelists. The study also interrogates the stereotypes even after the colonial period, whether they changed or continued under a new context.

O'Connor (1984) highlights the fact that visual representations of Irish women tend to be stereotypical, noting that the cinema is instrumental in the representation of women's discourse. She opines that "negative" stereotypes like housewife and mother must be replaced by more positive ones, such as those of independent career women. O'Connor's study is useful to the present one as it reveals how cinema, plays a role in the creation and validation of certain stereotypes about women but tends to question whether or not the portrayal of women as housewives and mother is negative since there are roles - such as mothering and being around children- associated with the biology of each gender while they grow up. This study brings to the fore the different portrayals of women, be it at home or even in the workplace, since women reside in different social spaces.

Still, on the depiction of women in various spaces, it can be noted that with the demands of life and changing realities, women find themselves in different places in search of better opportunities like their male counterparts. Kanaiaupuni (2000) writes that in Mexico, migration patterns are predominantly male because of the social roles of men, which are vastly different from those of women, who are confined to domestic duties. The present study contends that due to education, economic and political change, women are migrants too, as they support the economic base of their families as well. Kanaiaupuni's study is helpful as it has similarities with the present research, where women in some novels are not confined to the domestic space as they go beyond it in a quest to strengthen the economic base of the family.

Still on the traditional roles of men and women, in most societies, masculinity and femininity are evident as women bear the traditional roles as mothers, wives, housekeepers (basically their performance space is limited to the home). Rogers (1980:11) argues that "it is thought natural that a woman's place is in the home and that she has a very specific set of tasks which are thought to be universal because they are based on the biological imperatives of sex". However, culture is dynamic as are gender stereotypes, according to spatiotemporal dimensions. The present study analyses stereotypes associated with women, be it at home, work and other environments, as depicted by Ndebele authors published between 1975 and 2016.

2.3.5 Stereotypes of women at work

Glazer (1981) in her focus on women in the United States argues that women were invisible and oppressed in the professional sphere. This led to movements that were supported by the international community of feminist scholars. This study is of use to the present one as it reveals that the overall interest in women's issues is a worldwide phenomenon. The present study zeros in on the experiences of Ndebele women; in particular, to find out factors affecting women and that lead to the creation and validation of stereotypes depicted in Ndebele novels.

Romer, Motel-Klingebiel and Tomasik (2008) document the history of gender inequalities when she highlights that cultural differences are usually at play when it comes to gender differences in different countries and those gender inequalities are also related to an individual's resources and income. Romer's study is of use to the current one as the economic base affects gender in different societies, especially the Zimbabwean one and the Ndebele experience that the research focusses on.

Pessn and Arpino (2018:967), after undertaking a European Social Survey (ESS), write about women and gender attitudes toward "women's employment". The researchers set themselves between two cultural attitudes, posing the question "does the country of origin gender ideology influence immigrants" views toward working women? and "does the country of destination gender ideology influence immigrants" views toward working women? . Pessn and Arpino (2018:968) note instances in which people adopt egalitarian views toward gender roles promoting equal access to employment and greater equality within the household. They write that gender ideologies are influenced by socialisation and what the individual learns later in life. They quote Kim and Cheng's (2015:973) discussion about gender being influenced by socialisation and the life course approach, that is (exposure to different beliefs in adulthood and life events) can cause individuals to change their attitudes (Brooks and Belzendah 2004). Based on the findings of his research, he argues that even though socialisation plays an integral part in gender attitudes, there is a point and time when socialisation somehow fades as noted; the country of origin weakens as the length of residence at the destination increases.

The major contribution of this study to the present one is the notion that stereotypes derive from gender socialisation and the life course approach, and they are reinforced by the environment in

which the individual dwells and they may change with time, depending on social attitudes. This study, however, specifically focuses on Ndebele novels that are a product of indigenous and external forces, and it would be interesting to see how females are stereotyped in various historical periods from 1975 to 2016, and whether there is any change or continuity in the way they are projected.

Hutchings (2000), writing about the situation in Malaysia, highlights the situation in the 1970s, when women were not promoted at work owing to cultural norms that tied them to family responsibilities (pregnancy and absenteeism from work). This led to the launch, in the 1970s, of a new policy enabling women to have easy and equal access to education. This study is useful as it highlights the struggles of women in different countries/continents, what they go through reveals their representation and how they are stereotyped, even in their workplaces. This present study goes further to interrogate the experiences of women in Zimbabwe and how stereotypes have changed or have been maintained in the face of historical, political and economic challenges.

Desai and Banerji (2008) write about the autonomy of women in India and general control over their lives in the absence of their husbands due to migration. Many women were found in the informal sector trying to make ends meet. This current study identifies points of convergence in that in creating the rural and urban space in the colonial period, most men migrated to urban areas, leaving wives at home to take care of children. Similarly, in the decade of crisis, both men and women migrated to other countries, thus leading to the expansion of their duties, as noted by Muchemwa and Muponde (2007). In this context, however, negative stereotypes still emerged about women moving around and taking care of families. Stereotypes were directed at those deemed to be breaking away from traditional gender roles.

Mahowald (1986) writes about women at the workplace in North India, noting that there are sex role stereotypes associated with women who enter into the field of medicine and that if there is a marked increase in women entering medicine, their influence might help to reduce the impact of sex role stereotypes. This idea of owning spaces both in the workplace and at home results in the creation of negative stereotypes or failure to appreciate the positive contribution made by women in different spaces, thereby hindering women's potential.

Suk (2010), writing about the American experience, discusses gender stereotypes associated with women at the workplace and the need to eliminate them as they hinder women's potential. One such stereotype is that women who have families cannot excel at work or be good workers. The law tends to hold that women have family responsibilities that clash with their ability to meet the demands of the workplace. Suk's study sheds light on the complexities of the relationship among gender stereotypes, gender equality and the advancement of women and families. Seidman (1978:59) focuses on women in New England, and how they gradually became part of the working class in the 1970s. Seidman highlights the condition of employed black women, noting that they are limited to low - paying jobs and face "racism, classism and sexism". He also notes that they are confined to household work because of the socialisation process, and this affects even the types of careers that they choose. As Seidman (1978) opines, black women "find themselves in lower-paying jobs, less skilled categories, regardless of their educational background". Such conditions of women led to gender movements in the 1970s, which sought to emancipate women. Even though the previous study focuses on the condition of women in the 1970s, it is useful to the current one because the latter focuses on different historical periods while tracing the conditions and stereotypes associated with women in different spaces, not only at home, but at work.

Gmur (2006) writes about the stereotypes and social expectations of the "good manager" in United States. He notes that the preconceived ideas regarding leadership, arguing that men are the "good managers" because they are the "ideal" managers. Gmur (2006:105) laments the stereotypical expectations of male and female job applicants and notes that they are less favourable towards women because of the perceived incongruity between the female gender role and leadership roles. He argues that stereotypes affect the recruitment process, seeing females marginalised for not having "leadership qualities". This study reveals how stereotypes affect women in public spaces and inhibit them from progressing due to a culture that has always domesticated women. Gmur's study has similarities with the current study, in which stereotypes play a major role in determining the spaces that are occupied by women. The current study further interrogates stereotypes which not only relate to leadership but also other roles occupied by women, as depicted in Ndebele novels published from 1975 to 2016. There is a particular focus on how women project themselves and how men project their female counterparts in literature.

2.3.6 Women in politics

Bauer (2013) writes about the American experiences and challenges faced by women in the political arena. Bauer argues that the political arena demands that women be strong and aggressive. Bauer (2013) highlights that the political climate demands that female candidates break away from their gender stereotypes to run successful campaigns and be effective legislators in office and that they exhibit roughness, aggressiveness and assertiveness. The previous study is important to the current one, which analyses women characters who occupy positions of authority including Mkabayi and Zinkabi in *Umbiko kaMadlenya*.

Kerevele and Atkeson (2015:132) focus on female political leaders in Mexico, attempting to proffer ways of curbing or reducing stereotypes about females. They pose the question “does electing female political leaders reduce gender stereotypes about leadership?” and note that there has been some change relating to gender stereotypes but this has been somewhat slow because these stereotypes emanate from cultural values and other factors that reinforce traditional gender roles. With the passage of time, society begins to appreciate that females can also be political leaders. Kerevele and Atkeson (2015: 737) also note that the presence of a single female mayor would not affect sexist attitudes as men/society would continue to hold such attitudes towards female political leadership. They argue that men are more likely than women to support male political leaders. They suggest, however, that more females should be engaged in political positions so that people’s attitudes towards women can gradually change, with the appreciation of females in leadership positions. While the previous study specifically advances ways in which stereotypes in Mexico could be curbed, the present study also exposes societal attitudes towards females in leadership positions and stereotypes accorded to females in various socio-historical periods in Ndebele literature published from 1975 to 2016.

Dolan (2014:105) examines the situation in USA in relation to gender stereotypes and the evaluation of candidates, specifically focusing on voting for women. This study is based on a survey carried out and presents results from the 2010 survey in the United States House Elections, in which women were campaigning, including prominent women such as Governor Sarah Pain Baskins and Hillary Clinton. Dolan notes that people hold clear gender stereotypes about men and women in political positions, their traits and competencies. Dolan wanted to find out whether or not voter choice was influenced by the candidate’s gender, that is, when voting

for women, what was evident was that the choice of a candidate was determined by the party they were in. The impact of stereotypes suggests that party stereotypes have a greater influence than gender stereotypes. The previous study is useful as it brings a new perspective that leadership is an open area, even for women.

2.3.7 Women as Victims

Coutler (2008) writes about female fighters in the Sierra Leone War (1991-2000), what happens to women in the battlefield and how gendered perspectives affect these women. He focuses on how the participation of female fighters in this war was interpreted by the local population and by the international humanitarian community, 10-30% of the women participated in the war. Even though the study challenges stereotypes relating to women playing a minor role when it comes to war it further reveals the dual victimisation of women who transcend stereotypes through acting in ways not approved by society, he notes that women become victims of rape either at the hands of the enemy or in their camp. Coutler (2008:60) argues that “if they hesitated to kill, they could be punished through rape”. This suggests that even when women transcended what is considered to be acceptable feminine behaviour, this has its consequences. Coutler (2008:57) notes how the notion of “militarised masculinity” influenced how female combatants were interpreted “the female fighters were viewed as monsters and barbarians”. Similarities are noted in the present study across historical eras, where women had specific spaces they were supposed to occupy. Women transcending these space-challenged stereotypes were further stereotyped by society for deviating from the norm by occupying a so-called male space.

King (1973:12) writes about black women in America, focusing on the position of the black people and noting the strategic position of the oppressed in that they serve the oppressor. He brings to the fore the stereotyped images of the black woman, noting that “sex discrimination has victimized the black woman and the selective sex discrimination experienced by white women in American society”. He further argues that racism generated negative stereotypes of black women such as the “non feminist, depreciated sex object and the loser image”. King (1973:15) argues that, “the white woman was, however, a little more elevated than the black woman and depicted as small, delicate, soft, light and peaceful”. In the workplace, she earned more than a black woman. It should be noted that racism plays a major role in the subjugation of black women in the USA. King (1973:13) also discusses the racial caste foundation of the American state, which

is intertwined with the caste system of rule, at the bottom of which blacks are located, noting that the:

caste system based on race has been a dominant principle for organizing American society...the inflexibility of caste serves to protect myth beneficiaries from threats to their existing status and privileges.Caste is designed to freeze various levels of status, opportunity and privilege in a society... Consequently, when one is frozen at the top, he remains there vice versa.

King (1973:15) compares, “the caste system of rule to the racial caste, where whites are at the top and which defines the roles of black women as inferior to those of white women.” Thus black women face double oppression from the system. The current study identifies with King’s, in which black women are affected by race, but in the Zimbabwean experience, they are affected by colonialism, during which black women were affected by both patriarchy and external forces such as colonialism, which kept women subjugated. The present study examines stereotypes relating to women during the post-colonial period and identifies any change and continuity in stereotypes in the colonial and post-colonial periods.

2.3.8 Women and sexualisation

Wang (2009) writes about the representation of women in commercial adverts, which becomes an expression of Taiwanese tabloid culture. Easton and Toner (1983) argue that women are often more sexualised in advertisements than men, Wang (2009:769) argues that “women are put under pressure to sell their beauty and commercialise their appearance”. Women are at the centre when it comes to physical appearance and in Ndebele society where there are more labels associated with women’s physical appearance including terms such as *isiqabhobho*, *isiqamulamayezi*, *isiphalaphala* for, (beautiful, well-built women, etc). The major contribution from Wang’s study is the way it examines the way that women are depicted in terms of their physical appearance and as objects of the male gaze.

Lee (2013) also writes about Asian stereotypes about females, in which Asian women are depicted as submissive and mere sex objects, arguing that this has since perpetuated a demand for Asian women in pornography. Lee laments the proliferation of negative and disempowering images of Asian women and Lee’s study contributes to the current one in its depiction of the danger of stereotypes, especially ones which do not view women beyond their physical abilities and in which they are viewed as objects at the service of men. The present study, however, not

only focuses on women as mere sex objects but tries to locate them in the various - home, work, urban, and rural - spaces that they occupy, as per the various historical periods under study.

2.3.9 Women and morality

Melton (2011) writes about stereotypes relating to HIV- positive black women and how these advanced HIV stigma. Melton's (2011) study is undertaken from a gender dimension and also reveals how women are affected by negative stereotypes. Melton (2011:300) argues that "stigma tends to divide Americans and render positive people as outcasts compounded by negative images of African American women as sexually loose"

The contribution of this study is that it is focused on the HIV/AIDS pandemic, how it is contracted, and that it is contracted by women who are morally loose and such stereotypes do not help to improve the lives of HIV- positive people in society. This study is useful to the current one, which also focuses on a novel, *Lokhu Akungeke Kwenzeke*, in which the HIV discourse is placed at the centre. It is interesting to note the stereotypes associated with women who are loose and who are infected and affected by the AIDS pandemic.

2.4 Stereotypes about females in Africa

This section of the literature review focuses on stereotypes that are associated with women in Africa. It focuses on how sex role stereotypes develop from home and extend into societal spaces where we find women such as education, workplaces and in politics. Various tropes that are associated with these women in the different spaces that they occupy will be discussed below.

2.4.1 Development of sex role stereotypes

Tumusiime (2012:14) focuses on the cultural aspect of gender and argues that it is not linked to the biological sex of a human being that one is born with. She highlights that in the depiction of the woman in contemporary Ugandan art, feminine roles associated with her are linked to traditionally-mediated spaces in the home. Women in the public space are viewed as "agents of immorality and disease". Tumusiime's research highlights the fact that images and representations associated with women are largely determined by the cultural values of society despite economic and political changes that might take place. The present study benefits from Tumusiime's study as it notes traditional gender roles that are continuously tied to women

despite the continuous changes in societies in the political and economic sphere. The current study has a marked interest in the stereotypes associated with women in different historical periods and not only in the post-independence period but traces the development of stereotypes to see whether they change or whether they do not change and the impact of these stereotypes on gender relations.

Still, on cultural stereotypes, a review on homosexuality explains various stereotypes that people hold relating to sexuality. Epprecht (1998:631), in his study on homosexuality in Zimbabwe, opines that notwithstanding the belief that homosexuality was introduced by the West; homosexuality is as old as heterosexuality. Epprecht (1998:631) argues that homosexuality has always existed in Zimbabwe but had age restrictions, “same sex relations were disapproved beyond the age of adolescence and constrained by the imperatives of the pre-modern political economy.”

Epprecht diverts from the general view that homosexuality is an import in Africa and brings evidence of homosexuality in Zimbabwe. Even when so much has been written by scholars sharing Epprecht's view, many people believe that homosexuality is unAfrican and it is “principally spread by foreign tourists and ambassadors” (1998:631). Epprecht's study is somehow linked to this study, which is imbued with stereotypes, as the researcher notes instances in which the concept of homosexuality has been negatively stereotyped as unAfrican, a deviation from the norm, and those practicing homosexuality are reduced to the status of “dogs and pigs”. Even though the current research is not based on homosexuality, what can be gathered about negative stereotypes associated with homosexuality is that culture is at the forefront of determining what is to be followed by sexes in society. Therefore, the negative stereotypes seek to devalue homosexuality and hegemonise heterosexuality. All this shows that even though homosexuality is well established in our societies, it is still frowned upon. What can be depicted from Epprecht's study that is related to the current one is the fact that anything which deviates from what is deemed to be “established and acceptable” behaviour is negatively stereotyped. The current study is, however, somewhat different as it focuses on stereotypes about females that are found in Ndebele literature in various historical eras from pre-colonial to post-colonial period.

Still on the issue of stereotypes in African societies Bhana (2010) writes about women's experiences at Mbumbulu, a South African rural area, noting the customary practices that continue to keep women down. Bhana notes that in the rural space, women are not as emancipated as their counterparts in towns and that men and women do not enjoy equal rights. Bhana notes that the law alone cannot spearhead gender equality, but there is a need to look within at structures that continue to keep women down. Bhana (2010) quotes Philips (2004:100), who argues that gender equality is a formal instrument of the law and that gender is also mapped out by informal mechanisms of customary practices. He argues that customary practices are mobilised around male hegemony, which hinders the emancipation of women and that women and girls in rural areas shoulder many responsibilities. The major contribution of this study is its focus on indigenous cultural laws that keep women down and that if they are not improved or addressed, legislation and activity relating to gender movements that seek to emancipate women, will be null and void. This study not only looks at the culture but also at the external forces that keep women down, as projected by Ndebele literary texts produced between 1975 and 2016.

Yates (1982) examines the situation in colonial Zaire, noting that the colonialists brought their ideologies about the gender roles of women and how they are expected to behave, noting that it affected women in Zaire, as their roles became more restrictive. He argues, however, that Christianity affected women by positively impacting them by rescuing them from polygamy. This study is of use to the current one just as when the culture of the colonisers' influenced the culture of the colonised. The present study differs in its analysis of the extent to which external forces affected internal forces, resulting in the stereotyping of women in different spaces, be it at home or work.

Wilson (1982:155) talks of the "authenticate" a philosophy that seeks to return people to cultural purity and women should be at the forefront in these cultural movements, "they should be morally upright". The moral uprightness that is expected from women (in Zaire) noted in the previous study can also be identified in the present study, where women who move to urban spaces are mostly labelled as prostitutes, "male terms for men doing the same behaviour as women do not exist solely because women carry the burden of representation", which seems to be the major role of women in society.

2.4.2 Development of stereotypes in education

Schmenk (2004) writes about language learning skills, arguing that society thinks that girls have better language skills than boys. He confronts the general assumption that “languages are for girls” and he believes this is derived from common sense stereotypes. He argues that this is a fixed stereotypical view. (Schmenk, 2004: 516) argues that:

[s]tereotypes are fixed ways of thinking about people grouped into a social category, so gender stereotypes comprise static notions about feminine and masculine traits, regardless of social, cultural or historical variation in the lives of women and men.

Schmenk reveals that societal views about men and women hardly change. Even though the current study has no particular focus on language learning skills, the study benefits it through its argument that society operates on the:

difference approach and beliefs about the sexes as incommensurable opposites which derive their power from the assumption that male and females are two fundamentally different, monolithic entities. Schmenk (2004:517)

What can be noted is the fact that it is this difference approach that leads to stereotypes. Even though the focus is on language learning, women are limited by stereotypical notions and are therefore confined and bracketed, and those who fall outside of these brackets are stereotyped negatively. Accordingly, women in the colonial period who go beyond the domestic space are stereotyped differently from those who do not. Guidette, Glitzer and Greenwood (1976:128) aptly argue that:

[e]ven though the male stereotype is viewed more favourably, both sexes are limited by stereotyping. Stereotypes bring out limitations even for men who feel that they are good in language learning.

In this way stereotyping affects both sexes negatively as they cannot find agency outside spaces specifically meant for a particular gender.

2.4.3 Women in mothering and domesticity

Schildkrant (1982:56) focuses on women in Nigeria, noting the “rightful place” of women in society. Schildkrant finds that there are different performance spaces for women and “that the public domain is controlled by men and the private domain by women”. Schildkrant’s study identifies points of convergence in relation to Ndebele society (Ndebele women), where the

home is deemed to be the best performance space for women. The same notion is reflected in the Shona saying *musha mukadzi*, meaning (a woman is the foundation of the household). Women, mothering and domesticity are some of the culture-based stereotypes associated with women, and negative stereotypes are generated for women in the public domain, as noted in the stereotypes associated with women who flocked to the cities in the 1970s in colonised African countries. This study also extends to various stereotypes about women in various historical periods and focuses on changes be it in culture, economy and politics that gave rise to different types of stereotypes accorded to the female gender.

Schipper (1996:36) notes the condition of women in the colonial period. Schipper juxtaposes the position of women in the pre-colonial period with the position of women in the colonial period, noting that, “during the pre-colonial period, women had power and held privileged positions. Even though under patriarchal control, they were not entitled to own land, they were neither powerless nor victims”. The position of women was in between: they had power, but this kind of power had limitations and with the coming of colonialism, it became easier for women to be further subjugated. Schipper (1996:157) argues that:

[t]hrough colonisation, capitalism violently intervened in the existing order...the value of traditional women’s labour was reduced considerably because the home and the workplace were separated under the new system: the state and industrial concerns reserved most urban wage labour for men.

Schipper (1996:163) argues that women come under control from colonial policies and tradition as such colonial policies did not support women’s ownership of land and control over produce cultivated. Schipper (1996) opines that African literature captured all these things, since the literature produced emerged from the colonial context. The current study does not only focus on women in the colonial period but also on the portrayal of women during the pre-colonial period before the influence of colonialism and during the post-independence period to establish whether there is change or continuity in these stereotypes.

Boehmer (2005:89) writes about dominant women in African history vis-à-vis their contribution, including Winnie Mandela, who earned the title “mother of the nation” after being released from prison in 1990. She also draws examples from the Somalian writer Nuruddin Farah, who has commented that referring to a nation as a father is absurd as the nation can only be referred to as a mother. She also quotes Jesse Jackson who called for people of Africa to unite and see beyond

colour as they are knitted together because they share a common womb. Boehmer (2005) argues that the mother is concerned with bearing children and being a good mother. Boehmer (2005:101) notes that “it is in marriage and childbirth that women obtain power”. To be noted, therefore, is that the notion that the best performance space for women is the home. Elements of domesticity, which is rather confining, are brought to the fore. Boehmer (2005:101) also reveals that Virginia Woolf questions the mother trope and the fact that the mother is attached to or symbolises the nation, and has problems with the fact that the nation is predominantly male. In *Three Guineas* she notes:

In fact, as a woman, I have no country, as a woman, I want no country. Because men have drawn up, defined, directed national boundaries and national affairs.

Boehmer problematises the mother trope with regards to the nation, which she views as being merely a facade since women are relegated to the margins of the society. The current study benefits from Boehmer's as it tries to examine the roles of mothers as child bearers and whether or not the notion of a mother of the nation places women at the center in the development of society. The current study focuses not only on women as mothers of the nation only but also on the various places they occupy in society and the stereotypes accorded to them in the various historical periods under study. The study interrogates how mother stereotype affects women.

Green (2002:65) brings to the fore the introduction of solar cookers in the rural space (KwaZulu Natal), which he feels could potentially empower girls and women more and save them from, “physically tiring, time intensive activity and unhealthy practices and also create development opportunities and allow for personal growth”. Green (2002) challenges gender stereotypes through the use of solar cookers since most domestic chores are done by women and this could allow men to cook using user-friendly solar cookers, giving women more time to do other things. Green's study (2002) finds that men welcomed the idea but others felt that women would have nothing else to do since cooking would have been simplified through the use of solar cookers. These mixed opinions drive home the idea that in some instances, women are not allowed to venture beyond the domestic space. The current study benefits a lot and finds similarities with the Green's as the previous one challenges stereotypes through the use of household equipment that lessens women's work, challenging the mother trope and the confinement of women within the domestic space. The current study not only focuses on challenging gender stereotypes with

regards to household chores but focuses on women in both the rural and urban space in various historical periods and tries to examine stereotypes associated with women as depicted by authors in Ndebele literature both male and female.

Ochwada (1997:123) examines the issue of gender relations in Kenya, noting that the distribution of power is centred on masculinity. Even Kenyan literature depicts women's roles around the domestic space, with women complementing their male counterparts. Ochwada (1997:124) laments the absence of female heads of state in Africa and the fact that only a handful of women have been appointed to the cabinet. Ochwada further notes that colonialism led to the further oppression of African women as this was the situation with women from the West. What Ochwada (1997:129) argues is that "during the nationalist struggle, African women overcame the stereotyped roles which confined them to the domestic domain and actively participated in the decolonisation of Kenya". The major contribution of this study, which is somewhat similar to the current one, is the notion that women's identities and roles are not rigid but are negotiated depending on various circumstances, resulting in multiple identities. It is these stereotypes that the present research focuses on, Zimbabwe Ndebele literature published from 1975 to 2016.

Dipio (2008:145) focuses on Ugandan and Malian people, she centers her discussion on folktales and how they depict gender roles, noting that "motherhood is placed at the center and a woman assumes an elevated role in society". In Malian folktales, the mother is portrayed as the restorer of life, which is an emancipating role. The folktales also depict that, "both men and women are involved in the search and provision for food" Dipio (2008:142). The major contribution of this study is that it differs from others which opine that motherhood has elements of passivity and its only contribution to the family is the bearing of children. Even though these are folktales, similar experiences are noted in literature where women in the pre-colonial or post-colonial setting try to make ends meet.

2.4.4 Women and work in Africa

Senkoro (1982) writes about women who survived through prostitution during the colonial period. This was often a survival strategy for unemployed women or those who earned meagre wages or salaries, allowing them economic freedom. As Senkoro (1982:15) argues:

[i]t's true that in feudalistic times, people used prostitution for survival, it is not correct to state that there is no future in such people's thirst for their freedom from the exploitative bondage of the feudalistic system...prostitution leads to economic self - determination.

May (1979:9) writes about African women and urban employment, noting the factors affecting the employment of women and arguing that "wherever there is a high rate of unemployment, men are given preference in employment because they are taken to be inevitably the breadwinners". May's statement excludes women from the sole responsibility of providing for the family and her study is somehow at odds with traditional roles of women of being breadwinners and with the statement, "women work to provide food for themselves and their children" May(1979:13). This economic responsibility within the family was a source of status, which women lost when they became an economic liability to their male counterparts, dependent on their wages in town. The economic status of women declined considerably, leading to their dependence on their male counterparts. Such a study is important for the current one as it traces the position of women from pre-colonial period which this study is focused on and also discusses representations of women during the post-colonial period. These different conditions explain the multiple identities of women and stereotypes in the current study.

Obbo (1980:5), who studies the reasons behind the migration of women to the city in Nairobi, argues that "migrations involved mobility, and hence escape from obstacles to individual progress. Individuals migrate to escape poor positions in the socio-economic stratification system, which limit their full participation in the rural opportunity system". As a way of example, the character Nyembezi in Isaac Mporu's *Wangithembisa Lami* (1972:33), for example, expresses shock at the new source of livelihood in the rural area, saying "*sesizaphila ngani nxa imihlambi iqunywa*" (what will be the source of our survival if our herds of cattle have been diminished). Women also flocked to the city and what is of interest is how women in the city were depicted as compared to their male counterparts in Ndebele fiction published between 1975 and 2016.

2.4.5 Women and politics

Sanday (1981) discussed the situation in Nigeria, lamenting the decline of the status of women during the colonial period attributable to outside forces such as colonialism, which influenced gender relations in African societies. Sanday's study takes us back to the pre-colonial period,

where women had both economic and political power. Sanday refers to the Women's war at Oloko in 1929, where women defeated the colonialists who had imposed taxes in a bid to controlling them. This study contributes to the current one, which considers the position of women in the pre-colonial period from novels set in this period. This study not merely pinpoints the roles and positions of women in this period but zeros in on issues of stereotypes associated with such women in positions of authority vis-à-vis the cultural perceptions of the people in the society in question.

Tumusiime (2012:13) focuses on Uganda and her study depicts the independent new woman who now holds key roles in the country's economic and political spheres. She notes how patriarchy tries to challenge the emancipated woman through negative images of women in public spaces. The current study notes points of convergence with Tumusiime's study as it identifies that emancipated women are given negative labels such as *iqhalaqhala* and *omehlomehlo* (a very clever woman). This study, however, not only focuses on the emancipated woman in the post-independence period and the stereotypes associated with her but also traces the genesis of these stereotypes and focuses on literature that bears a pre-colonial setting to see how these stereotypes evolve and how they affect gender relations.

2.4.6 The sexualisation of women

Nkealah (2011) writes about the xenophobic violence in South Africa, which he analyses from a gender dimension. He does not focus on the effects of the violence but narrates the violent nature of the xenophobic violence on the females or rather the "female body". Nkealah (2011:132) in explaining the causes of xenophobic violence argues that the competition for scarce resources within a multi-ethnic community often results in conflicts between "indigenous peoples and foreign immigrants...and this somehow results in xenophobia – an expression of hostility". In as much as xenophobic violence is mainly attributable to conflicts and competition for jobs and other things, Nkealah (2011:132) reveals that

[t]he female body becomes the battleground on which phallic power is established or challenged, a woman is a mere object to be conquered and the penis is the ultimate weapon with which to dominate women and make them submissive, penis size becomes the ultimate determinant of power.

The major argument made by South Africans who attack foreigners is that Nigerian, Zimbabwean and Congolese men take their women because they have “money and big penises”. Nkealah's study suggests that women love money and want men for their big penises; this “gives the impression that they have a rapacious sexual drive”. The fact that a woman is “taken” suggests that she lacks agency and is an object to be conquered and commoditised. Even though the woman plays a passive role, she is often negatively stereotyped if she decides to be in love with these “foreigners”. The same applies to the current study, which identifies stereotypes of women who “go against” societal expectations and also goes on to look at the socio-historic circumstances affecting women and then identifies gender stereotypes associated with women in Ndebele literary texts published from 1975 to 2016.

2.4.7 Women and Immorality

The city is closely linked to prostitution, an act that cuts across the continent of Africa, as noted in the work of White (1990:4), who traces the history of prostitution in Nairobi. She argues that prostitution was the only way out for women who wanted to “revive the failing economies of their families of origin”. Elsewhere, Senkoro (1982:33) notes that “women prostituted themselves for wealth” and such acts led to “prosperity and economic self-determination”. In the same line of thought, Tamale (2008:12) in her study of commercial sex workers in Uganda, argues that, “women entered into prostitution because they had no choice, as prostitution was “a form of economic survival and therefore emancipatory”.

Thompson (2012) writes about female dancers with a specific focus on female dancers in Africa. He takes us back to early racial stereotypes with regard to dancing, which was wrongly interpreted. Thompson (2012:1) argues that:

African dance became evidence of the overt sexuality of blackness, helping create racial stereotypes of the black “other” and provided validation for the sexual abuse of black women in the Atlantic slave system.

To be noted is the fact that the previous study focuses on female dancers, which this study does not, but has similarities in the structures that held women down. In Zimbabwe, colonialism and the “black peril” justified female abuse and the negative stereotypes generated about black women and this in a way contributed and justified female subjugation. This study goes on to focus on the post-colonial stereotypes associated with women, emanating from unjustified

tropes, such as the cunning temptress, black peril, morally loose, etc in Ndebele fiction published from 1975 to 2016.

A reading of Ndebele narratives published during the period under investigation shows that some women were and are still stereotyped as prostitutes, women of loose morals and wicked individuals in different historical epochs. Lips (2001:3) suggests that, “stereotypes persist because of a long history of hierarchical relationships between groups”. Stereotypes are prevalent in novels and short stories and some of them change according to time and place but largely urban women were described as prostitutes in the colonial period. For example, White (1990:1), observed the following about the situation in Nairobi during the colonial period:

While the British colonialists sought to make the capital a city of male migrants, the permanent African population clustered in the service sector: servants, prostitutes, and householders. Indeed, prostitutes often became landlords and many landlords were prostitutes...women, in the absence of formal employment opportunities, earned the money with which to acquire property through prostitution.

Prostitution during the colonial period became one of the ways through which women held down by patriarchal structures could acquire property and lead a life free from the yoke of patriarchy.

2.5 Stereotypes about females: the Zimbabwean experience

This work focuses on stereotypes about females in the Zimbabwean experience in the various spaces that women find themselves in. It analyses how stereotypes develop and what perpetuates them, with a particular focus on socialisation patterns at home, school and the rest of society.

2.5.1 Development of sex role stereotypes

As has been noted before, socialisation plays a pivotal role in identity formation Sibanda (2013) notes that the socialisation process plays a great role in influencing gender stereotypes, which begin from the family and then go to spread to other social institutions such as the education, political and religion system. In Sibanda's study, the family is viewed as the central unit, where the foundation of all relations begins, including the relations between brothers and sisters with regards to gender roles, which are assimilated in the minds of the young. The current study benefits from Sibanda's, which notes that the family is a cultural unit but diverges in its

observation that it is not only the culture that has an influence on stereotypes but also political and economic factors.

Makawudze and Gudhlanga (2012) write about gender and socialisation, using mainly traditional games to reinforce their argument that African ways of socialisation made girls equal partners to boys as there was no subjugation and stigmatisation. The scholars use *mahumbwe* (houseplay) which as argued by Makawudze and Gudhlanga (2012:163)“... taught the indispensable roles that each gender performs in life... a boy is socialised to realise that he cannot manage without his female counterpart....”.It also dawns on the girls that they “cannot do without their male counterparts...”. These scholars also use riddles and taboos to depict complementarity in the family, arguing that “the often highly criticised African traditional ways of raising proffer more democratic and inclusive opportunities in which, neither maleness nor femaleness is a handicap” Makawudze and Gudhlanga (2012:61). Makawudze and Gudhlanga dig into the rich past through children’s games that taught them to be complementary partners later on in life. However, in changing times, roles have shifted and women often extend to the male space and vice versa, even though the scholars note that “when the young girls work around the home and kitchen, it is not confinement” Makawudze and Gudhlanga (2012:163). It is these fixed roles that are a cause for concern and result in the stigmatisation of women. Even when there are complementary roles, society has not entirely shifted in terms of what it calls women’s space and men’s space. By way of example, in Ndebele society, there are derogatory terms such as “*omehlomehlo* and *iqhalaqhala* that deride women who are viewed as too clever, and “*imbongendlu*” for men who are always at home. There is, therefore, a need to look within Ndebele culture to trace the problem of stereotypes as this study focuses on Ndebele novels and stereotypes associated with women (1975-2016).

Charamba and Charamba (2012) bring to the fore the dual sex system in the traditional Shona family, noting that the Shona language empowers women and does not depict them as appendages to men but as equal complementary partners and examining the various realities that condition the gender roles of mother and father. They also note the gender differences in boys and girls at adolescence and the various responsibilities that are attached to them as they grow into men and women. Charamba and Charamba (2012:180) argue that “gendered roles and responsibilities also become delineated. Boys herd goats, cattle and sheep...they also sit at the

dare (traditional court) with their older brothers, fathers and granddaughters”. It is important to note what girls and boys are taught in these different spaces: “at the *dare*, boys are taught survival skills by their fathers and grandfathers while girls receive instructions from their paternal aunts, mothers and grandmothers”.

What these boys and girls were effectively taught was in line with the different performance spaces they were supposed to occupy. Such a restrictive socialisation process tends to pose problems in changing societies where girls are not taught boys’ responsibilities and vice versa. What they are socialised into is rather restrictive and accords them stereotypes when they extend to another gender. It is interesting to note how these girls or women are stereotyped in changing socio-historical periods as depicted by Ndebele novelists (1975-2016).

Writers such as Dangarembga in *Nervous Conditions* (1988) depict the condition of women in Zimbabwe as one of dual oppression, emanating from the intertwined patriarchal and colonial structures, which gave rise to both negative and positive stereotypes relating to the female identity. The interest in women’s issues is not only evident in written works of art but also the emergence of gender movements throughout the world. In Zimbabwe, for example, there is an organisation, WOZA (Women of Zimbabwe Arise), whose activities revolve around women’s issues and problems affecting them daily.

Mguni (2006) writes about how Zimbabwean poets in the anthology *Inkondlo* (1998) depict issues confronting women. Mguni analyses the perception of these Ndebele women and the way they understand the condition or problems facing women in the context of social, political and economic issues revolving around the themes of AIDS, the Zimbabwean war of liberation and poverty together with the major theme of women empowerment. Mguni (2006:55) applauds such writings by women, which are produced from a woman’s perspective and argues that, these writings can be regarded as activism in the manner in which they contribute to the debate on the role and status of the contemporary African woman.

Mguni (2006:42) argues that “the condition of the African women can only be fully appreciated within the context of African culture”. Significantly, the genuine liberation of African women cannot be understood outside the context of culture. Mguni (2006:55) opines that, “these writings are centred on activism towards women empowerment; they should explore women’s issues, “in

the context of African history”. Mguni (2006:55) is against the idea of merely stereotyping African men on the road to activism, noting that “there is need for women writers to move away from stereotyping African women and men... and should focus on a broad spectrum of women”) from the point of view of women, with a view to positively transforming their condition and that of the family at large. Even though this study is specifically on poetry and how women poets articulate problems facing women, it is of use to the current study since both poetry and novels are literary works of art, which are bound to depict reality from a somehow similar perspective. Similar issues do come up in novels, which are, however, written in different historical periods. Issues of poverty and AIDS that are affecting families are also looked at in the current study. Mguni notes that in their literary activism, writers should move away from merely stereotyping men but rather boldly articulate their concerns as stereotypes do not improve society as they do not actually confront problems faced by Zimbabwean Ndebele men and women. This study focuses on stereotypes about females in novels published between 1975 and 2016, noting how this generally affects the images and potential of women in Ndebele society and whether there is any continuity and change in these stereotypes and how this affects the development of men.

Muganiwa (2018) writes about the representation of Shona women in Zimbabwean fiction and how their identities shift as a result of social, historical and economic circumstances. Muganiwa (2018:10) argues that “Shona women have to negotiate their identities in various circumstances resulting in shifting multiple identities”. Muganiwa traces the history of Shona women through a comprehensive analysis of images of Shona women as depicted by black male and female authors, she focuses on English and Shona novels that depict Shona women’s images in works such as *Grass is Singing*, *Trooper Peter Halket of Mashonaland* and other novels. The major contribution of Muganiwa's study is her assertion that “representations are constructions which cannot be divorced from time and space” Muganiwa (2018: 23). The current study benefits from the previous one since the current study focuses on stereotypes about females across time and space from the pre-colonial period to the post-colonial period. It focuses on the representation of women in Ndebele literature by a black males and female authors through the years to examine different stereotypes about women and whether there is change or continuity in these stereotypes.

2.5.2 Development of stereotypes in education

Gordon (1998) writes about the socialisation of children through the Zimbabwean school system in the nineties. He laments the formal curriculum inherited by Southern African states, including Zimbabwe, which was modelled on the British education system, in which girls were educated for domesticity (Wolpe, 1994) and boys for employment in the public sphere, preparing them for the role of family head and breadwinner (Davison and Kanyuka 1992). They note that the curriculum was gender-differentiated with woodwork, Technical Graphics and hard sciences for boys and Home Economics for girls.

Gordon (1998) argues that even teachers instil gender stereotypes on academic subjects, seemingly viewing the so-called, “feminine subjects” as useful to women in their “roles as mothers, and housewives”. The “masculine subject” prerequisites for occupations are, (scientist, pilot, doctor) are stereotypical and are influenced by traditional gender roles. Such stereotypes also limit both girls who might be interested in masculine occupations and boys who might be interested in feminine occupations. Gordon (1998) attributes these stereotypical tendencies to the formal curriculum, which was inherited from the British education system, ignoring the indigenous gender roles that children are taught from an early age: men would hunt and had the burden of providing for the family and women were confined to taking care of the children in the domestic space. The curriculum, therefore, reinforced pre-existing structures.

What is difficult to understand in Gordon’s study is the solution that he proposes that of using western models to bring a solution to gender ideologies and stereotypes. The question here is that isn’t Britain part of the West? It is not clear what he refers to as the west and what is backward is not clear. Gordon (1998:53) notes that education based on Western modes is seen as a necessary condition for modernisation (Gordon 1996). The education offered in schools based on western models has been assumed to be a solution to the problem of “backward” traditional gender ideologies and stereotypes. The major contribution of this study is the focus on the way that the curriculum shapes ideologies of boys and girls from an early age. This study notes that socialisation affects the choices that girls and boys make in the future and entrenches their mindsets and potentially limits their abilities and their thinking. This study, however, finds Gordon’s study to be important in highlighting the conditions affecting women’s choices.

2.5.3 Women and domesticity

Kufakurinani (2015) writes about white women's experiences in colonial Zimbabwe in relation to domesticity. He notes:

[i]n most colonial territories, one of the mandates of the colonizer was to domesticate the wild (that is the indigenous population and environment and make the conquered areas ideal for settlement and exploitation) (Kufakurinani, 2015:1).

Domestication was not confined to extending Western civilisation but also to impacting gender relations within the British Empire, which derived its major characteristics from Victorian culture. In the context of gender analysis, domesticity defines women's proper space as the home and has the potential to restrict women's options. Kufakurinani (2015:33) notes that "domestic ideology was a significant shaper of the experiences of white women within and beyond the so called private spheres". Domesticity was well established in Victorian society, where women occupying the domestic space were regarded as pure, chaste and morally upright. Kufakurinani (2015:33) further argues that:

Victorian domesticity emphasised women's confinement to the physical space of the home, as domesticity and motherhood were considered by society at large to be a sufficient emotional fulfilment for females

The domesticity trope is also promoted through various organisations and subjects learnt in school such as Domestic Science. Some women find domesticity oppressive and leave marriage whilst others view it as a place of agency, Kufakurinani (2015:35) argues that "the home was a place of work, with cottage industry and a residential accommodation". Kufakurinani (2015:102) also notes that the shift from the home to the workplace did not mean a complete turnaround of women's lives, since there was also domestication in the workplace, in the form of discrimination, subordination and limitation to opportunities...all this emanating from the dominant domestic ideology. Women earned less than men. Domesticity reduced women's options within the workplace, as they could only be clerks, typists and not leaders, managers, etc. What is of particular interest in this study, which is of use to the current one is the fact that "domesticity had a way in which it controlled white women's lives", those who acted against domestic ideologies were negatively labelled as deviants and wild because they failed to conform. Similarly, in the novels under study, those women who acted against cultural and colonial ideologies that kept them in the home were termed as morally lacking because they were

working against the interests of the system. The study also extends to the depiction of Ndebele women not only in the colonial period but also in the pre and post-colonial periods. While Kufakurinani looks at the socio-economic history of white women within the context of the domestic ideology, the present study looks at the various performance spaces of women and the stereotypes associated with them in the period 1975-2016.

Jones (2008:125) captures the experiences of five female Zimbabwean mbira players whose careers span the colonial and post-colonial eras, noting that performance spaces have since changed for these Mbira players, who no longer play them in the traditional arena only. The mbira instrument has been commercialised as it is now being played in beer gardens and night clubs and the international stage. Jones (2008:126) argues, “female mbira players have been marginalised and devalued by gendered interpretations of traditional roles and practices, which do not approve of women playing instruments”. What is significant here is the fact that culture has a bearing on stereotypes or roles of women outside the domestic space. Jones (2008:133) notes, however, that “none of the Shona mbira are sacred or ritually proscribed instruments. There are no restrictions as to who may make or touch them, or who may perform the instruments in ceremonial contexts”. The fact that a woman has to have a spirit in order to play mbira, depicts gender bias, also evident in the fact that Mbuya Nehanda gained respect and popularity as a woman solely because she was a spirit medium. Even though Jones’ study is on women in music, it has similarities with the present study in tracing the restrictive gendered performance spaces for men and women depicted in Ndebele novels. The current study also identifies stereotypes for women who try to occupy men’s space and the stereotypes associated with them. This study, however, focuses on women as depicted in literary works by both men and women set in the pre-colonial to the post-colonial periods, examining stereotypes accorded to females in various spaces.

Ward and Balswick (1978) write about sex role stereotypes of both men and women, finding that stereotypes accorded to men are different from the stereotypes associated with women. They find that men have more positive stereotypes as compared to their female counterparts. Examples of these positive stereotypes noted by Ward and Balswick (1978:46) depict them as strong and dominating, independent, breadwinners, sexually experienced, unemotional, logical and ambitious. He notes that women are accorded fewer positive stereotypes, and depicted as weak,

submissive, dependent, domestic, sexually emotional, and illogical. Ward and Balswick (1978) find that characteristics attributed to men are, often more positively valued than characteristics ascribed to women and all this results in the devaluation of women. Although stereotypes raised by this scholar sound over generalised, the present study has similarities with stereotypes in society and those in Ndebele literature with regards to sex roles for men and women. What is also significant in Ward and Balswick's study (1978:46) is the fact that they note that, "females characterise males in exactly the same way males characterise other males, and vice versa". Significantly, the continuous use of these stereotypes is such that they have been entrenched, even in the minds of women, who begin to characterise themselves in the same negative way that society characterises them. This study, however, has a marked interest in stereotypes about females as depicted by Ndebele writers from 1975 to 2016.

Phillips (2004:88) writes about the interdependence or interaction of constitution and custom. Phillips focuses on the constitution and custom, arguing that these determine transformation or subordination as far as gender relations are concerned. Phillips narrates that pre-colonial authorities tried to emancipate women through the Native Marriage Ordinance (NMO) of 1901, which strictly stipulated that "no woman was supposed to marry against their own will", a move that prevented African women from being forced into marriage. Before colonialism, African chiefs and headmen were in charge, and with colonialism, they did not completely lose their authority. As Phillips (2004:87) states:

[a]ny initial desire on the part of the colonial authorities to emancipate African women from what they perceived to be primitive and oppressive structures of kinship was rapidly replaced by recognition that their authority was based on the cooperation of African chiefs and headmen.

Both colonial authorities and local authorities contributed to the subjugation of women. Even though this study does not directly focus on stereotypes, it is interesting to note how women who broke away from such authorities and went into towns were viewed by society. The current study also looks at stereotypes accorded to such women in novels published in the pre-colonial and colonial periods and also extends to the post-colonial period.

2.5.4 Women and work

Riphenburg (1997) writes about the situation in Zimbabwe during Economic Structural Adjustment Programme (ESAP) and the change in gender relations that was brought about by ESAP in the 90s. Riphenburg (1997: 237) opines that:

[i]n 1990, Zimbabwe announced the start of ESAP and access to World Bank and International Monetary Fund financing was made conditional on the adoption of such a programme which involved measures such as reduced public expenditure, devaluation of currencies and export promotion all directed toward debt reduction.

Riphenburg (1997:243) argues that even though such policies affected Zimbabwe at large, women were the most greatly affected, which resulted in their further marginalisation. Riphenburg notes that gender equity was advanced by the urban elite, which strived to be in politics, earning itself labels such as prostitutes because they behaved differently to women occupying the rural space, who were viewed as “custodians of culture”.

Riphenburg (1997) argues that with a large number of people losing jobs, the informal sector became flooded, resulting in both men and women flooding the informal sector, which had largely been the breadbasket of women. This led to their further marginalisation, as they had to compete in the market with their male counterparts, and this decreased the demand for the goods being sold and the drop in purchasing power. The current study benefits considerably from a study such as this one as it also focuses on novels set during the ESAP period and how it affected livelihoods. Stereotypes were generated for women who competed with men in the informal sector and it is worth noting how Ndebele writers depict such women in their novels and the stereotypes generated surrounding these economic hardships in Zimbabwe.

Mutopo (2010) writes about Zimbabwean women who trade food across the Zimbabwe-South Africa border in Mutopo. Mutopo depicts the economic challenges faced in Zimbabwe that forces women to work under harsh conditions, which include the lack of proper places to sleep and verbal attacks all in the name of ensuring the economic security of their households. These women trade primarily in agricultural products such as *nyevhe* (indigenous vegetables) and by so doing, they become breadwinners. Such a study challenges the natural roles of men and women, where men are the ones stereotyped as breadwinners. Such a study is similar to this one which,

using the socio-historic approach, traces the difference and changes in gender relations through time and space in Zimbabwe between 1956 and 2016. Even though this study is not directly linked to stereotypes but undertones of challenging, stereotypes are brought to the fore.

Jeater (2000:33) writes about the colonial experience in Zimbabwe, and her title, “no place for a woman” highlights the debate surrounding the presence of women in the urban space, which was often believed to be inhabited by male migrant workers. The general impression given by Jeater was that there were no women, as depicted by studies preceding hers. She notes that “historians have acknowledged the presence of women in towns and on mine compounds from an early stage of white occupation and urbanisation”. She acknowledges that women played an active role in the development of the new town. Jeater problematises the term “no place” to bring to the fore the fact that there were jobs for men in towns and when there was a shortage of accommodation, men were the ones who got first preference and accommodation in bachelor flats. Women, therefore, had no place in town, if they did, a few got formal jobs and the rest were involved in beer brewing *ematshabhini*. In the eyes of the colonial and local authorities, the best place for women was the village. However, even though the urban space was for men, this did not stop women from going there by force or being in an environment that was not woman friendly. This study has similarities with Jeater’s, where the researcher also focuses on women in the city during the colonial period and stereotypes associated with women in the city because the system looked askance at them. The present study also stretches to the post-colonial representation.

Mwatwara (2012) writes about the migration of Zimbabwean men to the Diaspora (Namibia, Zambia, Mozambique, UK, etc. from the period 2002-2010 in search of greener pastures during the economic meltdown. Women, on the other hand, were pushed as a result of the ESAP to engage in cross border trade to supplement their husband’s, meagre wages. This resulted in a drastic change in gender roles and relations, with sometimes women being breadwinners in the absence of men. Mwatwara (2012:148) opines that:

[t]he post-2000 emigration has further transformed gender roles and responsibilities within the family, with women being forced to assume the role of de-facto heads of households.

The chapter thus notes the changes in the status and profile of Zimbabwean women as a result of male migration. Even though there were benefits in the migration of men, there were also

disadvantages as it brought suffering for those left behind in the form of disease and stigmatisation.

Mwatwara (2012:148) depicts a society that is still informed by patriarchal views and limitations (2012:148) and argues that:

[t]he general view in society is that women, children and old men should remain in the village to cope in the best way they can while the migrants remit home part of their earnings to cater for family needs that require cash.

As has already been mentioned, women are limited by patriarchal views and even if they go to the Diaspora, society and patriarchy do not spare them and tend to trivialise the contribution they make towards the family. Mwatwara (2012:149) argues that:

[i]n Zimbabwe and in other patrilineal societies, the male partner is expected to be the main breadwinner in a family. With such a gendered structure, women play the role of housewives, partially or wholly dependent on the men.

Mwatwara argues that those women who stay in the Diaspora are “single, widowed” and society stereotype them as women who are too independent. While Mwatwara’s study is important in its examination of stereotypes accorded to cross border women, the current study however focuses on gender stereotypes associated with women in various historical periods and also analyses representations of women in periods of economic hardships. Significantly, negative stereotypes are accorded in such difficult times to individuals who act against patriarchal dictates. It is worth noting how women are represented in Ndebele literature vis a vis economic migration following colonial and patriarchal practices that keep women down and to analyse whether post-colonial society carries the same images of such enterprising women or there has been any change in the stereotypes accorded to such women.

Gaidzanwa (2006:200) comments on women’s writing in the context of development and depicts different writings that, in her view, encourage women to fight for rights and equal treatment at the workplace. She notes that women are always subservient to male authority and the dominant tropes of women are that they are adulterous, greedy and wrongheaded. Gaidzanwa argues that women’s writing has been influenced by the colonial history of the country and a heavily Christianised representation of life. Gaidzanwa (2006:195) asserts that literature has been influenced by gendered opportunities for writing. Gaidzanwa’s research notes that the pre-

colonial setting is depicted by men only “colonised man’s writings were more prominent because of the male domination of the colonial order”. This depicts male hegemony in Ndebele writings, which could have affected their projection of women and the images/stereotypes they accorded them and their perceptions of women. This study benefits a lot from the previous one in its centrality on women’s experiences such as the way they are projected in women’s writings and colonial history and Christianising experiences that influence writings just like in Ndebele novels. The study also has similarities in its adoption of the socio-historic approach, arguing that novels under study in the pre-colonial period to the post- colonial period (1975-2016) cannot be studied outside of this context. This, in a way, affects stereotypes associated with women.

2.5.5 Women as victims

Muwati and Mguni (2012) focus on Mabasa’s novel, *Ndafa Here?* They note the negative male-female relations exhibited in the marriage between Wati and Betty. Women are portrayed as victims as they are depicted as suffering. Muwati and Mguni are against negative male-female relations, which do not make society improve. Muwati and Mguni (2012:51) argue that negative male female relations both within and outside the home are a transgression of the human rights of the entire family, the female and the child.

They argue that the home/ family is the basis of all the relations that feed into society, and if relations are not managed in the home these will flare up in the workplace, school, government and other public places. They argue that men and women should assist each other to build society. In the novel, Betty is blamed and accused of witchcraft when she gives birth to a paralysed child. Wati the husband is troublesome and rejects fatherhood, by drinking and acting irresponsibly. Muwati and Mguni (2012) aptly note how colonial and patriarchal forces fed into each other in the subjugation of women, something that this study finds important. Muwati and Mguni (2012:54) opine that:

[t]he colonial experience valorised patriarchy ...most African men inherited and concretised a “distorted and distorting” value of the father as the superior force, provider and breadwinner and the woman as marginal.

These scholars note that women suffer at the hands of the masculinised universe. Muwati and Mguni (2012:54) argue that, women like Betty “are victims of a masculinised universe of thought in which the man is both the definer and namer of reality....”. This attitude potentially

exacerbates the arrogant treatment of women by some men. This study finds such arguments important since the current research focuses on both internal and external forces in various historical periods. The study deploys African feminism, which posits that men also need to learn how they oppress women. Muwati and Mguni (2012:55) call for women to remove themselves from social injustices and holds that ... “there is no excuse for the tormented African woman to remain imprisoned in an abusive and dehumanising relationship”. The current study, however, focuses on Ndebele novels and the stereotype accorded to women (1975-2016) and tries to establish whether writers perpetuate the same stereotypes, or they change across time and space due to social, historical, political and economic circumstances.

2.5.6 The sexualisation of women

Ndlovu and Ngwenya (2012:17) write about public transport stickers, arguing that stickers degrade African women as they are flooded with negative images of women. Ndlovu and Ngwenya (2012:17) aver that languages in these stickers are sexist, negative and degrading and they depict women as “prostitutes, gold diggers and nonentities”. They are opposed, furthermore, to the careless use of language, which is also part of the socialisation process, and opine that[s]ociolinguists often argue that language is not just a tool for communication but is also crucial in socialising people either beneficially or harmfully.

Their main thesis is that there should be supportive male-female relationships in the African family and community and this is not possible when Zimbabwean womanhood is insulted in these public transport stickers (2012:17). Ndlovu and Ngwenya’s study, which focuses on negative and stereotypical visual depictions of women, has similarities with the current one, which examines stereotypes depicted by Ndebele novelists writing from 1975 to 2016 and how they affect the general image of women.

Masowa (2017:71) focuses on the representation of women in Shona humour. She argues that laughter is always directed at someone as a kind of scorn since this humour is embedded with negative stereotypes depicting women as “materialistic, self-centered, talkative, domineering, stupid, irrational, incompetent, carriers of diseases, old women as witches”. It is worth noting that such humour entrenches and enforces stereotypes and language as a powerful tool that privileges some over others. Humour, according to Masowa, therefore highlights unjust gender

relations and may be an avenue for understanding gender relations. Masowa notes the stereotypes expressed in humour and argues that we often find such stereotypes in novels. The major contribution from the previous study is that females are subjugated through humour.

2.5.7 Women and immorality

Chitando (2011) focuses on how selected Zimbabwe female writers depict HIV/AIDS. Chitando's work focuses on female writers, seeking to establish whether there are any differences in the way male and female writers portray women, where men have often portrayed women as vectors in the spread of AIDS, thereby perpetuating sexist ideologies associated HIV and AIDS. Chitando (2011) focuses on novels written in English and how writers have been influenced by cultural beliefs in their approaches to the pandemic. The beliefs are important, to interrogate whether women "endorse, destabilize or whether they employ non-conformist acts to undercut patriarchy and other oppressive socially constructed ideologies" (Chitando (2011:ii). The images of women as being loose and dangerous are examined in the context of HIV/AIDS. The study emphasises the possibility of literature to offer a platform for the liberation of women, or a counter platform for reactionary politics.

Even though Chitando's study relates specifically to the depiction of women within the context of HIV/AIDS, it shares some similarities with the current one, which focuses on HIV/AIDS in the post-colonial novel but is not confined to stereotypes projected by female writers only but also by male writers to get a full understanding of the overall depiction of women and identify change and continuity in these stereotypes.

Mboti (2012) writes about the imaging of black women in two Hollywood films about Africa, *The Last King of Scotland* (2005) and *Blood Diamond* (2006). These are Hollywood films about Africa produced for a 21st century audience. Mboti (2012) argues that these women are depicted negatively and deciphers the objectives of such depictions. Mboti (2012:31) opines that "the portrayal of African women as "vamps and temptress is meant to label, disgrace and domesticate them". Mboti (2012:31) argues that black women in these films are depicted as, "loyal wives, faithless wives, disease-carrying whores and hypersexualised seductresses". It is worth noting that these tropes can be traced from the colonial period. Women in the *Blood Diamonds* and *the Last King of Scotland* "constitute negative presence which renders them as unwanted elements".

Mboti argues that their depiction has to do with the negative image of Africa, (imagining Africa as the other), and one can note the double colonisation of African women, the African being imagined as the other and the inferior status of African women. Mboti (20012:31) opines that images of African women in these two films show not just a perpetuation of stereotypical frames of reference in the imaging and imagining of Africa “others” but also a “repackaging of the figure of African women for the 21st century audience”. This scholar also discusses how these negative images affect women and disgrace them. The current study, based on Ndebele novels and with a marked interest in the images of women, is similar to Mboti’s in its focus on the stereotypical depiction of women and how this affects their development. In this regard, Chivandikwa (2006:184) quotes Chinyowa’s (1997) argument that, “feeding society on stereotypical images of women results in the limiting of women’s potential”.

Hadebe (2006) focuses on the depiction of Ndebele urban women during the colonial period, with a particular focus on *Umhlaba lo!* By Barbara Makhalisa (1975). Hadebe examines the way in which urban women such as Lulu and Nozipho are depicted by Makhalisa as people of loose morals. Makhalisa’s depiction is located within the context of socio-economic issues that affect these female characters, one of whom is depicted lamenting, “*ucabanga ukuthi amadola amahlanu engiwazuza koMagaya angangifikisa ngaphi*” (do you honestly think that the five dollars that I get from Magaya’s place can sustain me?). Hadebe (2006:178) opines that “crime is a result of inadequate material and financial resources”. The city becomes uninhabitable for young men and women thus they resort to stealing and prostitution. In Hadebe’s (2006:176) view, “Makhalisa’s portrayal of the city is in line with the colonial ideology of that period, the city was meant to be home for the white settlers while Africans were only to come to the city temporarily as cheap labour”. The current study benefits considerably from Hadebe’s study in its marked interest in the depiction of urban women and has similarities where the current one finds stereotypes of women in the city as prostitutes and those in the rural space as morally upright. However, this study extends to the pre-colonial period and post-colonial setting to see and analyse the stereotypes generally associated with women in Ndebele literature, how this affects the development and growth of women and focuses on internal and external forces that have always kept women down.

2.5.8 Conclusion

The above literature review has highlighted the various stereotypes that are accorded to women in various spaces such as home, work school, and politics and in various representations such as novels, magazines and various forms of media. A review of World perspectives, African perspectives, and Zimbabwean perspectives on these various stereotypes has been undertaken. It has been noted that different scholars focus on different countries and specific historical periods but the current study has a particular focus on Ndebele novels and traverses across three historical periods in the country's history: pre-colonial, colonial and post-colonial period.

CHAPTER THREE

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

3.1 Introduction

The chapter gives an outline of the two theories that underpin this study. The theories have been selected because they speak to the issues under study. The study focuses on Ndebele novels set in different historical periods in the country's journey and on how women have been represented by both male and female authors in the selected novels. The study makes use of the Socio-historic approach and African feminism to analyse and bring into perspective the stereotypes accorded to women during these historical periods. It also discusses the relevant tenets of these theories that shed light on stereotypes in the selected novels, which were published between 1975 and 2016.

3.2 Theory and background

Given the focus of the study, namely the examination of female stereotypes in selected Ndebele novels, the most appropriate theories to use are those relating to the history, culture and location of the women in question in different historical epochs, as these influence the stereotypes that develop about women. The study contends that issues relating to colonialism, class and gender highlight the power dynamics that affect the identity of women within space and time. The study, therefore, analyses literary texts to have a better understanding of the factors that influence the stereotypes accorded to women. Literary criticism is premised on the study of how literature is produced and what influences that literature in terms of the forces and the factors shaping it and what this literature says about society. Theories provide critical methodologies for the analysis of the literature. In order to determine the theories best suited to understand stereotypes in literary studies, it is important to understand what a theory is. Eaton (1921:683) argues that, "a theory is a useful tool by means of which man moulds nature to his will". Eaton (1921:685) further highlights the functionality of a theory as he argues that "the completeness of a theory is its capacity to give by deduction all the particular and general propositions in a widely extended field of knowledge", which involves the study of fictional works in the form of poems, novels and drama. Chiang (2018:189) opines, on this issue, that "literary works are not a "space of facts", they are the "some place or other", and literary studies are the angles from which this

“‘some place or other’” is observed as well as engaged with”. Therefore, in a way, literary works try to mirror our day-to-day experiences in the world we live in, depicting reality and allowing for the understanding of the depiction of women in society in the novel.

This study makes use of literary theories, which, as Wasosa (2014: 54) argues, “exist and function within cultural frameworks and are a consequence of [the] cultural assumptions and expectations of a people’s culture”. Such theories are therefore appropriate in informing a study such as this one, where stereotypes are largely informed by the culture of the people in question. Wasosa (2014:54) further argues “that, literary theories are a result of studying how literature is produced, the producers of literature, [and] the conditions under which it is produced”. The ‘conditions’ under which the literature is produced therefore has a lot to do with the historical period and the events obtaining during this period, which may, in turn, have had a bearing on the novels being produced and the representation of women therein. The study of stereotypes in literary texts therefore becomes contextual. This observation is an important one in the present study, where the researcher observes that various publication houses made demands of authors publishing novels, which could have somehow affected the content of the novels. During the colonial period, for instance, the Southern Rhodesia Literature Bureau announced the themes that writers had to dwell on, making their literary texts somewhat reflective of the demands of the publishing houses.

Looking at post-colonial period literature, which, in a way, reflects the conditions under which literature was written, issues to do with the prevailing conditions, be they economic or political, come into play. Thus, in the study of literature written under such circumstances, Furusa (2002:16) argues that literary theories “provide both the critical methodology and criteria for the” analysis of “literature”. On another note, Mooij highlights the value of literary theories, which help in the analysis of literary texts and the specific issues discussed therein and, in this case, stereotypes accorded to women in different historical periods in selected Ndebele novels. Mooij (1979:124) opines that, “literary theories lead to new perceptions and suggest ways of looking at literary texts, of attending to specific aspects of them, as well as lines of systematic literary research”.

3.3 The socio-historic approach

Art's relationship to society is important and the exploration of this relationship can deepen one's artistic response to a work of art. Literary art is the work of an author fixed in time and space answering to a community of which he is an important part. In a way, the writer depicts and responds to the life of a particular society, his or her work largely portrays what is happening in that society, and its attitude with regard to (a) particular issue(s). Literature represents life and is closely connected with particular social institutions. The study adopts the socio-historic approach since there is a relationship between what is happening in the novels and the events obtaining during the various historical periods under study. The term 'socio' can be traced from sociology. Kendall (2003:3) argues that sociology which is the study of human social behaviour, especially the study of the origins, organisation of institutions and development of human society. Sociology involves the analysis of a social institution or social segment as a self-contained entity or in relation to society.

In a way, novels too allow for an understanding of gender stereotypes in terms of the origins, evolution of or change in these stereotypes in various circumstances. Novels offer a mirror of what is happening in society and probe these institutions and how society develops as reflected in the novel which captures people's experiences during a particular period. Stereotypes as reflected in the novels under study probe and allow for an understanding of Ndebele women in their society in relation to their roles and identity therein society, through the stereotypes that writers accord them.

Stereotypes as reflected in the novels under study are not an independent entity, as writers play a role in perpetuating these stereotypes, which raises questions about the social circumstances of the writer and the social content of the works themselves. The social origins of a writer play a minor part in comparison to his or her social status, allegiance and ideology or the ideas that he or she has about women in a particular society. Sociology, therefore, contributes to an understanding of certain aspects of the literature in question. It is also worth noting that the knowledge of the nature of society at a given time makes it possible to understand why people wrote the way they did and why they produced particular types of literature. Veit-Wild (1992:5) argues that "Zimbabwean literature is considered from two angles, how it was influenced by social and political factors, and how it responds to given social and political conditions and

experiences”. This scholar focuses on ‘the effects of education, political developments and cultural policies on the literary products’. She provides a framework upon which Zimbabwean literature can be studied, which justifies the notion that in the analysis of novels, one cannot ignore the external and internal forces that influenced the culture the novelists were depicting therein, and the conditions that led to the stereotypes accorded to women within the period 1975-2016. Literature also has a role to play in the society and in the view of the concept of gender stereotypes as reflected in literary works; the socio-historic approach is used to contextualise the issue of female stereotypes, focusing specifically on the history and culture of Ndebele people. The theory centres on the broader aspects of the context of the experiences of Ndebele women that include culture, colonialism, urbanisation, the Economic Structural Adjustment Programmes and the decade of crisis.

Within the socio-historic approach, it is argued that all literature bears the stamp of its age in that it has an operational context, as it is influenced by social, historic, economic and political issues obtaining at the time the work is written. In this regard, Mannheim (1955:134) argues that:

[s]ocial structures (or in the case of the socio-historic approach, social processes containing structures) are self contained entities with lives of their own which largely determine both the behaviour and consciousness of the individual human beings within their orbit. The essence of man is no abstraction dwelling within the isolated individual. Actually, it is the totality of his social relations.

From the above submission by Mannheim, it can be argued that literature cannot help but bear and depict the socio, historic, political and economic factors in society. Thus, there is a relationship between literature and society. Literature somehow reflects what is in the society therefore literature traces things that take place in society. Veit-Wild (1992:5) further argues, in this regard, that ‘literature is examined within the interaction of common experiences and individual responses, to avoid a view of literary works as mere mirrors of a social process’. Therefore, in the stereotypes accorded to women, writers note common experiences such as colonialism rural-urban migration and neo-colonialism among other factors that influenced the authors’ depiction of women. It is for this reason that the socio-historic approach would help to understand the reasons why the writers of the works under study accorded women various stereotypes during different historical periods.

As regards the adoption of different approaches by writers in the depiction of women, it can be argued that there is another dimension to consider in the history of writing in Zimbabwe, Chiwome (1994:58) argues that there are a lot of factors that shape the novel since ‘a novel does not emanate from the writer’s mind alone as many unacknowledged forces behind the scenes contribute to its shape’. By way of example, the Literature Bureau contributed considerably to the content the writers wrote about. In this regard, Chiwome (1994:66) argues that:

the Bureau became a de facto government censorship board that employed editors to perform the function. Editors stipulated themes and techniques so that authors would ‘not be found in prison’ and out of the control arose a novelistic tradition which was silent on contemporary socio-political crises. Characters were neutral on colonial economics and politics. As a result of the channelling, a few decades of writing saw artists dabbling in stereotypes based on idealistic morality.

Writing further on the mandate of the Southern Rhodesia Literature Bureau and its origins, Veit-Wild (1992:74) argues that:

the Literature Bureau always had a double function. On one hand, it played a very important role in promoting vernacular writing and providing the means for its development. On the other hand, it had been established in order to prevent the emergence of critical political literature.

Owing to its ambivalent role, one would wonder why writers sacrificed their freedom to write what they wanted, possibly because ‘for a long time the Literature Bureau was almost the only outlet for vernacular writing’ (Veit-Wild 1992:237). As has been noted, during the colonial period, there was the censorship of the content presented by writers in that the publishing houses prescribed what writers should write, which leads them to focus on somewhat similar themes and depiction of somewhat similar worldviews by novelists during the colonial period. The socio-historic study allows for an understanding of stereotypes and how they evolve (the factors that contributed to women being depicted in a similar way by authors in a particular historical period). Chiwome (1994:101) argues, in this regard, that ‘the rigidity of the literary framework resulted in monotonous stereotypical themes’. This view by Chiwome enlightens the researcher as to what prompted writers to depict women in a certain way in terms of the stereotypes accorded to them. The socio-historical background to writing would therefore be useful to the analysis of stereotypes accorded to women during the colonial period.

It is worth noting that this research does not focus on the colonial period only, but also the pre-colonial and the post-colonial periods. Using the socio-historic approach, it would be interesting to note any continuity or change in the stereotypes accorded to women by writers, which might be influenced by factors such as the economy and culture. The socio-historic approach therefore allows for an understanding of content of the novels being studied and the socio-historic factors influencing this content as well as the stereotypes accorded to women in the period 1975-2016.

The areas in which critics of the socio-historic approach focus their attention when they examine the relationship between literature and society include the sociology of the writer, the profession and institution of literature, his or her status, social ideology, biography, family background and economic position. Daichess (1956) argues, “giving an example that we can judge a good table from a bad table because we know what a good table looks like. We can then look at the conditions under which each table was produced in order to get explanations on why one table is good and the other is not good. We have not therefore gone outside our theory of tables in order to discover what a bad table is, but we have gone outside it in order to explain, at least partially, how this table came to be bad in this way”, (Daichess 1956:335). Following the submission from Daichess (1956) this research is not only confined to revealing good or bad literature, but also tracing the history of gender stereotypes relating to the female gender in Zimbabwean (Ndebele) society. This is done against the background of the authors’ history and culture of a particular people, what determines a good or a bad stereotype for men and women and what influences the stereotyping of a particular gender in different socio-historic periods pre-colonial to post-colonial in selected novels dating from 1975-2016.

The sociological critic is therefore interested in understanding the social milieu and the extent to which and manner in which the artist responds to it. Is there any relationship between the writer’s social origins and his writings? Is the writer’s work a product of his social circumstances? The belief is that the writer is in the same environment where the events that he is writing about take place such that he is not divorced from this reality.

To understand the sociological approach to criticism of literature, it is important to appreciate the relationship between society and literature. As Pereira (1975:69) argues, ‘a realism of the contemporary society still has, then, to rely on the author’s immediate perception and sensitivity

to his surroundings. The author himself becomes what informs the living witness to an epoch, the socio-historic context is the basis of literary creation.’

It is acknowledged that literature is a social institution and social creation, which uses language as its medium. In this use of language, there are particular terms associated with a particular gender and all this allows for an understanding of particular stereotypes associated with men and women in the wider context. Pereira (1975:70) argues, in this regard, that “writing is an act of historical solidarity, language and style are objects; writing is a function” - it constitutes the relation “between creation and society”.

Within the literary and socio-historic approach, there are problems of audience and the actual social influence of literature. Pereira (1975:65) argues that, “certain writers censor themselves more out of unfounded fears. It should be understood that writers censor themselves in their portrayal of a particular reality. The question is “how far literature is actually determined by or dependent on its social setting”. Mannheim (1955:135) opines that “the socio-historic approach accounts for social change, for the transformation of one social structure into another”. What is unclear is the question of the extent to which the writer is influenced by social factors. Mannheim opines, in this regard, that ‘the isolated individual still possesses a psychological apparatus fairly rich in content. For one thing, he still possesses a mind which frames ideologies and value systems’. The development of a work of art enters all three aspects of the problem, that is, the “sociology of the writer, the social content of the works themselves and the influence of literature on society”. Hegtvedt (1991:1) argues that, “literature functions to maintain or justify the social order and in effect exerts social control”. This reveals the reciprocal interaction between literature and society since literature affects individuals as well as organisations and is, in turn, affected by them.

Since every writer is a member of society, he or she can be studied as a social being. His or her biography and the social setting in which he or she lived might help inform ideas about their literature. Duchet, Gaillard and Lovitt (1976) argue that the socio-historic material conditions of literary production, presented the class relations or contextual influences, assessed the incidence of a biographical or politico-historical substratum and covered the mediations through which the subject or text is manifested, illustrated the contradictions between texts and society at the level of explicit or latent contents. The history of the writer will provide information on the social

origins, family background and economic position. Thus, the socio-historic approach proves to be viable in the study of the selected Ndebele novels as it, “depicts the relationship between literature and a society that is grounded upon certain intrinsic and cultural issues” (P’Bitek 1986:16). This theory, therefore, contributes to the analysis of some stereotypes generated in the context of the cultural experiences of the Ndebele, and validated by writers.

3.3.1 The socio-historic approach in the understanding of female stereotypes

The study acknowledges that the socio-historic approach has long been used in research. Nevertheless, it is indispensable in this particular study as it traces the history of the women in the literary texts under study. Since this is a study on novels published during the period 1975-2016, with a particular focus on the way in which women are represented, it is worth noting that the overall stereotypes accorded to women are a result of various socio-historical factors. Manheim (1955:134) argues that “the essence of man is no abstraction dwelling within the isolated individual; actually, it is the totality of his social relations”. There is a relationship between what is depicted in novels and the society, and Singer (2011:308) opines that ‘I find that novels can expose readers to information about social systems, about narratives inequality, about gender stratification and racism’. It is for these reasons, that the researcher argues that young people should be exposed to literary narratives because these narratives can show young readers how the world is organised. The depiction of women and the way they behave in the environment is related to several factors within that environment. Thus, the study of stereotypes is not carried out in isolation. Any behaviour of women is influenced by society, as the study argues that colonialism, culture and both internal and external factors around women therefore influenced the way in which they were depicted in novels. Oguz (2007:3) argues that ‘social historical “theory aimed to create an account of human mental processes that recognises the essential relationship between these processes and their cultural, historical and instructional settings”’.

At a general level, this perspective holds that, “action is mediated and cannot be separated from the social environment in which it is carried out” (Wertsch, Rio & Alvance, 1995:3)

Chojnacki (2017:1) argues that:

a social historical critical approach to literature seeks to understand the text based on the cultural and historical events taking place at the time it was written. If one is reading a text that was written in a time or period other than your own, then it can be very useful to understand the period in which it was written.

It is important to trace the time at which the text was written to understand factors influencing writers in their depiction of women. In this endeavour, the publishing houses and time frame cannot be dismissed, as they play a critical role in terms of the demands they imposed on writers, factors associated with the Literature Bureau and the kind of themes the novels considered in the present research insisted on what writers could focus on. Novels in a way reflect what publishers want the society to dwell on. Writing on the role of publishers, Singer (2011:309) explains that:

British publishers are more likely to publish Nigerian novels with a traditional village theme than those with an urban theme, even though Nigerian novelists write greater numbers of books that focus on contemporary urban social problems because the impression that these readers have of Nigeria is of rural communities struggling with problems of tradition and modernity...

In keeping with Singer's argument, it can be noted that in the depiction of female stereotypes in Ndebele novels, stereotypes do not only emanate from the writer's mind alone, but the publishing house may have a hand as well as it might compel writers to narrow down to specific themes. It is not only the publishing houses that sometimes influence the content of the novels but also various conditions at the time the novel was written also have a bearing. Fleming (2019:2) explains that historical content has a bearing on the content of the novel since:

historical content is essentially the details that surround occurrence. In other words, the various factors influence the contents in the novel, Historical context refers to the social, religious, economic and political conditions that existed during a certain time and place...those details are what enable us to interpret and analyse works or events of the past, or even the future, rather than merely judging them by contemporary standard.

The socio-historical approach is helpful in the interpretation of the behaviour of women by writers when considering the 'social, religious, economic and political' conditions at the time the novel was written. This approach lays bare the factors influencing the depiction of women and

the status women have in society as reflected in the change or continuity in the stereotypes accorded to women in various historical periods.

3.4 African feminism

African feminism is used in this study alongside the socio-historical approach. The use of this theory highlights the need to use theories that display a marked interest in the development and improvement of the lives of Africans and are centred primarily on African culture. African feminism is a type of feminism that is grounded in the realities of African women as it places at the centre their struggle within the context of African realities.

African feminism is a theory that is binary owing to its focus on Africa and feminism. The major voices in African feminism are Ogunjipe-Leslie, Steady, Arndt amongst others. African feminists redress the issue of feminism and contend that it is plausible for women in Africa to adopt a feminism which relates to their experiences. Since feminism is derived from the word 'femina' in Latin, which means woman, feminism is an ideology of woman or any body of social philosophy about women, Ogunjipe-Leslie (1994:222) poses this question:

what is feminism for you? What is your feminism? Do you, in fact, have an ideology of women in society and life? Is your feminism about the rights of women in society? What is the total conception of women as agents in human society - her conditions, roles and statuses-her recognition and acknowledgement? Generally, feminism, however, must always have a political and activist spine to its form. If we take feminism to imply all these, is the African woman on the African continent, in an African context, without problems in all these areas?

From the foregoing discussion, feminism is, in essence, a movement set to liberate women and is somehow universal in nature, as Oyewumi (2003:1) notes in her contention that:

the term 'feminism' usually refers to a historically recent Europe and American social movement founded to struggle for female equality. Feminism in designation has become a global political project. The term feminist describes a range of behaviours indicating female agency and self determination.

The term 'African feminism', meanwhile, tends to focus specifically on the experiences of African women, which were discussed in the thesis. Even though African feminism is binary in nature, there are some aspects of feminism that African feminism does not subscribe to including the fact that it is a 'global political project' (Oyewumi 2003:1), meaning to say that there is a group of women representing all women at a global level. This however glosses over specific

issues related to a particular society. Nako (2003:187) argues that “even if feminism requires some women to speak on behalf of others, such acts of representation are fraught with problems in that who speaks and who is spoken about or for has depended largely on other categories such as power, race, class and sexuality”. Even though feminism is universal in nature, it can be noted from the above-mentioned statements, that it has its shortcomings, as the African woman faces problems that must be dealt with using a relevant theory grounded on her experiences.

Oyewumi (2003:25) argues that ‘there is no question that in order to investigate the construction of gender in any contemporary African society, the role and the impact of the West must be examined not only because most African societies came under European rule by the end of the 19th Century, but because of the continued dominance of the West in the production of knowledge’. This argument highlights the need for a feminism that is rooted in the experiences of the people in question. Oyewumi (2003:40) notes that “women are not just women, and that factors of race, class, regional origin, age and kinship ties are central to the understanding of inter-gender and intra-gender relations, locally and globally”. Ogunidipe-Leslie (1994:223) concurs about the use of feminism that emanates from the experiences of the people in question, opining that ‘these feminisms have to be theorised around the junctures of race, class, caste and gender, nation, culture and ethnicity, age, status, role and sexual orientation’.

In keeping with the foregoing assertions by Ogunidipe-Leslie and others, the generalisation of feminism is found wanting as it does not take into account the fact that different women all over the world face different problems. The universalisation of feminism as a theory has been rejected by scholars like Oyewumi who do not agree with the balkanisation of knowledge from the West. Oyewumi (2003:4) argues that ‘white feminists have considered their experience of womanhood in their culture as the prototypic female experience and have used it to define feminism’. While it may be true that feminism is plausible to a certain extent as it focuses on the need to fight the oppression of women, its applicability at a global level is problematic, since women all over the world are subjected to different experiences. Evans (1986:2) argues, in this regard, that ‘while there are deep and sometimes bitter ideological disagreements between feminists, any feminist is, at the very minimum, committed to some form of reappraisal of the position of women in society’. Other scholars have had concerns about feminism and its specific focus on gender amid other problems faced by women all over the world. Hooks (1984:14) argues that ‘it has certainly

been easier for women who do not experience race or class oppression to focus exclusively on gender Hooks (1984:17) further opines that:

most people in United States refer to feminism women's lib' as a movement that aims to make women the social equals of men. Do women share a common vision of what equality means? Implicit in this simplistic definition of women's liberation is a dismissal of race and class as factors that in conjunction with sexism, determine the extent to which an individual will be discriminated against, exploited, or oppressed.

Even though the study identifies certain elements of strength in feminism it should be noted that within the different types of feminism, there are certain aspects that this study does not agree with. Hence the adoption of African feminism, a feminism that relates to the experiences of African women.

3.4.1 Background of African feminism

A background on African feminism was given to articulate the agenda of African feminism, that it is not patterned after Western feminism. Arndt (2002:30) argues that 'critics of feminism maintain that African women who sympathise with feminism are blind copycats of Western European feminists'. Such a viewpoint is retrogressive, since there are certain noteworthy elements of feminism. However, 'feminism' and 'African feminism' are slightly different in terms of agenda and context. Different feminisms have to be contextualised in keeping with the problems faced by each society. The different strands of feminism attest to the fact that women all over the world face different forms of oppression. The research briefly exposes some tenets of these, so as to show the clear departure and the weakness of these types of feminism, and their inapplicability to the African experience which is what prompted African feminists to come up with African feminism. The researcher begins the discussion with radical feminism, which is closely aligned to the genesis of feminists in the United States to fight sexual oppression. Hooks (1984:33) opines that 'feminism in the United States called attention to the exploitation and oppression of women globally. Unfortunately, this made it appear as if feminism was more of a declaration of war between the sexes than a political struggle to end sexist oppression.' Radical feminists held the view that men were the enemy, as male supremacy led to the subordination of women in the workplace and the home. They believe that males can justify their actions by persuading people that it is natural for men to be the dominant sex. Radical feminists, therefore, advocate for lesbian relationships as a prerequisite for freeing women from male domination.

They believe that technology enables women to conceive independent of men in their lives and to be in control of biological reproduction. Hooks (1984:34), in her criticism of radical feminists, notes that, 'they advocated for a Utopian woman nation, separatist communities and even the subjugation or extermination of all men'. She further details the resistance that radical feminism got from black women, (1984:70), noting that, 'many black women refused participation in feminist movement because they felt an anti-male stance was not a sound basis for action. This affirmation of bonding between black women and men was part of the anti-racist struggle.'

Another group of feminists are the Marxist feminists, who believe that they have ideas and solutions for all women. Arndt (2002:34) avers that:

mainly radical and Marxist feminists, go on the opposite extreme and pressure to be able to speak in the name of all women, they talk about, 'black sisters and they are not informed about the situation and the problem of women in African countries...race is hardly ever a central issue in Marxist feminism.

Marxist feminists differ from all other feminists in that their focus is on class. They place the class struggle ahead of the women's struggle. As Taiwo (2003:47) opines, "for Marxist feminists, feminist issues are not a priority. The oppression of women is seen as only one form of oppression, one which is an integral part of capitalism...gender struggle and class struggle are both of primary and equal importance, in dealing with women's oppression, we have two systems (capitalism and patriarchy): the first one which oppresses everyone through class rule and the second one of which alone can explain the oppression of women qua women". Even though Marxism seems to be a promising theory in its fight against class, its major weakness is that, as Tusscher (1986:66) notes, 'gender relations cannot be subsumed under the categories of class and the economy and that an autonomous or semi-autonomous body of theory needs to be developed to explain the domination of women by men'. In a way, Marxist feminists are like social feminists in their belief that capitalism has led to the amplification of conflicts between the sexes and minimised inequalities in the development process by arguing that introducing socialism would solve these problems.

Black feminists place an emphasis on issues to do with race and refuse to be balkanised under one roof with white feminists, since they believe that race affects women of colour. Black women in America felt that white women paid lip service to the anti-racist struggle and stood as persecutors of black women. African feminists, however, have a problem with theories

conceptualised by black Americans, as they lead to the ‘monopolisation of black women’. African feminists subscribe to a feminism of African conceptualisation that relates to the experiences of African women at home. Arndt (2002), reveals that Alice Walker and Hudson-Weems speak on behalf of all black women without really being informed about the situation of African women.

Ogundipe – Leslie (1994:229), one of the major voices in African feminism, gives her type of feminism a different name so that it does not sound like a type of feminism that is patterned after Western feminism. Scholars such as Arndt (2002:30) note the observation by critics of feminism that ‘African women who sympathise with feminism are blind copycats of Western European feminists’. Ogundipe-Leslie (1994:229) therefore advocates for a new term ‘Stiwanism instead of feminism, to bypass the combative discourses that ensue whenever one raises the issue of feminism in Africa’. To avoid all this, Ogundipe-Leslie (1994:229) comes up with the acronym STIWANISM, which stands for ‘Social Transformation Including Women in Africa’. She argues that ‘this new term describes my agenda for women in Africa without having to answer charges of imitateness or having to constantly define our agenda on the African continent in relation to other feminisms, in particular, white Euro-American feminisms which are, unfortunately, under siege by everyone.’ ‘STIWANISM’ allows the researcher to discuss the needs of African women today in the tradition of the spaces and strategies provided in our indigenous cultures for the social being of women...‘STIWANISM’ is about the inclusion of African women in the contemporary social and political transformation of Africa.

From the ongoing study, it can be argued that African feminism focuses mainly on women in Africa. The history of African feminists can be traced from the history of women of African descent, who were not only confined to the domestic space but also the public space. African feminism as a theory of social change and transformation is grounded upon this reality. Badejo (1998:100) argues that “our foremothers and our sisters were taught how to balance their femininity and their strength, how to bathe in fine oils, and yet be ready to draw swords of defence from within themselves when necessary”. Soon after, the position of women with African social structures was destroyed because of colonialism, which affected gender relations.

Badejo (1998:101) goes on to explain that:

the twin monsters of enslavement and colonialism marginalised African womanhood by denying the African the power to protect women's custodial rights...western sexism had denied its own womanhood legitimacy through its mythic religious systems first by demoting European womanhood from adult status to legal minors and then denying them access to the priesthood, a phenomenon that never occurred in traditional African societies.

African feminism traces the problems that women face back to marginalisation and colonialism. Africans have their problems that relate to their skin colour, which is put under the umbrella term race. Ngambika (1990:3) avers that, "African feminism challenges African men to be aware about how they subjugate women since both should struggle against European and American imperialism". This theory is relevant for this study on stereotypes as it notes that men, who are the companions of women, should be aware of the ways in which they subjugate women. African feminism has been selected as a theory in this study because it unsettles settled opinions about social issues. African feminism holds that through theory and practice, women will be rediscovered in the social arena, and this will result in social transformations. African feminists seek a turnaround in gender relations, and in so doing, they include men in the struggle.

African feminism does not ignore patriarchy, which is another mountain on the back of the African woman. Ogundipe – Leslie (1994:36) argues that, "The woman has to throw off the fifth mountain on her back, which is man, who does not want to abandon his centuries-old attitudes of patriarchy, which he does not wish to abandon because male domination is advantageous to him". Even under such circumstances, African feminism does not consider men to be the enemy as Ogundipe-Leslie (1994: 82) argues that, "the enemy is the total societal structure, which is a jumble of neo-colonial (that is, primitive capitalist and intermediary consumerist economic formations desperately dependent on international capital) feudalistic, even slave-holding structures and social attitudes".

African feminism has been misunderstood by some scholars such as Hudson-Weems of *Africana Womanism*, who believes that it is patterned upon European experience by adopting the term feminism and thus less relevant to people in Africa. African feminism is not racist in nature as it goes beyond the colour line and talks about things that are relevant to the African experience and

discards that which is not. The basis of selection does not lie in but on the experiences of the individuals. As Ogundipe-Leslie (1994:7) avers:

[m]y hope, however, is that we can move beyond a viscerally racist reaction to the source of ideas, from a biological exclusionarism to a critical approach which looks for the relevance of ideas to our experiences, societies and history, and to our project at hand. Believing in culture and not race, I firmly hold that thought and ideas are products and the legacy of the responsibilities of the human mind, to be claimed by all humankind.

African feminists are of the view that for progress and development to occur, a people should look beyond racial lines and establish links where possible and not reject theories based on colour lines. The theory brings into conversation external and internal forces that affect gender relations and lead, in turn, to the gender stereotypes of women vis-à-vis the roles that women have occupied since time immemorial. African feminism as a theory seeks to unravel the experiences of women where they are. It does not seek to balkanise or compartmentalise the experience of women, it is grounded on African women realities. Ogundipe-Leslie (1994:11) asks “are African women voiceless or do we fail to look for their voices where we may find them?” In this way, it can be realised that African women are not only confined to the working class or urban areas and they succumb to different experiences. In the present study, there are stereotypes relating to women within both the urban and rural spaces, within the working class and to housewives in different historical periods. Ogundipe-Leslie (1994: 11) argues that “we must look for African women’s voices in women’s spaces and modes such as ceremonies and work songs ...we must look for them in places such as kitchens, watering sites, kinship gatherings, women’s political and commercial spaces where women speak often in the absence of men”. Thus stereotypes depict the condition of the woman in various spaces where there are either stereotyped negatively or positively.

From the foregoing, it can be argued that African feminism is rooted in the experiences of African women in different spaces as they not only occupy one space as in the novels to be analysed in this study, where women are subjected to different experiences starting from colonialism up until the struggles after independence which had an impact on gender relations. Badejo (1998:96) opines, in this regard, that “we need to revisit African women’s histories on the continent and in the diaspora and review the impact of enslavement and colonialism on gender relationships”. In the novels under study, African women are depicted in both the rural

and urban spaces, and one hears the voices of the working-class women and the mothers and housewives at home. Ogundipe - Leslie (1994:13) insists that “African women are more than wives. To understand their multifaceted identities beyond wifehood, we must look for their roles and statuses in sites other than that of marriage”. A focus on different spaces, therefore, clearly brings out the stereotypes they are accorded. In these spaces occupied by women, African feminists are concerned with the condition of women as they argue that women are still under oppression. Arndt (2000:110) argues that:

many Africans shy away from being referred to as feminists. They say I am not a feminist but then go on to say they are convinced that the situation of women has to be improved drastically, that gender relations in African societies need radical transformations and that they are themselves committed to making these changes happen.

It can therefore be noted that African feminists are not shy to depict the condition of the woman as they seek gender parity and denounce oppression faced by African women

3.4.2 African feminism in the analysis of stereotypes accorded to women

Since the study is on stereotypes accorded to women as depicted in Ndebele novels, it is important to be cognisant of the relationship between literature and society. The novelists themselves are part of the society and a product of the cultures that they write about, so theirs is a reflection of the society from their perspective amid other factors that will be discussed later on.

In this regard, Ogundipe-Leslie (1994:44) argues that:

On a very primary level, literature can be said to mirror or reflect society, providing a reliable image of a number of hard social facts...on a secondary and more profound level, literature can reflect society in the sense of embodying and revealing that which pleases that society.

The above assertion by Ogundipe-Leslie (1994) applies to this study, where novels become a reflection of what society thinks about women in terms of the stereotypes that are accorded to those women. In the study of the selected novels, African feminism is relevant, in that the stereotypes are not always universal as they tend to be culture specific, in line with the historical experiences of people. Badejo (1998:94) avers that African feminism is active and essential to the social, political, economic cultural and evolutionary aspects of human order. It is relevant for this research, as it traces certain stereotypes accorded to women in different historic periods, noting that the subjugation of women is a result of both indigenous forces and external forces

such as colonialism. Silva (2004:129) avers that, “the African woman is subject to interconnected forms of oppression, which include the racism of colonialism and the indigenous and foreign structures of domination”.

Since the study on gender stereotypes touches on different historical epochs, from the pre-colonial setting up to the post-colonial setting, it suggests that they change over time. African feminists are aware of such changes and, as Kuumba (2006:113), observes that, “the colonial distortion of indigenous African cultures did away with the avenues of power and voice that African women had enjoyed”. This reveals the changes in the status of women as a result of external forces, which then impacted the gender stereotypes as governed by space and time.

African feminism places at the centre gender issues that are depicted in novels under study. The emphasis is on women of African descent, whereas other forms of feminism are general or have an all-encompassing agenda. African feminism focuses specifically on African women, who have experienced interrelated issues of slavery, colonialism and patriarchal oppression in the societies from which they emanate. It does not turn a blind eye to indigenous forces that affect women and lead to stereotypes that hinder women’s growth and potentials. The theory, therefore, focuses on the needs of African women following the history they had, which affected their portrayal and representations in different works of art and as such, is relevant to this study, which is filled on the stereotypes of women in Ndebele language fiction.

African feminism is relevant to the study of stereotypes that this research is focusing on, as it advocates for the periodisation of ‘African history’ since it is ‘necessary to recognise various social and historical categories which would affect our analysis of women’s positions in Africa’ (Ogundipe-Leslie 1994:32). Whatever studies we do of women in Africa, we should be aware of the need to ‘periodise’ African history adequately.

This theory is relevant and useful, then, in that, it seeks to change the social status for women through a provision of education that is balanced, where men and women are viewed as equal both in the classroom and outside the classroom. The theory calls for re-education on sex roles, based on gender following the changes in societies. Children will be educated, from a tender age, about current sex roles which are not necessarily rigid, since there are different spaces such as work and home. Sibanda (2013:1) argues that, “there is a need for a socialisation process that

uplifts women and that socialisation starts at the family level and extends to other forums in society”. Thus, stereotypes develop from home and spread to other areas such as education and politics.

African feminists advocate for a type of feminism that is not merely a fight between the sexes but an exploration of the condition of the woman and other areas that need to be improved. Furthermore, it should not be exclusively about women, but a ‘humanistic feminism that encompasses men, women and children’. Ogunjipe-Leslie (1994:228) argues that:

African feminism for me, therefore, must include issues around the woman’s body, her person, her immediate family, her society, her nation, her continent and their locations with the international economic order determine African politics and impact on the women.

It is worth noting that African feminists all over call for a special kind of feminism that captures the condition of the woman in question and does not gloss over issues that affect the African woman as depicted by Hooks (1984:18) who argues that:

white bourgeoisie women interested in women’s rights issues have been satisfied with simple definitions for obvious reasons. Rhetorically placing themselves in the same social category as oppressed women, they were not anxious to call attention to race and class privilege. Women in lower classes and poor groups, particularly those who are non-white, would not have defined women’s liberation as women gaining social equality with men since they are continually reminded in their everyday lives that all women do not share a common social status.

Thus, African feminists drive home the idea that concentrating on gender only would not improve society, especially in Africa, where there is a need for social transformation in the perceptions that society has of its women. This theory is applicable when focus is on how women are viewed in Ndebele novels, as reflected in the stereotypes generally accorded to these women in various historical periods. Arndt (2002) cover establishes a link with issues concerning the condition of women in Africa as she opines that:

white Western feminism concentrates solely on the question of gender, while the African contexts make it necessary to consider gender relationships only in the context of other political, economic, cultural and social forms and mechanisms of oppression such as racism, neo-colonialism, cultural imperialism, capitalism and imperialism religious fundamentalism, as well as dictatorial and other corrupt systems.

From Arndt's submission, it can be argued that gender in the African context is considered in relation to the various factors mentioned above, which makes the representation of women and stereotypes a result of such factors. African feminism becomes relevant in analysing the depiction of Ndebele women in Ndebele novels written under the influence of a number of factors including culture, colonialism, neo-colonialism and political independence. The theory is therefore linked to the stereotypes that are investigated in this research since they are not accorded to women arbitrarily but are, rather, related to the various factors mentioned above that affect the representation of women.

What African feminists agree upon is the fact that women empowerment and female subjugation exist but in the context of other issues as well, including culture and history of colonialism and neo-colonialism. There is, therefore, a need to include men, who through socialisation are trained to think this way about women through such sayings as *'indoda yinhloko yomuzi'* (the father is the head of the household). As Ogun-dipe-Leslie (1994:228) opines:

individual men are not the enemy, but the subordination and oppression of women are systemic, hence we need to look at structural patterns which distribute social justice between the two sexes...the enemy is the total system in Nigeria, which is a jumble of neocolonialist and feudalist, even slave holding structures and social attitudes...men however do become enemies when they seek to retard or even block these necessary historical changes; when, for selfish power interests, they claim as their excuse 'culture and heritage', as if human societies are not constructed by human beings; when they plead and laugh derisively about the natural enduring inferiority of women; when they argue that change is impossible because history is static, which it is not.

African feminism is therefore a theory aimed at changing gender relations for the better from an African perspective and at the same time appreciating the good that exists within African societies. As Okpala (2016:5) rightly observes, in this regard, 'African feminism encapsulates a set of collective thoughts actions and arguments aimed at changing the patriarchal power relations in Africa while respecting all positive African values and advocating complementarity between the genders. It, therefore, strives for a complementary relationship between the genders'. It is worth noting that the women's emancipation is not as it is depicted by African feminists. As Nnaemeka (2004:31) rightly avers, 'African women's lives are a balancing act indeed. Fighting on all fronts to contend with external and internal forces, bridge the fissures between public and private, home and abroad and maintain sanity through it all requires great

strength and imagination'. This is seen in Ndebele novels in question as they depict women under colonial and patriarchal rule.

The agenda of African feminism places at the fore issues relating to social transformation and it places men at the centre of this transformation so that they understand the condition of women and do not continually victimise women, knowingly or unknowingly. The entire society has to be educated to avoid stereotypical beliefs that women's condition and behaviour is static and unchanging. As Adell (1990:3) observes, in this regard, 'African feminism challenges men to be aware, of how they subjugate women, men is not the enemy, but African men need to be aware of the extent to which they participate in the subjugation of women'. Concurring, Ogundipe - Leslie (1994:230) avers that 'the feminist agenda everywhere in the world must include men and mobilise men in order for us to attain a more successful completion of the work of humanising society'. Some of the novels under study were authored by males, who therefore need to be part of the agenda.

African feminists call for people to question certain cultural traits that continue to subjugate women, Ogundipe - Leslie (1994:224), for example, argues that 'our opportunistic and irredentist compatriots who argue culture and heritage when it serves their interests should consider whether our inherited culture and heritage should be taken hook, line and sinker or should be subjected to change where necessary'. African feminism exposes the inequalities that have always existed in pre-colonial times, where a strong and outspoken woman, for example, was referred to as '*iqhalaqhala*' (a hot-headed person). The theory exposes such continued negative tendencies of stereotyping women into unchanging roles of motherhood and domesticity at home. This is not to say that motherhood and domesticity are in themselves a problem; what is, however, is confining women to this form of stereotype only and turning a blind eye on their other potentials.

Arndt (2002:72) argues, in this regard, that 'motherhood is never questioned by African feminism, as a rule it is defended. Yet African feminists do insist that women should be able to realise and define themselves beyond wifery and motherhood'. In the novels under study, women who step out of societally defined spaces tend to be negatively stereotyped. Ogundipe-Leslie (1994:13) similarly avers that "we have reiterated, seemingly to no avail, that African

women are more than wives. To understand their multifaceted identities beyond wifehood, we must look for their roles and statuses in sites other than that of marriage”.

It can be argued that, therefore, African feminism is a theory that is not moribund but active and alive to the changing circumstances in the lives of women. It understands the changing roles of women in various historical periods, which are evident in the novels under study from 1975-2016. It traces how women are depicted in various circumstances; how men respond to the various roles that women play in these changing times; and how they are affected by these roles in terms of how they are then viewed by society, which later determines how novelists depict them. Ogundipe-Leslie (1994:30) observes, in this regard, that “colonialism has thrown up new roles for women which are creating conflicts since men are not yet able to adapt to them, nor are they rid of old attitudes and expectations”. All this that has been forwarded by Ogundipe-Leslie (1994) clearly shows that society tends to look askance at women adapting to this change.

African feminism is cognisant of the fact that there are also indigenous cultural systems and external forces whose respective ideologies greatly affect women. Ogundipe-Leslie (1994:31) notes, in this regard, that “colonisation has also affected the legal structures of African societies, introducing 19th Century European ideas of patriarchy”. It should be noted that colonialism was not negotiated and therefore was imposed, in that the culture of the European was imposed upon African societies. The European patriarchal system exacerbated the effect of indigenous patriarchal structures, and the way women with such structures were viewed. This implies a collaboration of external forces and internal forces affecting women and this impacted on women and the general image of the African women. Oyewumi (2003:37) argues, for example, that “the image of the prostitute cannot be separated from the association of Africans with strong sexual desire, which reaches back into centuries of European fantasy”. This in a way might affect the depiction of women in novels published during the colonial period, when certain single women tended to be depicted as prostitutes; this would then seem to mean that in order for women to be viewed as living morally upright lives, they had to be under the tutelage of men.

African feminism relates to the study in its focus on societal attitudes that affect women. As Ogundipe-Leslie (1994:47) insists, “we do not want to change society at the political and economic level only. We should also change society at the attitudinal, motivational levels,

thereby changing the effective and psychic structures of persons”. This shows that societal attitudes towards women contribute to the stereotypes accorded to women in various spaces.

3. 5 Complementarity of Socio-historic approach and African feminism

Even though the theories used are different in terms of their focus, the socio-historic approach is not generally associated with gender issues, but it provides a framework for the interpretation of the experiences of women from a historical perspective. African feminism is largely concerned with the experiences of women and, like the socio-historic approach, is dependent on the context in order to interpret women’s realities.

The two theories have been used in this study as there is some complementarity between them. Most African writers write under specific circumstances and are not removed from society and do not produce art for art’s sake. They respond to cultural, economic, political challenges bedeviling their societies in different circumstances. Ogundipe - Leslie (1994:48) argues that “African writers are in fact caught in a double-faced fastness. Not only are they writing in a capitalist universe, they are writing in a colonial and neo-colonial one with all its attendant problems”. Thus, the issue of timing is important for African feminists as they also argue that the condition of women should be considered in terms of prevailing circumstances, and thus African feminism cannot be patterned after a balkanised and universalist feminism, which does not contextualise the problems of African women.

In the depiction of women, African writers are caught between paying homage to Westerners, who introduced classroom education ‘yet as mentally colonised and alienated persons, they are often unconsciously judging their society by Western standards and imposing foreign values while, at the same time trying, to sell their indigenous values, their Africanity, to the West’ (Ogundipe-Leslie 1994:48). The above assertion relates in a way to the early writers who were influenced by Western forms of interpreting reality, all this reflects the socio-historic circumstances that affected the writing of novels in Zimbabwe.

The socio-historic approach is related to African feminism as it traces the history of stereotypes from an African-centred approach in terms of the conditions affecting writers in their depiction of women in various historical periods. African feminism traces the experiences of women focusing on the economic, political and social issues affecting women. Both theories utilised in

this study are therefore closely linked to the history of the experiences of the writers themselves and how this, in turn, affected their interpretation of reality, the conditions under which the novels were written. The history and culture of Ndebele society are also placed at the fore in terms of how it continues to shape stereotypes accorded to women.

3. 6 Conclusion

The chapter discussed the two theories that underpin this study, namely the socio-historic approach and African feminism. In doing so, it traced the various tenets of the two theories that help in the interpretation and analysis of the stereotypes accorded to women in various historical periods that the study is focusing on, which is 1975-2016. The chapter also brought to the fore the convergences within the two theories, how they are suited to analysing stereotypes, the fact that they are imbued in history since timing is paramount in order to interpret a certain reality. The socio-historic approach focuses on the history and social circumstances but does not zero in specifically on the issue of gender, which African feminism attempts to do but from a historical perspective, taking into account the conditions affecting women during the various historical periods under study.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

4.1 Introduction

This chapter focuses on the research methodology that was used in the study. The chapter presents and explicates the major aspects of research methodology viz-a-vis, research design and research methods that were adopted for this research. The research design and research methods are essential as the nature of any methodology depends on the type, aims and goals of the study itself.

4.2 Research design

There are two major designs that researchers consider depending on the modalities of the research and these are the qualitative and quantitative research designs.

4.2.1 Qualitative Research versus Quantitative Research

The researcher would like to bring to the fore some characteristics of quantitative research which might not be useful in this study. There are different philosophical perspectives in each paradigm. Qualitative research focuses on or seeks to “understand, explain, explore, discover and clarify situations, feelings, perceptions, attitudes, values, beliefs and experiences of a group of people” Kumar (2014:104).

Kumar (2014:104) also notes the difference between qualitative and quantitative design methods in his assertion that:

The study designs mainly entail the selection of people from whom the information, through an open frame of inquiry, is explored and gathered. The parameters of the scope of a study, and information gathering methods and processes, are often flexible and evolving; hence, most qualitative designs are not as structured and sequential as quantitative ones. On the other hand, in quantitative research, the measurement and classification requirements of the information that is gathered demand that study designs are more structured, rigid, fixed and predetermined in their use to ensure accuracy in measurement and classification.

In relation to the above statement, it can be argued that stereotypes in literature can be carefully explored using the qualitative approach, which is flexible. Qualitative methods such as in-depth

interviews and open-ended questionnaires are deployed, and these do not restrict the respondents as they provide information related to culture or personal experiences relating to the stereotypes accorded to women in Ndebele society. The qualitative approach is useful in exploring and tracing stereotypes which could differ from one historical period to another. Kumar (2014:104), commenting on the use of qualitative and quantitative designs in different studies, argues that:

[s]tudy designs in qualitative research are more appropriate for exploring the variation and diversity in any aspect of social life, whereas in quantitative research they are more suited to finding out the extent of this variation and diversity. If your interest is in studying values, beliefs, understandings, perceptions, meanings, etc, qualitative study designs are more appropriate as they provide immense flexibility. On the other hand, if your focus is to measure the magnitude of that variation, 'how many people have a particular value, belief, etc, and then quantitative designs are more appropriate'.

For this research, the more appropriate research design is the qualitative research methodology, which has been deployed in order to understand social realities. This research methodology is also useful as it brings into perspective the trends relating to stereotypes in Ndebele fiction. Qualitative research methods can only yield a guide to general trends and observations and not results. Trends allow for an understanding of stereotypes in selected novels under study published between 1975 and 2016. It also establishes how and why people behave, think and make meaning as they do rather than focusing on what they do or believe in. The qualitative research methodology allows for an understanding of gender stereotypes in their social, political, and historical contexts in Zimbabwe as portrayed in the novels. The research also draws on other disciplines such as sociology and history to allow for an understanding and analysis of female gender stereotypes as portrayed in Ndebele fiction.

The seven novels that have been selected for this study cover three historical periods: pre-colonial, colonial and post-colonial. The pre-colonial period is represented in novels published later during the post-colonial period. The novels have been purposively selected because they were authored and published by both prominent male and female writers who have won awards. They, therefore, constitute a representative sample of topical issues affecting Ndebele society in which stereotypes accorded to women are revealed during the previously highlighted historical periods.

4.2.2 The Nature of Qualitative Research

Qualitative research takes into account the perspectives of the researcher and the participants involved in the research. It does not consist of generalisations and involves critical ethnography, as any society is structured by race, ethnicity gender and sexual orientation. As this research is grounded in qualitative research methods, this enables the researcher to gain a deeper understanding of gender stereotypes in Ndebele fiction as presented by selected Ndebele writers. In this study of gender stereotypes, the qualitative approach is appropriate and very necessary as the study establishes the type of female gender stereotypes that exist in the Ndebele community and probably why such gender stereotypes are accorded to the female and not the male gender in the community.

Since, in the analysis of gender stereotypes in the selected novels, the study deploys a qualitative research methodology, it is important to define what qualitative research is. Heyink and Tymstra (1993:293), in this regard, opine that:

[r]esearch is called qualitative if it is about determining ‘what things exist’ rather than to determine how many such things there are. More literally, ‘quality’ refers to the nature of things, rather than to their quantity.

In qualitative research, depth takes precedence over breadth since concern is largely focused on why and how people behave in a particular manner. Ambert, Adler and Detzener (1995:880) argue that:

Qualitative research, seeks depth rather than breadth. The aim of qualitative research is to learn about how and why people behave, think and make meaning as they do rather than focusing on what people do or believe on a large scale.

The assertion by Ambert et al., make qualitative methods imperative for this particular study, which is focused on a particular group of people, the Ndebele people. It becomes contextual research, since it seeks to know the different types of stereotypes accorded to women in Ndebele society as later reflected in Ndebele novels or works of art in general. Since gender stereotypes are founded upon social relations, the qualitative research methodology is the most appropriate to study them. As Flick (2014:11) argues, this approach, allows a researcher ‘to examine peoples’ experiences in detail, using a specific set of research methods such as in-depth interviews, observation, content analysis, visual methods and life histories or biographies’. To be noted at this juncture, is the fact that, “focus is on the detail and not necessarily breadth of ideas”

(Hennick, Hutter and Bailey 2013:8). Where detail on stereotypes is concerned, it should be acknowledged, first and foremost, that stereotypes exist and secondly it should be determined what influences these stereotypes and how they change or are maintained in different historical settings. Given that qualitative research examines the perceptions of various people in society especially women, who are the focal point of the study, this study uses feminist theories such as African feminism, which allows for an in-depth examination of the stereotypes that are accorded to women. For this reason, the researcher interviews both male and female writers on the issue of stereotypes in novels. Mies (1983) in Flick (2014:78) makes the following assertions about feminist research using the qualitative approach:

There are reasons why feminist research is more linked to qualitative than quantitative research. Quantitative research often ignores the voices of women, turns them into objects and they are often studied in a value neutral way rather than researched specifically as women. Qualitative research allows women's voices to be heard and their goals realised.

Ussher (1999:99), meanwhile, argues that:

Feminist research is focused on a critical analysis of gender relationships in research and theory, an appreciation of the moral and political dimensions of research and the recognition of the need for social change to improve the lives of women.

The above quotation attests to the need for critical analysis when it comes to the issue of gender and close interaction with selected individuals including authors, readers and literary critics is deemed necessary is appropriate in order to achieve the best results not in quantifiable terms but in terms of depth. Abdullahi, Senekal, Zyl-Schalekamp, Amzat, Saliman and Seneka (2012:21) submit that "the focus of the qualitative approach is thus on the microscopic level such as action, actor, perception and other mental processes". From Abdullahi et al., (2012) submission, it can be argued that the 'microscopic level' details can be deduced from literary critics and authors of selected novels under study.

It has been noted that qualitative research involves mental processes and perception, which are associated with a certain worldview that triggers certain thought patterns. Abdullahi et al., (2012: 21) argues that, "the qualitative research approach is rooted in micro-sociological traditions (such as symbolic interactions, the interpretive tradition, phenomenology and ethno methodology". Ambert et al., (1995) concur with Abdullahi et al., (2012) that the focus lies in the issues of the 'why' and the 'how' part of things and not 'where', 'what' and 'where'. The

‘what’ and ‘where’ part would largely fall under quantitative studies, which might not be the most, appropriate method for a study such as this one. Following the qualitative research method would trigger the question ‘why’ particular types of stereotypes are assigned to women and not men.

Since there are diverse meanings associated with certain representations of genders in different societies, the qualitative research approach would be the most appropriate to use as “human experiences, feelings, opinions, and their very existence are too complex to be presented in numerical terms as portrayed in a quantitative, positivist paradigm” (Abdullahi et al.,2012:23). The fact that human experiences are so complex further highlights the need for a multi-disciplinary qualitative research approach.

The use of the qualitative approach makes it possible to understand stereotypes in the context in which they are used since gender is a cultural concept that is nurtured within a particular society. The same applies to the issue of stereotypes, some of which are said to be universal, while others are assigned diverse meanings in different cultures and societies. Gender is thus a cultural concept and some gender stereotypes are peculiar to certain societies and infamous in other societies. Hennick et al., (2013:8) argue that:

[q]ualitative researchers study people in their natural setting to identify how their experiences and behaviour are shaped by the context of their lives, such as the social, economic, cultural or physical context in which they live. Qualitative research is useful for exploring or understanding complex issues for explaining peoples’ beliefs and behaviour and for identifying the social or cultural norms of a culture or society. Therefore qualitative research is most suitable for addressing ‘why’ questions to explain and understand issues or ‘how’ questions that describe processes or behaviour’

From the foregoing, it could therefore be argued that the qualitative approach allows for an understanding of why certain stereotypes are for this group or gender and not the other way round. The qualitative approach allows for an understanding of the underlying beliefs and reasons assigned with certain gender stereotypes and not specifically the types of stereotypes that are accorded to the female gender in Ndebele society as reflected in selected Ndebele novels. Therefore there is a clear link between the qualitative research methodology and issues relating to stereotypes.

Flick, Kardoff and Steinke (2004:8) argue, furthermore, that “qualitative research has a strong orientation to everyday events or the everyday knowledge of those under investigation”. Since the authors of novels in a way attempt to reflect everyday events, in this sense, there is an intricate relationship between literature and society. Literature is a reflection or mirror of what is happening in society, and novelists, who are part and parcel of society, cannot help but depict or comment on what is happening in society in their literary works. In this light, the qualitative approach sheds light on social relations and interactions and behaviours such as stereotypes by going back to the very society that is depicted in different novels which are set in different historical epochs.

It should be noted that certain stereotypes are universally associated with males and females, but this study narrows down to the understanding that certain stereotypes are peculiar to certain societies since stereotypes are largely influenced by several issues, that is a society’s cultural orientation, socio-political and economic issues and, last but not least, time and space. Hence, in the novels there are differences in the stereotypes associated with women in different spaces and time zones, making the qualitative research methodology most suitable for an understanding of these spatial and temporal contexts. Silverman (2007:19) argues that:

[q]ualitative research is fundamental to the understanding of another culture and seeks to understand things in their context.

In this study, the qualitative approach allows for an understanding of how men and women relate to each other. Since a stereotype is a form of representation, representations depict meanings assigned to different genders within a particular society, as well as what a particular gender thinks about the other in terms of different operational spaces such as home and work. By way of example, in novels written in the 1970s in Ndebele language fiction, most novelists gave the impression that women who resided in rural areas were pure whilst those in urban areas were morally corrupt, being spendthrifts and prostitutes. To be noted is that these are subjective perspectives and Flick (2014:16) opines that “qualitative research is of specific relevance to social relations; it takes into account that viewpoints and practices in the field are different because of the different subjective perspectives and social backgrounds related to them”.

The fact that qualitative research is bent on studying social relations within their context, it necessarily takes into account societal changes political or economic in nature - that affect gender relations and representations in society. Stereotypes are contextual and are governed by time and space, and some changes while others do not. This is in keeping with the argument by Flick (1998:13) that “qualitative research is oriented towards analysing concrete cases in their temporal and local particularity and starting from people’s expressions and activities in their local contexts”. In understanding stereotypes assigned to the female gender in different historical periods ranging from 1958- 2016 in the Ndebele novel, it is to be noted that women have various representations, depending on the time and the socio-economic issues affecting them. In the decade of crisis, for example, people resorted to different ways of getting money, men becoming thieves, dealers, and women as prostitutes as depicted in the novel (*Highway Queen* by Phiri 2010), a novel capturing the Zimbabwean experience in the decade of crisis. When a crisis hits, stereotypes may emerge that are largely associated with certain behaviours.

4.2.3 Ethnography

Ethnography holds that society is structured by race, ethnicity, gender and sexual orientation. Qualitative research is linked to ethnographies and this study is an ethnographic one. Cresswell (2014:14) opines that “ethnography is a design of enquiry coming from anthropology and sociology in which the researcher studies the shared patterns of behaviours, language and actions of a cultural group”. Thus, the study adopted the ethnographic approach, which is necessary as the study is imbued on Ndebele society and the need to go back to the community through interviews and interaction to understand the nature of gender stereotypes in Ndebele society, which largely emanate from culture and external forces. Flick (2014:15) argues that “another way to study complex issues with qualitative research is to design methods that are sufficiently open to the complexity of a study’s subject”. Since in this study, stereotypes feed on various things such as culture, changing society and space and time, various perspectives can be drawn from key informants. Members of Ndebele society were approached to give perspectives on stereotypes as they are knowledgeable about different practices in Ndebele society ranging from the roles of women in the domestic arena and beyond it that could earn them various stereotypes. As such, and as Flick (2014:16) avers, “qualitative researchers study participants’ knowledge and practices”. These need to be studied as they are part of the Ndebele society and know what is

celebrated in that particular society. The knowledge of societal practices is handed down from generation to generation and some of these practices do not quickly change. The views of participants who have insider knowledge about the practices is invaluable, as these insights allow for an understanding of some of the stereotypes presented by novelists in the historical periods under study. Stereotypes might be positive in society but in most instances, they are to be understood as social problems as they limit and restrict people into certain ‘acceptable behaviours’.

Cresswell (2014:4) rightly says that qualitative research is an approach for exploring and understanding the meaning that individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem. Ethnography involves the description of a person in relation to their worldview, which includes culture and customs. Reeves, Kuper and Hodges (2008:512) define ethnography as, “the study of social interactions, behaviours and perceptions that occur within groups, teams, organisations and communities”. In this light, the qualitative approach would allow for an understanding of stereotypes in Ndebele society, for both men and women, stereotyping becomes a social problem when there are negative stereotypes assigned to the female or male gender without a proper understanding of the socio-political and cultural issues fuelling them.

4.3 Research methods

4.3.1 Sampling

This research in the study of female stereotypes in selected Ndebele novels made use of purposive sampling. The sampling method was used in engaging the complexities of selecting novels in various historical periods and literary critics. This study focuses on female stereotypes in the following selected novels where we find women in the domestic space and in the workplace: *Lifile* (1975) by O.S.Mlilo, *Umbiko kaMadlenya* (1986) written by Mayford Sibanda, *Umendo* ([1977) authored by Barbara Makhalisa, *Etshabhini* (1990) by Ndabezinhle Sigogo, *Lokhu Akungeke Kwenzake* (1997) by Bekithemba Sodindwa-Ncube (1997), *Laphuma Elinye Lingakatshoni* by Bernard Ndlovu (1992) and *Esilojeni* (2016) by Mihla Sitsha-Tsheza. Tongco (2007:147) argues that “the purposive sampling technique is a type of non-probability sampling that is most effective when one needs to study a certain cultural domain with knowledgeable experts within”. In this sense novels and three literary critics who participated in the study were

selectively chosen in the interrogation of stereotypes accorded to women in Ndebele novels. These novels, written by male and female authors, were selected because they provide a representative sample of issues discussed by prominent Ndebele writers, some of whose novels have won awards. Thus, selection of these novels was not random. Tongco (2007:147) avers that under purposive sampling, “choosing the purposive sample is fundamental to the quality of data gathered; thus, reliability of competence of the informant must be ensured.” Novels and literary critics were purposively selected in this study. The seven selected novels cover issues to do with stereotypes in the historical periods under study; the novels are thus a representative sample of prevalent stereotypes accorded to women in each historical period.

The novels were analysed by the researcher and various people – the authors themselves gave insights on issues that affected the way they represented women in their novels be at a cultural and, political and economic level. Literary critics at university – were carefully selected for interview to unpack the issue of stereotypes in the novels since they were assumed to have an understanding of stereotypes and the various forces behind the emergence of these stereotypes.

4.3.2 Data-gathering techniques

In order to understand the complex issue of stereotypes as a form of representation in Ndebele language fiction, a number of data-gathering techniques such as interviews, content analysis and desk research were used.

4.3.2.1 Interviews

This study on stereotypes made use of interviews. An interview is a conversation which is specifically aimed at bringing out a certain result or outcome and therefore not everyone with regards to the issue of stereotypes was interviewed. Thus serious issues are discussed in interviews. Interviews were mainly conducted with a specific sample of authors (where applicable) of the novels under study. There was a need to interview authors so as to gain insight into the interface between fiction and reality as regards the issue of the representation of women in different novels. Flick (2014:14) argues that “the essential features of qualitative research are the correct choice of appropriate methods and theories, the recognition and analysis of different perspectives”. Face-to-face interaction made it easier for the researcher to detect the mood regarding female stereotypes in selected novels as physical interaction leads to an appreciation of

the mood of the interviewee when explaining certain aspects that allow for a deeper understanding of female stereotypes. The study therefore analysed the novels and solicited the views of key informants such as university literary critics and the authors of novels under study, which would provide valuable insights on Ndebele stereotypes. The representation of women somehow seems to follow similar trends with only superficial differences. Thus, there was need to determine whether there is any link between socio-historic and economic issues affecting Zimbabweans and gender relations and how these influence the stereotypes accorded to women.

Interviews were also carried out with lecturers in different areas of gender studies so that they could shed light on the culture of a people in question since gender is an offshoot of the worldview of a particular people in question. Lecturers who teach African literature at the University of Zimbabwe in different departments of the Faculty of Arts were interviewed so they could give their viewpoints on African literature and the politics of representation in Africa in general and Zimbabwe in particular. A teacher at Majiji who teaches Ndebele novels was also interviewed.

In-depth interviews were carried out with the above-mentioned informants. Abdullahi, Senekal, Zyl-Schalekamp, Amzat, Saliman, Seneka (2012:26) argue that, “an in-depth interview is a deeper and lengthier conversation between the interviewer and the interviewee”. An in-depth interview is one of the data-gathering instruments that focus on specific research questions. Such a technique guided the interviewer accordingly and avoided issues of generalisations in the broad topic of gender studies, focusing instead on stereotypes as a form of representation. This should yield the relevant information required to answer the research questions posed in this study. Although there is a lot of documentation on gender and representation, it was useful to get perspectives from Ndebele people in society. Flick (2014:22) argues that “qualitative research starts from people’s expressions and activities in their local contexts” as well as their interpretation of the things around them. In this regard, Heyink and Tymstra (1993:300) argue that “[q]ualitative research is pre-eminently appropriate if one is interested in the respondent’s own interpretation and wording with respect to their behaviour, their motives, emotions and experiences in the past and the present”. Such an approach helps examine the developments of stereotypes across different historical periods within the country’s history.

Hennick, Hutter and Bailey (2013:109) argue that “an in-depth interview is a one-to-one method of data collection that involves an interview and an interviewee discussing specific topics in depth”. The purpose of an in-depth interview especially in a semi-structured one is to guide the interviewee and probe them into the direction of the interviewer so that they give more insight with regards to certain issues, and in particular stereotypes. What is imperative in an interview is that the interviewee might provide insight into issues emerging in the novels, which are the primary data source in this study. They may also help to give experiences that lay akin to those in the novels, and this serves as a guide to the representations of women in Ndebele language fiction. Silverman (2007:117) argues that ‘interviews do not tell us directly about peoples’ experiences but instead offer indirect ‘representations of those experiences’. The researcher was able to relate the experiences of the interviewees with those found in Ndebele novels. In the same line of thought, Patton (2015: 14) contends that “interviews yield direct quotations from people about their experiences, opinions, feelings and knowledge”. In this way knowledge on stereotypes accorded to women was shed through interviews as the interviewees explained what they knew about female representation in novels and society in general.

4.3.2.2 Semi-structured interviews

In a semi-structured interview, the questions are open ended rather than closed and limiting. Flick (2014:197) argues that:

Semi-structured interviews are based on a set of prepared, mostly open-ended questions, which guide the interview and the interviewer. This interview guide should be applied flexibly and leave room for the interviewee’s perspective and topics in addition to the questions.

Semi-structured interviews are viewed as relevant to the issue of stereotypes, as the interviewee is not limited in his/her discussion and explanation of representation and stereotyping. Flick (2014:207) highlights the following advantage of using semi-structured questionnaires:

Semi-structured interviews have attracted interest and are widely used. This interest stems from the view that the interviewed subjects’ viewpoints are more likely to be expressed in an openly designed interview situation than in a standardised interview or a questionnaire.

The semi-structured interviews were handy in this research as the interviewees were not restricted in terms of expressing and explaining what they knew about stereotypes, be it in the novels under study or in society in general.

4.3.2.3 Content Analysis

Interviews and questionnaires were used to solicit information from participants. These methods, however, have their weaknesses. Therefore, texts from historians were useful in understanding and contextualising stereotypes. Texts from historians such as Ranger (1993) that capture various historical periods in Zimbabwe were used as reference points in depicting how various historical periods affected gender relations in Zimbabwe. Scholars such as Schimdt (1992), Berndt (2005) who also capture the experiences of women in the colonial period were analysed. Fraenkel and Wallen (1990) note that, “content analysis is a technique that allows researchers to study human behaviour indirectly through an analysis of their communication”. The advantage of content analysis is that the researcher is in a position to read texts and get a feel of the social life in the various historical periods and this gives the researcher ample time to go through earlier records. Ndebele novels written from 1975-2016 were examined in this study, making such records on the experiences, positions and images of women relevant and useful. This enabled the researcher to engage in current debates and be aware of the debates raised by critics after examining earlier documents. This is important as stereotypes can be studied in the context of a country’s history.

4.4 Ethical Considerations

Gray (2014:68) avers that ‘research ethics refers to the moral principles guiding research and conducting research in a responsible and morally defensible way. Ethical can mean what is good or right as contrasted with the unethical’. Every study should protect its participants and ensure that they are not harmed in any way. Consent was sought for carrying out the research and participants were not forced to participate. Hennick et al., (2013:62) opine that, “in qualitative research, there is a need to maintain the following ethical requirements at different stages of the research: voluntary participation, minimisation of harm, anonymity and confidentiality”. These scholars argue that if information and data are not anonymised, then the privacy and security of the participants could be compromised. Participants were informed about the purpose of the research, which was for academic purpose, to gain a deeper insight of and understanding of the literature forming the object of this study.

4.5 Conclusion

The above chapter has outlined the research methodology used in this research. The use of the qualitative research design over the quantitative one was clearly outlined as the qualitative one gives room for understanding the attitudes, beliefs and experiences of a people. It focuses on depth rather than breadth in the understanding of stereotypes. Novels were purposively selected and the study made use of seven novels from prominent male and female Ndebele writers. Informants were not randomly selected as the researcher focused on authors, readers and literary critics of African literature. The instruments for data collection were discussed that is interviews and questionnaires and their relevance justified in the study of female stereotypes in selected Ndebele novels from the period 1975-2016. The chapter has also discussed the critical texts to be used in understanding gender stereotypes in selected Ndebele novels. Texts relating to gender, general historical texts and historical texts about women in Zimbabwe were also examined. Ethical considerations have also been discussed in this chapter as informants were told about the purpose of the study.

CHAPTER FIVE

PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

5.1 Introduction

The chapter discusses stereotypes through a presentation and analysis of data from interviewees and selected novels. The data emanates from interviews conducted with authors of the novels and literary critics in the area of literature. This chapter analyses the portrayal of women in the pre-colonial, colonial and post-colonial periods. The seven selected narratives are set in different historical periods. The chapter analyses the various stereotypes emanating from these novels, starting with the pre-colonial setting, followed by the colonial setting and, lastly, the post-colonial setting. Data presentation is critical in the analysis of female stereotypes as presented in selected novels published between 1975 and 2016. Novels form the centre of understanding stereotypes in various historical periods identified in this research. The research approaches the issue of stereotypes as related to time and space – hence various themes emanate from novels in different historical epochs. The chapter examines whether novelists have particular stereotypes that they advance about women in different historical periods, paying attention to issues about women and how they are expected to behave in society, and the stereotypes associated with a particular behaviour trait (whether good or bad) as perceived by the society in question. This is done in order to have a clear view on gender and the overall identity of women in Ndebele society, as well as the implications of such depictions vis-à-vis emancipation and changing gender roles in Ndebele society. The study observes that stereotypes do not revolve around a single individual, hence the use of different novels from the same historical period in the analysis of stereotypes attached to women. The study observes that novelists portray a consensus regarding what society deems fit for its people – whether good or bad. Appiah (2000:48) describes the context of stereotypes, and the value or use of stereotypes in societies, by arguing that:

A stereotype is not a view about how members of the group behave simpliciter. It is grounded in a social consensus about how they ought to behave in order to conform appropriately to the norms associated with membership in their group.

The analysis focuses on how female characters consciously or unconsciously conform to stereotypes. It also shows how those who do not conform to stereotypes are treated. The expectations of other characters with regards to how women ought to behave are brought to the fore. This is noted through statements by these characters in the presence of women, or when discussing women in their absence. The negative and positive stereotypes associated with women's behaviour helps in understanding gender stereotypes associated with women in various historical periods under study. In the novels written from 1975 to 2016, women exist in different environments such as the home (rural and urban environment), workplace and battlefield. It is in these environments that the stereotypes are depicted, and that is also where they are either maintained or challenged – depending on the historical period in question. The chapter brings to the fore issues that shape these stereotypes, be it at political or economic level. On interrogating these stereotypes, the study pays attention to the historical period from which these stereotypes occur and what shapes them, which potentially triggers the 'acceptable' and 'unacceptable' role of women in the Ndebele society and the nation at large. The study analyses the way women are depicted in various historical periods in the context of culture, space and time. In the selected novels and historical periods, the study examines whether societal views on women change or not and the kind of implications these stereotypes have on the identity of women.

The analysis of novels helps in understanding stereotypes from a historical and cultural perspective since stereotypes are shaped by culture, history, time and space. Stereotypes are a way of understanding and interpreting gender in Ndebele society and the position of women among the Ndebele and the nation at large.

5.2 The Plot of *Laphuma Elinye Lingakatshoni* (Ndlovu, 1992)

The novel was published in 1992, way after the pre-colonial setting that it seeks to represent. The story is centred on the Ndebele nation and how it broke away from Tshaka in Zululand to what is present-day Zimbabwe. Characters in the novel live at Gibixhegu, where maNxumalo and Mzilikazi's sons - Nkulumane, Mangwana and Lobhengula are also temporarily staying. Mzilikazi's other wives are also part of the group. King Mzilikazi is not around, having separated from Gundwane's group comprising women and children. Mzilikazi's group has headed in a different direction in search for a better place to settle. The separation is strategic

militarily as it is meant to ensure that an enemy attack would not expose women and children and the warriors to harm its way.

The story revolves around the succession of king Mzilikazi. Chief Gundwane and Dambisamahubo, after noticing the disappearance of king Mzilikazi for a period of two years, immediately contemplate the king's succession and broach the subject with the head of Mzilikazi's wives, maNxumalo. The queen is happy about this and encourages her son, Nkulumane, to be king. This is in keeping with tradition as *indunas* (chiefs) must consult her over the coronation of the next king after Mzilikazi's suspected demise. She is expected to offer advice and her word is taken seriously. Mhlangano, who is Nkulumane's friend, advises the prince against ascending to the throne because he cannot ascertain whether or not his father is dead. Nkulumane pays no heed to his friend's advice, pointing out the rumour that a certain kingdom was said to have been destroyed by the Lawu people. He argues that since they had not heard from the king for two years, the only reasonable conclusion that could be drawn was that it was Mzilikazi and his people who had been destroyed. After some disagreements from two groups, the other led by Gundwane and the other one by Gwabalanda, Nkulumane is crowned as the king and replaces his father Mzilikazi.

The group led by Gwabalanda refuses to be part of the decision taken by Gundwane and maNxumalo of crowning Nkulumane as king whilst his father is still alive, insisting that the sun cannot rise while another has not yet set (thus, a king cannot be crowned while another still occupies the throne). Gwabalanda and his team go in search for the king until they found him. Mzilikazi is angered when he hears that his son has replaced him. He rejects the reasons brought forward by the *indunas* for installing Nkulumane as king. They tell Mzilikazi that they had been in a quandary since they needed a king to preside over the *inxwala* (first fruits) ceremony. The *inxwala* ceremony was an important ceremony on the calendar of the Ndebeles who strongly believed that it kept them close to their ancestors. It gave them an opportunity to thank the ancestors for the harvest and the continued protection they received from *ibutho* (army) against other kingdoms. Mzilikazi kills the *indunas* (chiefs) who had advocated for his replacement. Nkulumane disappears; his fate is unknown, and it is not clear whether his father killed him or exiled him to his uncles. Mzilikazi returns to a tumultuous welcome at Gibixhegu and is reinstated as king.

5.2.1 The Plot of *Umbiko kaMadlenya* (Sibanda, 1986)

The novel *Umbiko kaMadlenya*, a sequel to *Laphuma Elinye Lingakatshoni*, depicts events that revolve around the succession of king Mzilikazi. The succession of king Mzilikazi causes havoc and instability in the kingdom. In terms of setting, the novel focuses on events that took place in the pre-colonial period, centering on Mzilikazi's succession by Lobengula. It describes the civil war that broke out due to factional disputes regarding who should succeed Mzilikazi between Madlenya (a warrior) and Lobengula (one of the princes).

A decision has to be made quickly as to who of Mzilikazi's sons will succeed him. The dilemma is that the rightful heir is missing; the whereabouts of Nkulumane are unknown since it is not clear whether he was killed or exiled to his uncles back in Zululand. Installing Lobengula is problematic since the fate of Nkulumane is not known. For all they know, Nkulumane could be alive – thus presenting a potential for conflict.

Mkhaliphi and Mkhithika play a critical role in the succession of Mzilikazi. According to them, Mzilikazi had a soft spot for Lobengula – which they interpreted to mean that he was his chosen successor. Mbiko, a warrior married to one of Mzilikazi's daughters named Zinkabi, is not happy that the *indunas* were all in agreement that Lobengula should succeed Mzilikazi. Zinkabi is projected as a mother warrior who wants to reign side by side with her husband. She is fearless and aggressive and advises her husband that being a king is not something that is not achievable as the throne could be usurped, the same way Shaka usurped it from his brothers. In the end, Lobengula is crowned as king. The opposing group also crowns Mbiko as king. This saddens Lobengula who pleads with Mbiko to reverse this decision, arguing that a fight between them would cause bloodshed - with women and children likely to lose lives as well. Mbiko and Zinkabi ignore the advice and go on to organise an army to attack the ruling kingdom. A bitter battle is fought and Mbiko is set to lose. When Zinkabi realises that Lobengula's army is stronger, she kills herself to avoid the shame of being ruled by Lobengula, whom she considers unfit for leadership. After Mbiko's army is vanquished, people swear allegiance to Lobengula as their king. In both narratives, there are disputes as to who should be installed as king. As in

Laphuma Elinye Lingakatshoni, women are placed at the centre as they play roles, politically and culturally, to the nation building process.

5.2.2 The plot of *Lifile* (Mlilo, 1975)

Lifile focuses on the lives of Lifile and Hleziphi, who move from rural to urban spaces in a bid to make a better life for themselves. This rural-urban displacement compels the characters to succumb to different socio-economic and cultural experiences, which directly affect the manner in which they perceive their existence and relationships with others. *Lifile* depicts the experiences of young men and women as they migrate to urban areas in search for jobs. ‘Lifile’ is the central character in the novel, whose name means ‘it is doomed’ she goes to the urban centre in search of a job. Her parents and the other villagers are naturally opposed to this idea as they perceive that the urban environment is not suitable for women. As suggested by her name, *Lifile* experiences hardships in the town, as she is unable to find employment and is eventually forced to engage in prostitution. She returns to her rural home critically ill and at the verge of death.

5.2.3 The plot of *Umendo* (Makhalisa, 1977)

The novel *Umendo*, written by Barbara Makhalisa and published in 1977, centres around a young woman named Gugu, who has two children – Siphon and Ndumiso. She lives in the rural areas with her husband’s aunt, maZulu, whom she refers to as her mother-in-law. MaZulu seems to be tired of taking care of her because her nephew, Ndaba, no longer sends money for her upkeep. Gugu gets assistance from her friend and leaves for the city where she finds her husband living with another woman (Jenny). Ndaba ill-treats Gugu and she goes to her parents’ house where her father does not accept her. She decides to go back to her husband and she begins to look for her old friend, Musa, but fails to locate her. She finally meets an old classmate, Thulani, who helps her secure a job. Thulani and Gugu later fall in love. Ndaba appears at Gugu’s place looking wasted. He narrates how Jenny had stolen his property. Ndaba is later stabbed and Thulani and Gugu visit him. On his death bed, Ndaba advises Thulani to take care of Gugu. Thulani and Gugu are set to wed.

5.2.4 The plot of *Etshabhini* (Sigogo, 1990)

Etshabhini is centered upon two women, maKhuphe the shebeen queen and maMkhwananzi. MaMkhwananzi lives with her husband and her dog. MaMkhwananzi has a friend, maMhlanga, and through her we learn that she is not happy to stay in Mzilikazi because the place is crowded and there is noise from the neighbours. The girls living there are prostitutes and always playing their stereos on high volume. The shebeen is owned by maKhuphe and it makes her life difficult as she hardly gets time to rest. MaMkhwananzi and Gwebu cannot move to a better suburb because they cannot afford it. MaMkhwananzi's dog continuously attacks and disturbs MaKhuphe— making her want to kill it. MaKhuphe consults a traditional healer and wants to kill maMkhwananzi and Nyoni because they make her unsettled as they complain that the shebeen is disturbing them. Her efforts fail and her business runs low, and she finally leaves Mzilikazi.

5.2.5 The plot of *Lokhu Akungeke Kwenzeke* (Sodindwa-Ncube, 1997)

The novel *Lokhu Akungeke Kwenzeke*, is centred around characters Mpala, his wife maDewa and daughter, Irene. The Economic Structural Adjustment Programme (ESAP) has just started and Mpala is retrenched. Irene stops going to school, maDewa ventures into selling tomatoes but in vain as the market soon becomes flooded, and she eventually works for businessman Mabhena as a cross-border trader. The market gets flooded again and the products that maDewa is importing for Mabhena are no longer in demand. Mabhena employs maDewa's daughter after sleeping with maDewa. In the midst of all this, the employment rate is low and jobs are scarce as we meet young women prostituting in order to earn a living. While at work, Mabhena tries to get close to Irene. He finally rapes her and gets arrested shortly thereafter.

5.2.6 The plot of *Esilojeni*, (Sitsha-Tsheza, 2016)

The need for accommodation forces Mthokozisi to move into a house where the landlady (maNcube) is cruel, demands food from him and at times steals from him. Mthoko would sometimes fail to pay his rentals on time because of the cash crisis in the country, where some workers could actually go for months without salaries. Thoko, who is maNcube's daughter, is a 'cunning temptress' who tries by all means to make Mthoko love him and connives with her friend to take pictures of Mthoko in bed. All this happens when Mthoko is drunk. These pictures are used as evidence to prove that indeed Mthoko and Thoko were in a relationship that resulted

in Thoko's pregnancy. Thoko tries to ruin Mthoko's wedding by telling the marriage officer that she is pregnant for Mthoko; tests are done to prove Mthoko's innocence. Thoko is found guilty and MaNcube loses the house to her step-son. MaNcube is left homeless and Mthoko marries and buys a house.

5.3 Presentation and Analysis of Data from Interviews

This section looks at data that was gathered from oral interviews with different informants. The informants include authors of the novels under study, as well as literary critics who have read and studied Ndebele literary works. All this was done to get a deeper understanding of the kinds of stereotypes of and on women in novels written in isiNdebele.

5.3.1 Authors' perspectives on stereotypes of women

This subsection examines the interviews that were carried out with the authors of the selected novels under study. The interviews are important in revealing the authors' perspectives on the depiction of women in Ndebele society as embodied in Ndebele literary narratives. It was important to interview the authors as this helps in understanding what motivates their literary vision and creativity. In as much as it is possible to interpret literary texts without knowing anything of their creators, it can be argued that interviewing authors can offer novel perspectives and textures that allow us to nuance better our arguments.

5.3.2 Interviewee A

Interviewee A is an artist who started writing in the 1970s. She has written novels, poems and short stories, and she has written in both Ndebele and English.

When Interviewee A was asked whether her writing is in any way linked to the socio-political and economic history of the country, she highlighted that all writing is inherently affected and inflected by specific contexts:

My novels were affected by socio-cultural issues of the day, not necessarily, a political-economic issue...all life is politics: not overt politics of the day but has to do with politics.

The assertion from Interviewee A relates to the socio-historic approach. Oguz (2007:1) argues in this regard that, “we do not live in a social world; the social world is already within us determining how we think.” In a way, what the Interviewee implies is that whatever she writes is inadvertently linked to the prevailing socio-political and economic contexts. In this thinking, literary texts cannot be dissociated or understood outside the conditions in which they have been created. The texts thus, capture and represent these contemporary realities in their diverse complexities.

As captured in the title of the novel, *Umendo* (Marriage), the interviewee’s focus is on the social institution of marriage. A second question was posed: *What affected your writing during the period your novel was written and published, and did the Southern Rhodesia Literature Bureau (SRLB) have an impact on the structure of your novel and also the themes that you projected in your novel?* In response to this question, the Interviewee pointed out that she was not directly affected by the Literature Bureau and it never prescribed any themes for those writing literary texts. She said:

The Literature Bureau did not have an impact in the structure of my novels; it encouraged short story, novel and play writing.

She, however, highlighted the merits of the Literature Bureau in that it encouraged the writing of novels through writing competitions in order to encourage the teaching of African languages. She states in this regard:

The University of Zimbabwe started in the 1950s, and when the department was created it had no support structure. There were no novels; the Literature Bureau was an arm of the government, an arm of the Ministry of Education and they threw out competitions. They never gave any themes.

She explained that there were no themes prescribed by the Literature Bureau. In this way, whatever she wrote was inspired partly by the works that she had read and also by what was happening at that time. She affirms in this line of thinking:

I played it by the ear. In most cases there were stories of a young man leaving to town - a depiction of what used to happen: women remaining at home while men went to work because of industrialisation. There were factories manufacturing blankets and clothes;

women were nannies and men garden boys. Men would go back to the rural areas on weekends and month ends.

The Interviewee explained that the Literature Bureau did not directly prescribe any themes for writers, but somehow evaluated manuscripts and censored any material that was deemed to be critical of the government at that time. The Interviewee finds that besides encouraging authors to write in their indigenous languages, the Literature Bureau censored material that was to be published, she notes:

People hated the Literature Bureau because it did not want people to depict anything political. Writing was not supposed to depict government institutions troubling people, for example depicting the police troubling people. In my novel, I was made to change my content because I was told that the police did not mistreat people, something that I had revealed in my novel and yet this was what the police did. I had to remove some of the material because I wanted the novel to be published.

This, in a way, depicts why writers wallowed on the same things even though the Literature Bureau did not prescribe any particular themes for writers. Their writing became limited – thus forcing some to oscillate around the same themes. So, in a way, writers had limited options.

From what inspired the Interviewee's way of writing, it can be noted that numerous issues come into play when one is writing; an individual's work of art is influenced by immediate surroundings, politics of the day and the general way of life. Answering a question on how women are presented in her novel and whether the historical period affected male and female relations in her novel, she had this to say:

I depicted things as I saw them, there was patriarchy, women could not go to town at free will; a woman would wait for the man to tell them to come, and patriarchy ruled the day.

What can be deduced from the above statement is that, from the Interviewee's perspective, it is patriarchy that contributed to the control of women, whereas both the government at that time and patriarchy contributed to the control of women. This can be seen through Barnes' view on the movement of women. Barnes (1999:95) argues that:

In a meeting held in April 1935 by the Matabeleland Home Society (MHS) over the enforcement of the 1901 Native Marriage Ordinance in urban areas. The outcomes in the

meeting were that, “the gates into towns be shut to women by way of inspection for marriage certificates”

Women were the ones who were grossly affected because they were expected to be under the authority and guardianship of men, the Interviewee attests that women were affected by patriarchy as she states:

Ubaba yindoda yomuzi; okumele ilalelwe, konke kulawulwe yiyo, njalo umama ngowesintwana. Ibala leli licitshwe ngemva kukazibuse ngoba lincedisela ekuncindezeleni omama. Umuntu wayesithi angahlangana lendoda athi banjani abantwabakho wayebalisela lomama.

(The father is the head of the house and is supposed to be respected; he makes major decisions, and a woman is equivalent to a child. Terms like *owesintwana* (of a child like nature) were banned after independence as they contributed to the subjugation of women. When a man met his friend and asked after his family, he merely said ‘how are your children?’ and this term was implicitly understood to be inclusive of the wife as well.)

The Interviewee explained that she has been criticised for not depicting women well, and she argues that, *‘I depicted things as I perceived them and, as feminism grew; I was accused of not depicting women as strong’*. She notes that women characters in her literary works tried all they could, but their performance space was governed by patriarchy.

In this way, women are presented as children who have to live under the care of men. The Interviewee explicitly attests in this regard that:

*Ugwalo kumelwe lukhangelwe sikhangele isikhathi olulotshwe ngaso kunye lezinto ebezisenzakala ngesikhathi leso, kugwalo oluthi **Umendo** ngiveza izinto ezazisenzakala ngesikhathi leso, njalo ugwalo olunjengo **Mendo** olulotshwe ngama1970s kakumelanga lukhangelwe ngamhlo anamuhla.*

(When analysing a novel, we should be guided by the context and the socio-historical experiences obtaining at that time. In the novel *Umendo*, I depict things that were happening at that time and when focusing on a novel like *Umendo* which was written in the 1970s, we should not analyse it in the context of the current environment.)

The Interviewee’s statement attests to the socio-historical experience, thus she links what is in her novel with what is happening in the society. This drives home the idea that every literature bears the stamp of each age.

5.3.3 Interviewee B:

Interviewee B is an artist who has written novels in Ndebele and short stories in English.

When Interviewee B was asked on whether his writing of the novel is in any way linked to the socio-political and economic history of the country, noted that he wanted to talk about the relationship between the landlords and their tenants and, in doing this, noted the challenges faced by Mthoko as he could not pay his rentals on time due to cash shortages in the country. To be acknowledged here is that, indeed, the author's writing is connected to the political and economic issues of the day.

The interviewee explains that he centrally focuses on the marriage institution, highlighting its importance. He elucidates that he writes to give advice to girls who lose opportunities of getting married by focusing on men who are already taken. His main preoccupation is to depict the centrality of marriage to the female figure. He says that it is important for women to get married, as this somehow brings stability to their lives. The interviewee notes:

*Kugwalo oluthi **Esilojeni** ngikhangele indaba yomendo. UmaNcube loThoko ngabantu abakhangelele ukuthi umuntu ukuze aphile kumele kube lowesilisa. Empilweni kuqakathekile ukuthi umuntu ayende, loba kulabantu abathi bona nxa bezisebenzela abadingi isilisa empilweni zabo.*

(In the novel *Esilojeni*, I focus on marriage. MaNcube and Thoko are of the view that in, order to survive, a woman has to be attached to a man. In life, it is important for one to marry, even though there are women who are well up who think that marriage is not important and do not need men in their lives, marriage is always important.)

It is evident that the Interviewee is influenced by patriarchal ideologies as he considers the significant value of men in women's lives, and that women are incomplete without men. In this way of thinking, society disregards single women because getting married for a woman and having a family is far more important than being rich. His way of writing and thinking is founded on male-centered cultural practices which marginalise and look down on single women. Interestingly, the same scorn is not heaped on single men whose value is not diminished by being bachelors. Thoko desperately looks for a man to marry her. She gets pregnant for Nkanyiso and lies that Mthokozisi is the one responsible for her pregnancy. The novel *Esilojeni* depicts women who are single and desperate in their search for husbands who will make their lives complete. This desperation leads women to lie. He argues that Thoko does not just want to get married to

any man, but a man who can provide for her. Her mother even assists her to get a man who can provide for her. The Interviewee notes that:

Umendo uqakathekile. UmaNcube uyakunanzelela lokhu ngoba udingela umntanakhe ijaha. Uzama ngendlela zonke ebantwini ababuya bezohlala kuye.

(Marriage is important; maNcube is aware of this and searches for suitors for her daughter. She tries by all means to search for suitors from her tenants.)

From what has been expressed above, it is apparent that women are depicted as people who have to be taken care of by men and cannot live independent lives. The Interviewee notes that Thoko does not just want a husband but a man who can take care of her, which is why she refuses to be with Nkanyiso. The Interviewee points out:

UThoko ufuna ijaha elisebenzayo. Intombi zifuna umuntu olemali, olenhlalakahle njengoMthokozisi.

(Thoko wants a boyfriend who is employed; girls generally want men who are well up, men who can offer financial security - like Mthokozisi)

Thoko's frantic search for such a man turns her to do evil deeds as she frames Mthoko. The novel depicts the extent to which women can go just in order to be taken care of by men. Interviewee B, on explaining how women are presented in his novel, notes that he presented two types of women: the ones that are morally upright and the ones that have no morals:

Egwalweni lwami ngethula omama abaziphetheyo abanjengo Nokuthula, uNokuthula uziphetha, ukhulele esintwini ulethemba lejaha lakhe. UMthokozisi kafuni kuphunywukwa yintombi le. Ngakolunye uhlangothi, kulabesifazana abanjengoThoko abangaziphathanga.

(In my novel, I present two types of women. The ones that are morally upright like Nokuthula because they were raised in a cultured family; she trusts her boyfriend, and Mthoko does not want to lose such a woman. On the other hand, there are women like Thoko who are morally decadent.)

The Interviewee's assertion above reveals that, just like in the colonial period, there is still a depiction of the good and bad woman in the post-independence period.

A point to be considered is the fact that even though marriage is important, girls miss on opportunities to get married by focusing on men who are already married.

The Interviewee says,

Amantombazana alahlekelwa ngamathuba okwenda ngokukhangelela umendo emajaheni akhonjiweyo.

(Young women miss on opportunities to get married because of focusing on men who are already taken, and in stable relationships with their partners.)

He says his novel comes as a form of advice to young women who wish to marry. Thoko does not get married because she looks for marriage in the wrong place. She becomes a failure in the end because she is not married, thus suggesting that the author is still pinned on the idea that a woman should be dependent upon a man in order to be successful. This explains why Nokuthula, who is morally upright, gets happily married in the end.

5.4 Critics' Perspectives on Stereotypes of Women

This section covers the interviews that were done with literary critics at the University of Zimbabwe and Majiji High School. Their views are important in the understanding of stereotypes in Ndebele literature. Discussions with the literary critics were not confined to just the novels that are being analysed in this study. Rather, discussions involved the literary depiction of gendered relations and gender(ed) stereotypes. Some had read a few novels, short stories and poems set in certain historical epochs, and they commented on stereotypes of women in terms of how they are continuously represented in these works of art. Their views helped in the understanding of stereotypes in Ndebele fiction and in Ndebele society in general.

5.4.1 Interviewee C

Interviewee C is a male lecturer who is an Associate Professor in the Department of Languages, Literature and Culture at the University of Zimbabwe. When asked on how women are represented in Ndebele literature, Interviewee C noted that women are presented in stereotypical ways as they are expected to fulfil specific societal roles which are particularly focused on domestic roles within the family home. Interviewee C notes the most common stereotypes in novels:

The most recurrent stereotype is the one that embodies the woman as the mother who has to sacrifice everything, including themselves, for the greater good of the family and society.

Interviewee C also notes another way in which women are stereotyped as he says,

Women are infantilised. One of the Ndebele words for women, 'abesintwana', equates women to children. This implies that women cannot think on their own as is the case with minors, given that they 'require men' to think for them and also protect them. Sigogo's novel represents this stereotype.

What has been asserted by Interviewee C highlights what happens in Ndebele culture in that women are perpetually subsumed under men, with the men seen as *inhloko yomuzi* (the head of the house) and women as children who wait for men to make major decisions in the family.

On the other hand, Interviewee C notes that women who behave in counter-stereotypical ways are considered in a negative perspective. The Interviewee makes reference to prostitutes and how society views them. Interviewee C also points out that:

*Women who dare to think for themselves, especially concerning their bodies, agency and sexualities, are categorised into another stereotype – that of prostitutes or loose women. Makhalisa's play, **Umhlaba Lo**, for example, presents this stereotype very well.*

Interviewee C examines the stereotypes arising in different historical stereotypes, and on whether male and female authors project women the same way, he found that novelists are influenced by culture in their projection of women, regardless of the gender they belong to. He asserts that:

In the different stereotypes of women in Ndebele literature, it is important to consider that these works are critical in highlighting the precarious condition of women in these societies. Literary representation plays a pivotal role in destabilising the stereotypes that are being portrayed in the texts.

From what has been presented above, it can be noted that stereotypes accorded to women arise endogenously from culture as there are Ndebele sayings that contribute to the subjugation of women through confining them to the domestic space and being under the control of men. Assertive women are stereotyped negatively as they are deemed going against the demands of their culture.

5.4.2 Interviewee D

Interviewee D is also a male critic who is a Senior Lecturer at the University of Zimbabwe, in the Department of Languages, Literature and Culture.

When Interviewee D was asked to explain how women are typically represented in Ndebele fiction, he said:

The representation of women depends on the ideology of the author, the time the novelist is writing and the events obtaining at the time the novel is written and not necessarily the gender of the author.

Interviewee D continues to explain the representation of women, dissecting the rural-urban dichotomy in the colonial period:

*In the colonial period, events influenced what authors depict; Mlilo depicts the character Lifile, who is in the urban areas, and Lulu and Nozipho in the play **Umhlaba Lo!** who are prostitutes in town. These are juxtaposed with the rural good that is Sibonile, who has acquired good Christian and traditional values from her rural home, it is in the same place where we see Sibonile's mother submitting under her husband, Nduku.*

To be noted is the fact that society does not approve of immorality, and this is the reason why women who are morally wanting face their punishment in the novel *Lifile* and the play *Umhlaba Lo!*

As Interviewee D previously highlighted, ideologies and time play a critical role in how women are presented. He notes how women are criticised in the post-independence period for being assertive and trying to be at the same level with their male counterparts, this is depicted by poets like Zondo and Dube. Interviewee D notes that women in the post-independence period are assertive and reveals how women have always been marginalised, historically. He singles out Makhalisa, who clearly questions male dominance and supremacy in the poem *Batsho ngani?* where she notes that women also played a critical role during the war of liberation. So, therefore, there is no need for society to look down upon women and refer to them as the inferior sex.

Interviewee D opines that:

*The depiction of women largely depends on the historical period and organisations that sponsor the literature. The Zimbabwe Women Writers sponsored the short stories entitled **Vus'Inkophe** and **Vala Singafohleli Lesisilo**. In these works of art, issues of women emancipation and marginalisation are brought to the fore. This, then, becomes protest literature. The anthology **Giya Mthwakazi** became a response to the Beijing conference on women emancipation, and in this way, there is a difference between writers writing before the conference and after the conference.*

In this manner, women's organisations and the Zimbabwean Women Writers give room to and encourage women to voice out on issues directly affecting them in society.

5.4.3 Interviewee E

Interviewee E is a female teacher and she teaches Ndebele language and literature in High school.

Asked on how women are represented in Ndebele novels, Interviewee E noted that women of old were homemakers. She gives an example of Gugu in *Umendo*, who fights all obstacles and does not give up on her husband, and still hopes that he will change his ways and take care of her and her children. Interviewee E explains that:

Gugu is a typical home maker, a good example of the typical Ndebele woman who gets married solely because she wants to build a home.

From the above assertion by Interviewee E, it can be revealed that the mother trope is a stereotype that is attached to the woman. Women have the sole responsibility of building a home. Men are not given the burden of making sure that the home is intact, regardless of how the man behaves. When talking about a home, reference is not being made to a building but to the family as a whole, which consists of the father, mother and the children. The centrality of the woman in the home is also noted in the Shona society through the saying *musha mukadzi* (the home is a home because of a woman/wife). Interviewee E affirms the view that women are home makers who perform well in the domestic arena, and this is where they perform their gender roles well.

Interviewee E also notes that women are presented as loose and alludes to characters like maMpofu in *Akulazulu Emhlabeni* and Khonzaphi in *Impilo Yinkinga*. She notes that the presentation of women is not largely determined by the gender of the author but by events obtaining at the time the novel is published. Interviewee E submits that:

MaMpofu, a married woman, is presented as loose and is punished in the end as she loses her husband.

Notably, literary texts are expected to have a direct impact on morality, and in this way women who had loose morals were punished in the end so that readers can embrace good morals.

With regards as to whether there is any change or continuity in the way women are represented in various historical epochs, Interviewee E noted that there were some changes in the way women are presented as they begin to be more assertive. She notes that this is clearly depicted in poetry, as women no longer merely submit to male authority but question the status quo:

In the post independence period, women are portrayed as questioning and challenging the status quo as they become assertive and advocate being their own bosses. The woman now challenges the man and is failing in the home.

One can note that even though women are assertive and domineering in other spaces outside the home, they are seemingly failing in the home because they have moved away from submitting to male authority.

5.5 Sex Roles and Stereotypes: Implications on Gender and Identity

Gender is a social construction and the distinction between men and women is in terms of the roles and societal expectations which are aligned to their biological sex. In this way, society is understood through compartments, and emphasis is largely on difference in order to assign what is expected from men and women in different societies in question. This distinction between men and women makes it easier to formulate cultural and societal expectations for each gender.

Thus, it can be noted that the notion of gender itself emphasises on the social construction of masculinity and femininity. Marini (1990:16) argues that:

The study of sex and gender is concerned with documenting the existence of differences between the sexes and explaining why there are these differences...there are roles of both biological and social influences.

To be noted is the fact that sex and gender issues emphasise differences rather than similarities. From this perspective, compartmentalisation of society makes identification easy. Identity is in terms of expectations from each sex. As a result, society is able to follow up easily on expected roles, and a particular form of identity and societal expectation is created in the nation at large. Societal expectations become critical in the fashioning of an identity for men and women. Sex roles themselves do not operate in a vacuum as they are related to the cultural experiences of a people, which are sometimes formulated by historical experiences. Sanday (1981:15) has this to say about stereotypes:

They do not derive from human genetics but from the historical and political circumstances in which people find themselves when they are forced to come to terms with their environment and themselves as a social unit.

The continuous representation of women and the roles assigned to them, stereotypes women and men. There are already prescribed behavioural traits for men and women which they must fit in.

Baur (2013: 27) argues that “the prescriptive versus descriptive distinction can help scholars understand how individuals use stereotypes to develop expectations for women and how individuals use stereotypes to evaluate actual behaviours of women”. The issue of stereotypes goes a long way in making a society understand what a man and a woman is. In the prescribed and acceptable behaviours of men and women, the issue of compartmentalising men and women into certain roles sets to control different genders or groups in a particular society so as to maintain uniformity that generates control and little resistance from the group in question.

Both men and women are stereotyped, and gender stereotyping regulates how each gender behaves in the society in question. Stereotypes pose limits for both men and women. They control people and impose a shallow worldview, even in the midst of cultural, economic and political changes or issues that affect the identity of a particular gender. The stereotypes remain static as they give little room for consideration of these changes in society. For example, a woman should be a good mother and cook. On the other hand, men are expected to be breadwinners – hence they occupy the outside homespace. Schmenk (2004:516) argues that:

stereotypes are fixed ways of thinking about people grouped into social category, so gender stereotypes comprise static notions about feminine and masculine traits, regardless of social, cultural historical variation in the lives of women and men.

Schmenk’s contention here is that people’s minds do not change in the way they view gender. Society already has inherent views about its men and women that is inherited from generations before. Those who transgress the gender norms or preconceived notions are labelled. The labels constitute what is considered as good or unbecoming behaviour of a man or woman.

5.5.1 Background to nationalism and nation building

The novels *Laphuma Elinye Lingakatshoni* (1992) and *Umbiko kaMadlenya* (1986) narrate events that took place in the nation-building process of the Ndebele nation. Notable is that the Ndebeles, that is, speakers of the language, did not originate from present day Zimbabwe, but have roots in South Africa. Acknowledging the important role played by novelists in sustaining the memory states building, Hadebe (2007:1) has this to say:

As creative writers are not historians, no one expects them to be factual and faithful to evidence. Nonetheless, the creative writers’ versions of historical events are popularised more than documented history.

While acknowledging that novelists may not capture a nation's history characteristic of historians, novelists occupy a critical site in capturing experiences of the past. It is, therefore, safe to say that narratives are equally as important as historical documents and can be used in retelling the Ndebele history. Although it can be argued that in novels characters may be fictionalised, the general worldview and way of life of a people is brought to the fore as in the two novels under study. It is for this reason that historical fiction may be used more often than documented history to give a glimpse of the way of life of a group. Fictional narratives may be popular because of the way they tackle historical events. Readers are, "transported over time, shaped by the changing circumstances characteristic of narratives" (Hofmeyer, 1993:25). Novels are, therefore, a critical cog in defining a nation and issues to do with nationalism.

Nationalism is defined by Wilford (1998:10) as "an ideological movement for attaining autonomy, unity and identity on behalf of a population deemed by some of its members to constitute an actual or potential nation". Therefore, nationalism as an ideological construct is associated with nation building. Nationalism can be best understood as the desire for national advancement or political independence and invokes a spirit or aspirations common to the whole nation, thus strengthening devotion and loyalty to one's own country. In this chapter, nationalism is understood within the confines of nation building, that is, the advancement of a nation politically and culturally. For example, in Ndebele history, there are three main events that have attracted the interest of both historians and creative writers that is the formation of the Ndebele state after Mzilikazi left Zululand. Secondly, it is the succession to Mzilikazi's throne and, finally, the downfall of the Ndebele state and the fate of Lobengula its last king. Thus, in two novels at the centre of this study, that is, *Laphuma Elinye Lingakatshoni* (1992) and *Umbiko kaMadlenya* (1986), the focus is on the building of the Ndebele nation as the Ndebele people moved away from the Zulu kingdom to present-day Zimbabwe.

The nation and nationhood are what is called the Ndebele society today. Different ethnic groups make up what is acclaimed as the Ndebele nation. Sayi (2016: 40) observes that, "the nucleus of this nation is the sub-Nguni group (Abezansi) led by Mzilikazi, (the group that broke away from the Zulu kingdom and the Khumalo clan) which settled in present-day Zimbabwe. Enroute, the Abezansi group raided communities (Abenhla) and incorporated them into their kingdom". Completing the kingdom (Ndebele nation) was the AbeLozwi, that is, the group that was found

in present-day Zimbabwe. Thus, the Ndebele nation was built through raids and assimilating different ethnic groups into the kingdom and adopting their culture and way of life.

The formation of the Ndebele state relied on men and women. Men trained to be warriors, fought and defeated other kingdoms and incorporated them into their own. Though women were not involved in battles; they still played an active role in nation building. They gave birth, cared for the children and taught the children the Ndebele cultural values, beliefs, traditions and expectations, thus contributing to nation building (Porter, 1998; Wilford, 1998)).

5.5.2 Women and Nationalism

Nationalism is love for one's country and doing one's best to keep the society intact at a political, cultural and economic level. Even though nationalism is associated with the public political sphere in Zimbabwean literature, there are several other entry points such as transmitting culture. Indigenous culture assigns and defines gender roles for men and women. Marsh (1998:110) observes that "nationalism has to be understood by aligning it not with self-consciously held political ideologies, but with the large cultural systems that preceded it, out of which-as well as against which it came into being". Thus, women in any society also contribute to nationalism by growing the nation (procreation) and contributing to the economic wellbeing of the nation.

The growth of a nation and nationalism cannot be attributed to a single gender; neither can it be identified with one group. Women, men, children, and their culture make up a nation. The contribution can be politically, culturally, economically and ideologically. Wilford (1998:11) makes the observation that, "nationalism has been deployed in a variety of ways, including the whole process of national-building, a sense of national consciousness sentiment, a symbolic and linguistic representation of the nation, an ideology, a movement intended to realise the national will." At the centre of Wilford's assertion is the realisation that in nationhood and nationalism, women are not only associated with training children as cultural custodians and mother figures in the nationalistic project, but they stand side by side with their male counterparts - giving them advice as the mother warriors. Women and men assume different statuses requiring different gender roles, and they assume different roles requiring them to have different behavioural traits. Thus, strict heterosexual roles align women with femininity, and acting contrary by assuming

male roles is out of the norm. Such women as Zinkabi and Nyamazana are an exception, thus they are not accepted as women in society.

5.6 The depiction of women in *Laphuma Elinye Lingakatshoni*

The section analyses and discusses stereotypes assigned to women. The selected stereotypes depict women as advisors, mothers and cultural custodians. Women stereotypes carry either positive or negative connotations. The male and female gender is associated with different cultural processes and teachings instilled in children from a tender age. Culture is at the centre in defining the roles of men and women. Just like any heteropatriarchal society, the male gender in the Ndebele society is associated with masculinity and the female gender with femininity. This dichotomous way of viewing gender is entrenched in the minds of the young from a tender age through socialisation. There are certain behavioural traits that are instilled in the minds of children that emphasise on 'differences' often associated with their biological sex. It is through that socialisation that acceptable cultural beliefs are secured in the Ndebele society.

The novel by Ndlovu (1992), which is centrally locked in the succession of Mzilikazi by his son Nkulumane, depicts a pre-colonial setting even though the novel is published almost two decades after Zimbabwe had gained her independence in 1980. The influence from external forces is minimal as the Mzilikazi nation in transit incorporates different tribes such as the Enhla into the Ndebele nation. The nation building for the Ndebeles happens as they run away from the Moffats who are attacking them. The novel *Laphuma Elinye Lingakatshoni* gives a clear depiction of the roles of women and stereotypes associated with them in the pre-colonial period.

5.6.1 Women as advisors in *Laphuma Elinye Lingakatshoni* (1992) and *Umbiko kaMadlenya* (1986)

Fulatha (Lobengula's mother) and Mwaka Nxumalo (Nkulumane's mother), in the novel *Laphuma Elinye Lingakatshoni*, best illustrate the advisory role of women. Mwaka Nxumalo is the only woman who plays a central role in the novel; not much is said about Fulatha, who is considered as *umthanyelo* (the queen's maiden). The women are both found in the royal house. When Mzilikazi's replacement is required, *Indunas* (chiefs)(represented by Gundwane Ndiweni) consult Mwaka Nxumalo because she is the most senior wife (queen) of Mzilikazi. It is clear that she has an important role to play in running the affairs of the nation. Being the queen also gives

her a leadership position with power that some men in the kingdom do not have. Notably, the *Indunas* (chiefs) are the king's legal advisors but when they are faced with the challenge of an absent king, could not make the decision to install a new king without the queen's advice. Because she likes the idea of her son becoming king, she cleverly manipulates the *Indunas* through a concocted dream that suggests that Mzilikazi's spirit considered Nkulumane his suitable successor. In the novel *Umbiko kaMadlenya*, Zinkabi plays a central role in advising her husband to usurp the kingship from Lobengula. Zinkabi is Mzilikazi's daughter. As in *Laphuma Elinye Lingakatshoni* (Ndlovu, 1992), Zinkabi participates in decision making on governance issues. Zinkabi is seen making decisions outside the home confines, extending to issues to do with governance. Zinkabi demonstrates that governance issues have never been a preserve of the male gender since, historically, women have played an indirect (and sometimes direct) role. Fusi, cited in Sibanda (1986:53), comments on Zinkabi's role thus:

... *umfazi makangadelelwa, kunengi umfazi angakucebisa indoda njalo siyabe siyazikhohlisa nxa singacabanga ukuthi abafazi kabazihluphi ngezindaba zombuso welizwe.*

(Women should not be looked down upon; there is a lot that a woman can advise you on and we would be day-dreaming if we are of the view that they are not concerned with issues to do with governance.)

It can be inferred, therefore, that women have never left decision making on governance issues in the hands of males. They have always had a way of participating, however indirect it may be. The argument could be that women's participation has been indirect, so lacking a public voice. Women could influence their husbands in private, but they did not exercise any official power. Male power defined and enforced the rules of society.

Women are portrayed as the advisors; they advise their male counterparts on political issues. In the character Zinkabi, we see a woman who defies tradition and protocol by advising and encouraging her husband to succeed Mzilikazi. She is able to subtly persuade her husband through logic: she does this in an intelligent way when she says, '*alukho uhlobo olwadalelwa ukubusa, ababusayo babusa ngamandla abo*' (no-one was born to rule or lead; those who do so do it on their own will and power) (Sibanda, 1986:30).

This critical role of women in affairs of the nation is captured by the Ndebele adage '*umfazi kalankosi*' (even a king has to listen to his wife), which emphasises that, nomatter the position of

authority that a man holds; he has to rely on his wife for advice. A man may despise the advice offered to him by his male counterparts but he will always take heed to advice offered by his wife, or is always ready to listen to what his wife says. Thus powerful is a queen's voice in any matter that Ziqwana, in Ndlovu (1992:16), comments:

Akulamuntu olamandla okuphikisana lelizwi leNdlovukazi yesizwe kumbe indunankulu yeSigodlo. Ilizwi leNdlovukazi kumbe elendunankulu yesizwe lilokhe liyilizwi lenkosi.

(No one has the power to go against the Queen or the commander. The Queen's word or the word from the commander should be taken seriously, as it is not different from the king's word.)

The acknowledgement of the queen's authority is demonstrated when, upon getting advice from Manxumalo, the *Indunas* (chiefs) quickly install Nkulumane as king, thus emphasising her power in governance issues. In support of the powerful role women played in governance issues in pre-colonial Africa, Drew (1995:2) submits that, "many pre-colonial African societies had structures for female political involvement, through institutions such as queens and queen mothers and through women's associations and networks." This demonstrates that women have always played a major role in teaching and upholding cultures, as well as guiding society in general on how things should be done.

Zinkabi does not limit her advisory role to governance and political issues but also advises Madlenya on cultural procedures in issues to do with governance. Her critical ability is depicted when she convinces her husband that Nkulumane is dead. Since Nkulumane did a despicable act of succeeding his father whilst he was still alive, his father would not have allowed him to live. She has this to say:

'Kambe Masuku ukhumbula ukuthi kulomntwana ongathatha ubukhosi bukayise uyise esaphila aphinde awadle amabele?

Honestly, Masuku, do you really think that there is a son who can take his father's throne while he is still alive and live to see the light of day? (Sibanda, 1986:21).

Zinkabi rationalises that Nkulumane must have been killed for betraying his father. This conversation happens in the privacy of Zinkabi and Mandlenya's home. Thus, she is presented as having wisdom and a confidante to her husband. The issue they discuss here is a security issue which, if found out, would earn them death. Zinkabi's conduct in this situation proves that she is not the common woman who is supposed to respectfully agree with her husband. Instead, she is

cast as an independent and critical thinker, contrary to the commonly held view that women play a secondary role to men. She concedes her limitations as a woman and laments: '*yeka ulunya lwamadlozi akithi ukungenza umfazi.*' (How so cruel of my ancestors to make me a woman) (Sibanda, 1986:90). She, however, sees an opportunity for her husband to grab power, confirming Yuval-Davis' (1997:31) assertion that, "women's contribution is not limited to child bearing and care but even in affairs of the state".

Zinkabi's participation here is contrary to stereotypic women. Admittedly, while women in pre-colonial times may have been excluded from public participation, history is replete with stories of their influence. There are many examples of their influence over men, though for hegemonic reasons they are portrayed in negative stereotypes: the Cleopatras of the Shakespearean times, the Nehandas of Zimbabwe, Queen Nyamazana and the Manxumalos of Mzilikazi's times.

However, while a woman may advise her husband, the husband still makes the final decision as captured by the Ndebele proverb, *indoda yinhloko yomuzi*, literally meaning that 'the male is the head of the household,' thus appropriating final decision making to the man. This, however, does not take away the complementary role that women play in decision making at family and national level. However silent and inconspicuous they may be in decision-making; they still play a part through occupying the advisory role.

With regards to *inxwala* (first fruit ceremony), the Ndebele believe(d) in the concept of the living dead, owing to the fact that their utmost protection came from their ancestors, who were supposed to be appeased and the relationship kept intact through ceremonies like *ukuthethela* (appeasing the spirits of the dead) and *inxwala* (first fruits ceremony). Bozongwana (1983:44), a descendant of the family that presided over the *inxwala* ceremony, has it that, "the *inxwala* was among the most majestic and significant ceremonies that the Ndebele had". Following the importance of the *inxwala* (the first fruit ceremony) ceremony, the *izindunas*, led by Gundwane and Ndiweni, agreed to install Nkulumane as king. Crowning Nkulumane as king became the only option they had since they did not want to be a nation without a leader and, thus, making themselves vulnerable to attacks.

Dambisamahubo, one of the *indunas* (chiefs), narrates how difficult it was to build the Ndebele nation, when they had run away from the once powerful kingdom, Shaka. Ndlovu (1992:4) remarks,

Saqansa izintaba ezesabekayo, sangena emahlathini alezilo, sachapha imifula elengozi saze sawela elizweni likaMambo.

(We climbed scary mountains and went through dense forests with fierce animals and crossed rivers until we came here to Mambo's kingdom.)

To be noted, therefore, is the fact that the queen's advice goes a long way in determining the future of Nkulumane and the Ndebele kingdom regarding the majestic *inxwala* (first fruit ceremony), thus proffering advice becomes one of the roles played by women in issues concerning governance

5.6.2 Women as flexible role players in *Laphuma Elinye Lingakatshoni* (1992)

Although culturally the female gender roles were confined to the home, sometimes they breached the usual boundaries when they participated in men's spaces, as illustrated by Manxumalo. Thus, we see maNxumalo participating in a critical decision-making process. This is clear indication of the flexibility of their roles. Mkhaliphi, one of the *indunas* (chiefs), confirms the acceptance of the involvement of Manxumalo's participation in decision making, which is something that outsiders ignorant of the Ndebele culture could regard as male-dominated space. Mkhaliphi eloquently captures this as an expected norm:

Ndlovukazi yesizwe, ulamandla amakhulu kakhulu ekuqhutshweni kwendaba zombuso welizwe nxa inkosi ingekho. Indunankulu yesizwe ingeke yenze lutho ungavumanga wena. Nxa inkosi ingekho ungumlomo lamehlo lendlebe zenkosi. (Ndlovu, 1992:60).

Queen of the nation, you have great power to deliberate on issues pertaining to leadership; even the commander cannot do anything without your consent. When the king is not around, you are his eyes and ears.

From Mkhaliphi's words above, it can be argued that it was naturally expected of women to play motherly roles and to be involved in issues to do with governance. Thus, through Mkhaliphi's words, the writer depicts that, contrary to the popular view that pre-colonial Africa's decision excluded women, women actually worked side by side with their male counterparts, thus exhibiting power in governance issues. Literature shows that, "platforms such as *mahumbwe* in *Shona* or *amandlwane* in Ndebele (playing house) provided the necessary socialisation that

prepared both girls and boys to play complementary roles” (Makaudze and Gudhlanga, 2012:163).

This is supported by Nyathi (1994: 65), who depicts the roles played by king’s wives and asserts that:

Ayekhona amakhosikazi ahlala esigodlweni amanye ayehlala emizini etshiyeneyo. Amakhosikazi la lawo ayesiba ngamehlo lendlebe zenkosi khonale emizini lapha ahlala khona.

(Some of the king’s wives stayed with him in the royal house. But as for the other wives, they stayed in different places and also acted as the king’s eyes and ears at their places of abode.)

This emphasises that, “women were not just wives, biological regenerators of the nation or child minders”, but could - depending on context, play other roles such as transmitting cultural values and symbolically critical to the survival of the kingdom or the nation (Marsh, 1998: 98).

The advisory role, however, was not limited to the most senior wife. The other wives were also to support their husband. To illustrate this, Mzilikazi accuses Fulatha of not advising people well with regards to him being succeeded by Nkulumane. Thus, the writer is able to subtly suggest that women had other roles besides those that they typically dominate in. Thus, the political arena was not a preserve for men but women were also expected to be actively involved.

Elsewhere, the role of Lozikeyi and women in royal families is illustrated by Clarke and Nyathi (2011) who note that, in 1874, princess Mncengence led the *Inxwala* ceremony in Lobengula’s absence. The role of Lozikeyi Dlodlo, Lobengula’s oldest queen, is noted when Clarke and Nyathi (2011:9) contend that, “after Lobengula’s disappearance, she remained a power on the land and took it upon herself to speak for the Ndebele people during the 1896 uprising”. Therefore, although women were not considered heads of families, they did not just head families but could run the affairs of the nation in the absence of their husbands in pre-colonial Zimbabwe.

5.6.3 Women as mothers and cultural custodians in *Laphuma Elinye Lingakatshoni* (1992)

It can be noted that women not only contribute to the nation politically through taking the central stage in running the nation and advising their husbands in political issues, but they also

contribute in the fashioning of cultural identity. Mbaru, Tabengwa and Vance (2018:177) define culture as “generally understood to mean the ways that societies conduct and express themselves in time and space”.

Culturally, the place of a woman is at home where she raises children, cooks for the husband and children, and ensures that the family is well taken care of. These roles place the woman as the mother who holds the family together and who is also a cultural custodian, responsible for shaping the child’s behaviour. Women bear children and nurture them in line with the cultural demands of the society in question. Society expects women to raise children in the most acceptable ways. The mother trope confines women in the domestic arena to raise children. As they grow children, they learn and enforce stereotypes associated with certain behaviours which demonstrate good upbringing. Stereotypes are a conduit through which gender roles are learnt and entrenched. Seiter (1986; 66) explains the strength of a stereotype and argues:

The strength of a stereotype and its usefulness in the process of socialisation are based on three factors; its simplicity, its immediate recognisability (which makes its communicative role important and its implicit reference to an assumed consensus about some attribute or complex social relationship).

The motherly role of women is emphasised in some Ndebele proverbs. For instance, *intandane enhle ngumakhothwa ngunina* (a better orphan is the one who has a mother as the surviving parent), and *umntwana ongakhaliyo ufela embelekweni*, (A child who does not cry dies on his or her mother’s back). Both proverbs reveal the centrality of women in children’s lives from a tender age. A mother is considered to be closer to her children than their father is and has the responsibility of shaping the child in a culturally acceptable way consistent with the family and societal expectations.

In Ndlovu (1992), maNxumalo is given the burden of raising Nkulumane, her son, into the most acceptable modes of behaviour because society has placed this burden upon her shoulders. Even when Mzilikazi is back, he reprimands maNxumalo for not guiding her son and the society accordingly, saying:

Umphakathi wesizwe ukwethesa umlandu omkhulu ngokubekwa kukaNkulumane esihlalweni sikayise. (Ndlovu, 1992:60)

(The society at large blames you for the crowning of Nkulumane as king whilst his father is still alive.)

Mzilikazi is angry with maNxumalo for not upholding tradition and says:

Wena Mwaka...sitshela ukuthi usuze ungxube ekhanda wake walibona ngaphi ilanga eliphuma elinye lingakatshoni... uyihlo uZwide wake wabuthatha ubukhosi buka Ndwandwe uyise esawadla anhlamvana?(p.60)

(Mwaka, as old as you are, have you ever seen the sun rising before another sets? Did your father Zwide become king whilst his father was still alive?)

In this stance, Mzilikazi is accusing Mwaka of not paying heed to cultural practices or placing them at the forefront before taking any decision, which is what is expected of her as she is supposed to know better since she is the daughter of a king. The king places it on the queen's shoulders to be conversant with how things are done culturally, in terms of succession and the general way of life of the Ndebele. Yuval-Davis (1997:29) argues that:

women are often the ones who are given the social role of intergenerational transmitters of cultural traditions, customs, songs, cuisine and, of course, the mother tongue... Women are often required to carry the 'burden of representation' as they are constructed as the symbolic bearers of the collectivity's identity and honour.

Concurring with Yuval-Davis, Porter (1998:42) argues that, "women participate in nationalist processes through biology, transmission of culture, participating in national, economic, political and military struggles". Elsewhere, it can be noted that Lozikeyi Dlodlo, the eldest wife of Lobengula and Queen, contributed to the nation building, not just politically but also culturally. Clarke and Nyathi (2011:9) argue that "Lozikeyi was consulted by chiefs and was a talker and a story teller". To be realised is that in storytelling, she played the role of enforcing required cultural ideologies in the young, thus her role is not limited to motherhood and wifely duties as she also contributed politically and culturally to the Ndebele nation.

5.6.4 Women as fighters in *Umbiko kaMadlenya* (1986)

Women are represented as fighters in their own right and offering support to their male counterparts. The character Zinkabi shows bravery when she joins her husband at the battlefield. Although she does not engage the enemy, she is there up a tree giving support to her husband. Zinkabi represents uncelebrated women in pre-colonial times. Such women are numerous and are celebrated as legends. Hudson-Weems (2012:2) states that:

Going back to Ancient Africa, we witness women at their height, reigning side by side with their male companions and even when necessary, in leadership as is the case with Queen Hatshepsut 1506-1435 BC, Queen Nzingha, 1583-1663 and Queen mother YaAsantewa of Ghana, leading the Ashanti people against the domination of the British Empire in the Yaa Asantewa War.

Zinkabi is there risking her own life to be by Mbiko's side. Sibanda (1986:151) writes, *'ibambene nje yenzenje, uZinkabi ukhwele esihlahleni uyibukele'* (Amidst all the fighting, Zinkabi is perched on top of a tree, watching).

She even has the temerity to take her own life upon realising that Mbiko's army cannot withstand Lobengula's army. She cannot stand the ignominy of having Lobengula as king. Zinkabi has this to say:

Ngifa lawe qhawe lami, ufa njengendoda. ULobengula kabuse amathambo ethu, asife njengamadoda uqobo Mbiko wakwethu (Sibanda, 1986; 156).

(We die together my hero; you are dying like a real man. Lobengula will only get to rule our bones; let us die like real men, Mbiko my love).

Zinkabi prefers to die with her man, Mbiko, so as to deny Lobengula the satisfaction of ruling over them. The picture that we have of Zinkabi rejects the discourses that have presented women as meek and on the softer side. Ivekovic (1993:113) highlights how nationalistic discourses have downplayed women's participation: "In the relationship between women and nationalism, women's identity and relationship to the 'other' is different from that of men, hence even when women participate in nationalism, it is in a less violent form". Zinkabi's participation during the battle between Lobengula's warriors and Mbiko's warriors dismisses the general common belief that only men sacrifice themselves for a national cause. To emphasise that women do have characteristics that society only attribute to men, she says "let us die like real men" (Sibanda, 1986:156), illustrating that she too is brave. Thus, Zinkabi does not stand for the stereotypical woman that the Ndebele culture expects.

5.6.5 Discourses of nationalism in Ndlovu (1992) and Sibanda (1986)

In the pre-colonial setting, Ndlovu (1992) and Sibanda (1986) capture a pre-colonial setting of gender relations as they were in the pre-colonial period, and the power that men and women had in issues to do with governance. Men and women are constrained by the limitations of their gender. People think of gender roles first before they can think of how they can fit into the

scheme of things to do with the nation; hence the issue of gender is older than the issue of the nation. Men and women are assigned stereotypical gender roles first. Cook and Cusack (2010; 13) argue that:

Stereotypes are invoked for complex, varied reasons and sometimes contradictory reasons. We stereotype to define a category of people, we create categories to maximize ease of understanding and predictability. We stereotype to know what people are dealing with and to anticipate how people we do not personally know will behave. We stereotype to malign or subjugate people and sometimes we stereotype people to protect or justify deferring to them. We stereotype to ‘script identities’ to assign norms and codes by which men and women can be preconceived and expected to live their lives.

Through Sibandas’ (1986) and Ndlovus’ (1992) novels, the contribution of women to the nationalistic discourse is depicted through women like Zinkabi and Mwaka Nxumalo. It is notable that women are not completely dominated by men as they have their space both at home and in the political arena. However, even when they have a place in these different scenes, that is, at home and in the political arena, there are stereotypes that are associated with them. It can be argued that women like Zinkabi represent the abnormal woman that is not typical of the Ndebele women. The name itself suggests that she possesses attributes that are not celebrated in the Ndebele culture. She is a bull, “*Zinkabi*”, therefore not the typical woman - suggesting negative stereotyping of such women. The description of Zinkabi’s character also casts her as abnormal: *amehlo esiphundu* literally suggests that she has eyes at the back of her head.

The writer seems to covertly suggest that even though women like Zinkabi’s nature have admirable qualities associated with the male gender, society still thinks that the original performance space for women should remain within cultural expectations. Commenting on the character Dingane, Bhoqo has this to say to Mncumbatha:

‘*Wayeyini uDingane mihla sisekwazulu thina? Okwakhe bekuyikudla labafazi nje ubengendoda yalutho.*’ (Sibanda, 1986:7)

(Who was Dingane when we were still in Zululand? Dingane was a good for nothing, he only fooled around with women, he was no real man.)

Thus, such characters as Dingane are disapproved of in the Ndebele society. This suggests that women are second-class citizens and men are first class citizens who do serious business. This is in line with the Ndebele adage, *indoda ngamabhulugwe* (a useless man).

From these novels, it can be noted that even though women act as advisors to their male counterparts, they shock the society as they go beyond societal expectations. Mbiko comments about Zinkabi in Sibanda (1986:26):

'Akulamfazi ongacabanga okujulileyo kanje, ikakhulu ngezindaba eziphathelane lombuso welizwe.'

(No woman can be this much of a critical thinker, especially in relation to governance issues.)

Their critical abilities are doubted and society generally thinks that women are inferior to men in the way they think or reason. Even though Mbiko sees potential in his wife Zinkabi on issues concerning governance, he is also constrained by societal views about women; Stratton (1994:14) argues that, "women's position relative to men deteriorated under colonialism. They also show that while pre-colonial women had more freedom than their colonized descendants, male domination was nonetheless an integral part of the societies they lived in". Pre-colonial societies taught males to view women as inferior to them and those who did not conform were labelled as 'not women'. It is for this reason that Mbiko dismisses Zinkabi as a critical thinker as her conduct is against expectations of the Ndebele society.

Dambisamahubo captures eloquently the expectations of the Ndebele society with regards to acceptable roles of men and women. He makes it clear that the female gender has a different space to occupy as expected by society. He declares: *'Sizakuzwa sesithungelwa emacansini ngemikhonto sife njengamanina.'* (If we do not place a king who will guide us, we will die like women) (Ndlovu, 1992:6)

According to Dambisamahubo, "natural" roles of men and women are in the home. He views governance as a male territory. According to society, certain roles are for women and their roles are confined to home affairs. Yaganeh (1993:6) notes that, "in the 1970s, Muslim women were encouraged by state policies to take up so-called feminine professions, faced discrimination and lower pay when they attempted to enter the traditionally male dominated professions". This illustrates that the performance space for men and women is usually attached to their biological sex and socially constructed roles. Thus, African feminists acknowledge the multifaceted identities of women that society seeks to eradicate and present a one-dimensional role of women in the kitchen and home doing "wifely motherly roles".

Ogundipe (1994:130) argues that:

African women are more than wives. To understand their multifaceted identities beyond wifehood, we must look for their roles and statuses in sites other than that of marriage.

In Sibanda (1986:), the character Zinkabi feels that she can be a better ruler than Lobengula since she belongs to the royal family, but her gender does not allow her to do so because she is a woman and political positions are naturally for men. She knows that women, no matter their participation, cannot hold the same position as men. A woman can only support those in power or work effectively in their absence. Clarke and Nyathi (2011:35) note that, “the royal sister leading the Ndebele nation at the *Inxwala* ceremony in 1874 was Lobengula’s senior queen, Princess Mncengence”. Clarke and Nyathi (2011:36) have this to say about the king’s wives who did not live at the king’s court, “the royal women outpost to the provincial towns represented the king but did not threaten his authority, since their gender prevented their usurping the kingship”. Thus, the position of women is affected by their gender, as it is limited by their biological sex.

Mkhithika, a Lobengula’s supporter, blames Zinkabi for ill-advising Mbiko. This shows that society disapproves of shrewd women who invaded men’s spaces. Mkhithika comments on Zinkabi’s shrewdness thus:

UZinkabi ulamehlo esiphundu...lingathi lina uMbiko uzenza zonke lezizinto eyedwa.Kayedwa uloZinkabi. (Sibanda, (1986:74)

Zinkabi is very clever... do you honestly think that Mbiko is doing all these things alone? He is not alone, Zinkabi is the one who is advising him this way.

Wilford (1998:3) argues that:

the voices of women and feminists were silenced by the masculinisation of the peace process. This process of exclusion...is gendered (people) practices, symbols and ways of thinking coded as masculine mark the centre of politics, while what is rendered ‘feminine’ is relegated to the margins. Moreover, fighting alongside men ‘to achieve independence, does not provide a guarantee of women’s inclusion as equal citizens.

The above quotation depicts the contribution of women in the fight for independence which, however, does not guarantee them gender equality. The same can be realised during the war of

liberation; we realise this in the novel *Ngenziwa Ngumumo Welizwe* by Sigogo (1986), where the character Phikezelwe leaves the comfort of home and goes to the battlefield. In spite of this contribution, poets like Makhalisa in the anthology *Inkondlo* (1998:38) observe how women's contribution is downplayed in the post-independence period:

Batsho ngani ukuthi awufanele?

Kungani bengakutshongo

lisemangweni?

Saduma isibhamu lilonke.

(Why are they saying you are not capable?

Why did they not say this when you were in the battlefield?

You heard the sound of the gun together (men and women))

The emergence of such poetry advocates for women's emancipation and, also, organisations like WOZA (Women of Zimbabwe Arise), whose activities revolve around women's issues and problems affecting them daily, help in handling problems faced by women.

It is interesting to note that women like Zinkabi, who tap into the man's space, are criticised in the anthology by male poets in the poem who are seemingly unhappy about the gender movements advocating for gender equality. Dube, in the anthology *Giya Mthwakazi* (1990), says,

Selizenz'omakhonya laph'ekhaya

(You are now behaving like bulls at home.)

This, somehow, suggests that society is comfortable with women being under men. Another poet, Khumalo, in *Giya Mthwakazi* says,

We Eva, usulingana lo Adam?

(O Eve, do you now have the same authority and position like Adam?)

The above only depicts that even way after independence, women are expected to be controlled by men, and women who act against societal expectations are questioned and ridiculed. Bauer

(2013:27), commenting on stereotypes, argues that, “prescriptively, stereotypes can have negative effects for women who behave in counter-stereotypic ways.” Zinkabi’s involvement in politics, thus, becomes an unwelcome move, since she is only supposed to focus on domestic issues. Thus, there is ambivalence in the position of women in Ndebele society vis-a-vis the roles they are supposed to play. Women are supposed to show disinterest in issues to do with governance in order for them to be viewed as ‘good’ women’. Clever women like Zinkabi are not fully accepted.

The ambivalent representation of women in the nation is also realised by Sibanda (1986:53) in a conversation between Fusi and Mbiko. Fusi notes the contribution of women politically as he says:

Le kwaZulu umbeki wamakhosi nguMkabayi kaJama ngokwakhe. Konke lokhu kubulalana kwamadodana kaSenzangakhona, uMkabayi ulesandla kikho ngoba ubacebisa ngokunengi. NguMkabayi owayecebisa uTshaka esabusa, kunguye uqobo owatshela uTshaka ukuthi kabe lukhuni ekubuseni kodwa kwaba nguye futhi uMkabayi owabopha ilisu lokubulala uTshaka laboDingane.

(In Zululand, Mkabayi— daughter of Jama, was the kingmaker. Mkabayi had a hand in the killings of Senzangakhona’s sons as she was an advisor. Mkabayi was Tshaka’s advisor and encouraged him to rule with a heavy hand and is the one who plotted with Dingane in the killing of Tshaka.)

The contribution of women is clearly outlined in the above statement, but in the same conversation between Mbiko and Fusi he downplays the contribution of women by saying that they should always be careful lest they die like women. Fusi says that they should wake from their sleep – lest they are caught unawares and die like women. He says in Sibanda (1986:53):

Ngakho madoda asiwavuseni amanye amadoda, ukuze singajunywa yikufa njengabafazi.

(Let us encourage those men who are in complacency so that death does not catch us unawares like women....)

This ambivalent position on the contribution of women is realised by Wilford (1998:3), who argues that:

men suffer a collective and convenient memory loss about the contribution made by women to nationalist liberation struggles. forgetting... appears to be a frequent effect of reconsolidating centralized control of authority.

It can, therefore, be argued, as depicted in the novel, that men are at pains accepting that women are equal to them. They downplay women's contribution in the political sphere by emphasizing feminine stereotypes. We, therefore, see women being stereotyped into roles that keep them within the domestic space. Such discourse perpetuates the status quo. Thus, this continuous representation by novelists and society further entrenches the ideology that women are better confined to the domestic space. Lips (2001:1) argues that sex stereotypes are "socially shared beliefs that certain qualities can be assigned to individuals based on their membership in the female or male half of the human race". Stereotypes are linked to social notions of sexuality. The main idea behind stereotypes is to pathologise difference - be it on racial or gender lines. Ivekovic (1993:122) argues that, "sexuality and gender difference is older than the conception of the nation." Male and female bodies who constitute the nation are gendered themselves; thus, we have different gender realisations of the people who occupy the Ndebele space. The social constructions of manhood and femininity follow a pattern for those who behave in a particular way *Indodanfazi* is a term used to describe women who are strong and admired by the society because they work hard and are independent. *Indojelana*, a weak man, a good for nothing man, *umfazazana* a woman of no standards and who is not respectable in the society. These social constructs of a woman being likened to a man as *indodanfazi* has positive attributions, since a woman who behaves like a man is admired, but a man who behaves like a woman and likes the domestic space is not admired that is *imbongedlu* (a home dweller), respectively. When a woman is likened to a man, this becomes a positive attribute and such a woman is ready to hold 'serious' conversations with men.

In Ndlovu (1992), the *Indunas*, decide to discuss the issue of the succession of Mzilikazi with the queen:

mina bengibona kufanele ukuthi ngasihlanganise amakhanda lezinye induna kanye lendlovukazi, umaNxumalo.

(I thought it could be good if we heard what the other indunas are thinking, including the Queen herself.)

It can be noted that, from the concerns raised by Ngwadi, the Queen is part and parcel of decision making and they also want to contribute on the matter. It is Dambisamahubo's considered view to seek her opinion from a position:

'Kodwa indlovukazi siyibekele obala ukuthi isizwe asisazimiselanga ukuqhubeka singelankosi'

(We should be clear to the queen and tell her that the nation is not ready to go on without a king) (Ndlovu, 1992:5).

What can be deduced from Dambisamahubo's views is the fact that they have already taken a standpoint even before discussing with the queen. Wilford (1998:14) argues that "without public power, women will remain the subjected territory across which the boundaries of nationhood are marked out (and not), active participants in the construction of nations". Mwaka, in this case, is stringed along and this follows traditional beliefs that *indoda yinhloko yomuzi* and *owesifazana ngumntwana* (the man is the head of the house and the woman is a mere child), respectively. The inferior position of women is also noticed when women are put in the same category as children: This is evident when Ngwadi, one of the king's advisors, says:

'Kodwa bekungafanelanga ukuthi kubulawe abantwana abanjengoMangwana, oLobengula, oHlangabeza, inkosazana, lomthanyelo uFulatha kaTshabalala. (Ndlovu, 1992: 67)

(The king should not have killed children, the likes of Mangwana, Lobengula, Hlangabeza, the queen and her maid Fulatha daughter of Tshabalala.)

Mzilikazi captures this when he states: *'nxa inkosi ingekho uyindlebe'* (in the king's absence, you are his ear) (Ndlovu, 1992:60). What can be inferred is that women are allowed to occupy men's space in the absence of the latter. In their presence, there are clear male and female roles. Clarke and Nyathi (2011) clearly depict the role of women in royal positions that they perform only in the absence of men. Clarke and Nyathi (2011:9) argue that, "Princess Mncengence leads the *Inxwala* (first fruit ceremony) when Lobengula is not there and Queen Lozikeyi becomes active when Lobengula disappears (2011:9). This shows that women's participation is subtle and subdued by patriarchal stances that do not accept women as men's equals, capable of participating fully in politics, if they do then their public participation in politics is short lived.

In the novel by Ndlovu (1992), we have Fulatha and Mwaka Nxumalo, and in Sibanda (1986) we have Zinkabi. These are the only women who are talked about at length in these two novels. Only a few women seem to take the centre stage in issues to do with nationalism, this is also depicted in the novel *Umvukela WamaNdebele* (Sithole, 1956) which succinctly brings out the theme of nationalism, where the character MaNtshangase is admired for brewing beer only.

The women mentioned here are royal women, as they belong to royal families; they are not ‘ordinary’ women. Their identities and the various positions they occupy in the society is depicted and of note is that they have been depicted as mothers, cultural custodians, advisors to their male counterparts and in rare circumstances participants in war. This handful of women depicts the stereotypes associated with women who are in positions of authority only but does not give a clear view of ordinary women in society who do not belong to royal families. One can argue that in the pre-colonial period, women had subtle power as depicted through the character of Mwaka and Zinkabi. This, however, cannot be considered a yardstick of measuring the various roles of women everywhere else since the roles that they are depicted playing are a bit different from the roles that could be played by ordinary women in Ndebele society. When men talk and discuss women in authority and the advisory roles they play in private spaces, they acknowledge the power they have in men’s lives. They are, however, quick to revert to the older stereotype of women as weak beings when it comes to issues concerning governance: ‘*ukufa sithungelwa emacansini njengabomama,*’ (we will die like women); ‘*makangadelelwa umuntu ongumama*’ (do not look down upon a woman), suggesting that women are naturally inferior to men. The number of women mentioned above serves to justify the fact that only a handful of women participate in positions of authority in the Ndebele society and novelists in a way mirror what is happening in the society.

Zinkabi is blamed for Madlenya’s aggression and attempt to usurp the kingship from its rightful heir. The *indunas* (chiefs) stereotype her as a strange and unusual woman (with *amehlo esiphundu*, that is, eyes at the back of her head). Zinkabi is, thus, seen as not fitting the cultured Ndebele woman who is meek and gives her husband sound advice. Few women in the novels occupy the cardinal points of history. This may be so because the rest of the women are afraid of occupying the so-called male dominated space to avoid negative stereotypes. From the representation of Zinkabi and MaNxumalo as central female figures in pre-colonial Ndebele society, it shows that the other women who are not in influential positions are weak, and the participation of these two in matters concerning rule is by chance, otherwise the rightful performance space of the woman is the kitchen. Dosekun (2007:43) argues that, “existing studies have tended to focus on and even mythologise “great women” in pre-colonial Africa, that is, African queens, warriors, traders and the like”. It could be argued that such women were remembered or noteworthy because they were exceptional to the general rule of women as

subordinates. African feminists, however, argue against the exclusion of women from serious affairs. Zinkabi and maNxumalo's participation is out of their privileged positions as queens, otherwise the rest of the women are naturally removed from political affairs. Ogundipe-Leslie (1994:15) contends that, "women are 'naturally' excluded from public affairs; they are viewed as unable to hold positions of responsibility, rule men or even be visible when serious matters of state and society are being discussed. Society has inherent views that the performance space is in the kitchen". This is evident through the images used when referring to a woman as a child or as childlike (*umntwana/ owesintwana*).

It can also be inferred from the texts; therefore, that Sibanda (1986) and Ndlovu (1992) generally represent women who actively participate in politics. In Ndlovu (1992), there are those who participate in a subtle way through advising the *indunas* (chiefs) - seemingly on an equal footing with men. The participation of women in an active way in issues concerning governance dismisses the idea that women are subordinates to their male counterparts. Thus, in the pre-colonial period before the influence of external forces such as colonialism, women held positions of authority even though their authority was subtle. Furusa (2006:4) argues that, "colonialism bracketed the woman into the roles of wife and mother with her major staging area as the kitchen". What is clear is that even in the pre-colonial period there were stereotypes associated with women in positions of authority and, when they were consulted, they were not at the same level with their male counterparts. It can be argued that women's positions of authority, though not equal, were acknowledged (for example, *umdlunkulu*) (senior wife)- positions later destroyed by colonial rule. Drew (1995:10) reveals that, "the 1929 Igbo/Ibibio women's war included feminist demands, the impact of socio-economic transformation on women's social roles and consciousness".

5.7 Writings in the Colonial Period

The previous section discussed the position and different stereotypes associated with women in the pre-colonial period, focusing on the novels, *Laphuma Elinye Lingakatshoni* and *Umbiko kaMadlenya* by Ndlovu (1992) and Sibanda (1986), respectively. These novels have a pre-colonial setting, but were published way after independence. This section focuses on novels published under colonial rule. Unlike in the previous section where focus was on novels published after the independence period, this section in the analysis of novels highlights some

factors which most likely affected the way the novels were written in the colonial period. The section talks about the stereotypes associated with women in the colonial period focusing on the novels *Lifile* (1975) and *Umendo* (1977), respectively.

5.7.1 The image of the female figure in the city

The female figure has been central in most novels published in the colonial period. Writers try to capture how men and women respond and react to every socio-political and economic challenge. The image of the woman has been put to the fore and women in towns have been depicted as prostitutes and sexually reckless. Makaudze and Gudhlanga (2012:161) argue that “the negative image of women has been a cause for concern the world over”

Wasosa (2014) writes about deviance and moralisation in selected novels and short stories after independence, where he talks about the Zimbabwean crisis as the context of deviant behaviour. He concludes that women engage in prostitution to earn a living. Writers depict the prostitution in towns. Berndt (2005:7) argues that “female identity is composed of different identity layers that represent diverse cultural traditions and personal aspects.” The Shona and the Ndebele society had already been patriarchally structured societies before the onset of European colonisation. The saying, *ibele lendlela kalivuthwa* (a crop that grows by the wayside will never get ripe) has been explained before. This is a proverb that is attached to the female gender, that is, the fact that women can only be meaningful when they are attached to one male partner through marriage. The proverb and sayings go a long way in depicting the inherent beliefs about how women are to behave, and this has an allusion to their morality and the need to stick to one sexual partner. Berndt (2005:11) affirmsthat, “In Shona society, the status ‘women’ has traditionally been associated with bodies of reproduction and with jobs that extend into household places to caretake children and male relatives”. Thus, the female body becomes useful for procreation and anything outside that context is unappreciated. This goes a long way in interpreting the stereotypes accorded to women in the city who deviate from cultural expectations. In the traditional Ndebele society, females who had sexual liaisons with men and bore a child outside marriage were forced to get married to an older man as a way of punishment, thus immorality was discouraged this way. In the city with no elders to curb immorality, there developed prostitution, and prostitution is whereby one has multiple concurrent sexual partners.

Benoit, Smith, Jansson, Healey and Magnuson (2018:1) contend that prostitution is payment for the exchange of sexual services, and Jenkins (*Encyclopedia Britannica*) notes that:

Prostitution is the practice of engaging in relatively indiscriminate sexual activity, in general, with someone who is not a spouse or a friend in exchange for immediate payment in money or other valuables. Prostitutes may be female or male or transgender and prostitution may entail heterosexual or homosexual activity, but historically prostitutes have been women.

Laite (2009:739) notes that, “prostitution has been linked by many historians and social commentators to industrial development and capitalism of the modern age in mining regions from the mid-nineteenth century”. To be noted, therefore, is that even though a woman could have more than one sexual partner, prostitution during the colonial period, on the one hand, and industrialisation epoch, on the other, took different angles. Wasosa (2014:117) argues that, “it is significant to note that anthropological research in prostitution in Africa reveals the non-existence of the practice of prostitution prior to colonialism”. Culture and the church were against prostitution. According to Laite (2009:746), “in relation to female migration, religion and missionary activity had a large role to play here and calls for change were made through church groups and welfare societies”.

As a way of comparison, in order to understand the behaviour of women, there is need to note how the same society views men when it comes to issues concerning male-female relationships. It is the same society that says, *indoda libhetshu lomziki*, (a man can have more than one partner). *Ibhetshu lomziki* means an animal skin skirt worn by men, which does not maintain the same position once worn, as it keeps moving around the waist and loins. The same way this type of animal skin moves means that a man’s engagement with female partners is fluid as he is not expected to be faithful to one female partner. Thus, society accepts such behaviour as a result of this proverb generated to validate and justify male deviant behaviour. The Ndebele proverb has allusions and gives a clear sign that a man is free to have more than one sexual partner and, thus, society should not condemn this. In situations where men have many sexual partners, novelists do not condemn them, and yet the same novelists are harsher on the woman who has more than one sexual partner. Thus, the writer takes into consideration the societal values, attitudes towards its gender, hence his/her story cannot be read in isolation, and it emanates from societal attitudes about each gender. Chiwome (2002:21) argues that, “a novel does not emanate from the writers’

mind alone as many unacknowledged forces behind the scenes contribute to its shape”. A writer’s work, therefore, becomes a reflection of the society that the writer is writing about. Stereotypes of women in the city emanate because of women’s behaviour that is acceptable or unacceptable in Ndebele society.

5.7.2 Rural women as supposedly pure in *Lifile* and *Umendo*

The novel *Lifile* represents parents who are perplexed and bemoan a changed order as their young men and women flock to the city where their good moral values are corrupted. Gotshombo, an elderly man complains about Biziwe who encouraged his nephew to go to the city:

Nango umntanakhe esethatha umntaka dadewethu emphosela esizibeni selangabi. (Mlilo, 1975:7).

(Her child has taken my niece to a pool full of flames).

It can be argued that the image of a flame shows that the city is not good as it wipes off all good morals. Mlilo takes her protagonist from the rural space to the urban space and back to the rural space. This suggests that in the rural space there is therapy and healing to people who have been corrupted by the city. The character Mbayiwa in *Lifile* is not amused by the movement of women to the urban areas, Mlilo (1975:6) argues that, through the character Mbayiwa in *Lifile*:

‘Sizwa kuthiwa selithumela abafazi emadolobheni’,

(We hear that you are now sending women to the city)

The above statement by Mbayiwa shows that women were encouraged to be in the village as women were seen as better off in the village than in towns. Gugu in *Umendo* is kept in the village and represents the typical married woman who has acquired good values and stays in the village with her husband’s aunt whom she regards as her mother-in-law. Makhalisa depicts the pristine values of rural women that have not been corrupted by the city. Gugu married Ndaba and lives happily with her husband. She lives in the rural area with her husband’s aunt, maZulu, whom she calls mother-in-law. Sayi (2016:4) notes that in the novel *Umendo* by Makhalisa, Gugu is depicted as a humble and virtuous woman who does not challenge her mother-in-law, regardless of her insults.

Thus, the virtuous woman with ‘good’ moral values that Makhalisa presents is Gugu. Gugu remains respectful even when her husband’s aunt insults her about her husband not sending money. Before being in an informal liason with Jenny, Gugu’s husband is cooperative as he sends money for their upkeep, but as we meet them in the novel, they have nothing to eat and maZulu complains that Gugu may be receiving money and food from her husband and was hiding and spending it secretly. The husband, Ndaba, is working in an urban area and Gugu remains in the rural area taking care of their children and the husband’s aunt.

Lifile, in the novel *Lifile*, however, unlike Gugu in *Umendo*, who is presented as pure, is admired in absentia by one of the elders showing that she was pure and morally upright before being corrupted by the city. The elder says:

Yek’umfazi, intombi kaBayanga. (Mlilo, 1975:14)

(Behold a real woman, Bayanga’s daughter.)

This suggests that the rural space was believed to keep women close to their cultural values to avoid any corruption that the city would bring. This emphasis on morality persuades women to be culturally pure and hand over these values to their children. Notable is that people were still used to traditional values since the city had just been an invented space causing them moral panics and perplexities. Mlilo directly admires young women in the rural areas, alluding to the fact that this is where they obtain good cultural values from. The same can also be realised in Makhalisa’s *Umendo* as Gugu is presented as a respectful daughter-in-law who performs her duties well and, as expected, does not take heed of taunts from her mother-in-law. In *Lifile*, we also meet a young woman who is praised for performing her duties well. Mbayiwa praises one of the women for a job well done when he partakes of her traditional beer brew. Mbayiwa says:

Ubebugoqozile umntaka Nkezo.

(Nkezo’s daughter really brewed the beer very well).

One of the elders in the rural areas seems to lament the changed order brought by colonialism and is nostalgic about the yesteryear women who were seemingly dirty but had good morals as compared to the clean women whose hearts are not pure.

He says in Mlilo (1975:48):

Siyabakhumbula omama ababephothula ingcekeza emzimbeni, bemnyama ingcekeza ngaphandle kodwa bemhlophe qhwa ngaphakathi. Bangcono oqotho, kulalaba abalamhla abamhlophe ngaphandle kanti ngaphakathi bahlihla inhliziyu.

(We really miss those women who were dirty, dark because of dirt but possessing good hearts. They are far much better than these light skinned women who have evil intentions).

In the traditional society, women were confined to the home, while men were expected to go out into the jungle to fend for their families, whilst women stayed at home, cooked and took care of the children. In the colonial era men are the ones who are encouraged to go to the city while women are supposed to stay behind at home. Mlilo (1975) notes that:

uMlilo uchaza isililo sabantu besiZindeni, ngesikhathi sokufika kwamadolobho. Kwakukuhle ukuthi amajaha ayosebenza edolobheni, kodwa kwakukubi ukuthi amantombazana lawo ayekhona, ngoba ayengasekuyikuziphatha ngendlela yamasiko esizwe.

(Mlilo writes about the lamentation of the people of Sizinda during the urbanisation period. It was good for young men to go to the city but totally wrong for young women to go there since they were going to be corrupted by the city and fail to behave in culturally acceptable ways).

Thus, the novel highlights that women were safer in the rural space and those women in town were unsafe and herded for destruction. In the same way Gugu is discouraged from working as Ndaba sees himself as the sole breadwinner. The husband, Ndaba, is working in an urban area and Gugu is in the rural area taking care of their children and the husband's aunt. Makhalisa reveals how tough it was for a woman to go to the city. For a woman to go to the city, to meet her husband, she had to seek consent first from her husband, and maZulu knows this quite well. She asks:

'umkakho ucine nini ukukubhalela maDube. (1977:23)

(When was the last time your husband wrote you a letter maDube?)

Thus, a wife could not just go to the city, writing a letter would give Gugu permission to go to the city. When Gugu is having a conversation with her friend, maMlilo, she is advised to visit her

husband, but she is against the idea- since her husband had not yet given her the permission to come to town. MaMlilo urges Gugu:

Kungani ungayi wena ngokwakho khonale koBulawayo uyezizwela uzibonele ukuthi kuyini okukhona?(p.23)

(Why don't you go to Bulawayo and see what is taking place?)

Gugu replies,

Ngingatholanga ilizwi elivela kuye kuqala?(p.23)
(Before hearing from Ndaba first?)

MaMlilo's reaction depicts what the system permitted at that time,

UmaMlilo wezwa kumcaphula lokho, kodwa engacaphukeli uGugu, ecaphukela lowo owabeka lowomthetshwana esizweni sabeNsundu.

(Gugu's response made maMlilo furious, but she was not furious at Gugu as much as she was at the system that passed such a law, a law that limited women's mobility and obviously infringed on their rights.)

The law that maMlilo is furious about is the one that was passed by the government that did not permit women to go to town without permission from their husbands and, if they were married, they were supposed to produce marriage certificates. Raftopoulos and Yoshikuni (1999:95) comment on the meeting held regarding women's entry into towns in April 1935:

The Matabeleland Home Society (MHS) meeting 'strongly asked that the gates into Towns be shut to women by way of the inspection for marriage certificates...coming to town was tantamount to, 'forcing herself where she was not officially wanted.

The meeting, therefore, gave men power over women and was part of the patriarchal system that made women to be subordinate to men. Gugu is both a wife and a daughter-in-law, and she fulfils both tasks well. She is totally committed to her new home, and whatever she has, her commitment should be towards her matrimonial home. MaZulu says, (1977:11):

'Ubokhumbula maDube ukuba wakhutshelwa amalobolo, ngakho ungowakwethu la hatshi kwenu koDube'

(MaDube please do remember that your brideprice was paid; therefore, you belong to this family and not the Dube family.)

Gugu's behaviour is 'remarkable' as she does not answer back when maZulu is insulting her, and is the virtuous, pure rural woman with rich cultural values. Gugu cannot be compared to the city women who trap other people's husbands. MaMlilo says, (1977:22)

Kababa angingezake ngilokothe ukumangala lapha ngisizwa ukuba omehlomehlo bemadolobheni sebezimisele ngaye. Bavele abakutshayi mkhuba ukuhluthunela amanye amanina omkabo.

(My dear one, I would not be surprised to hear that those city sluts have their eyes set on your husband. They do not care; they just snatch other women's husbands willy nilly.)

From the above, it can be argued that *omehlomehlo* (morally loose), suggests the type of women that are found in the city who are after snatching other women's husbands, thus destroying their marriages. What is notable is that husbands are the ones that are said to be trapped, and women are all blamed - thus suggesting that women are the ones responsible when immorality occurs. In response to such sentiments, Ardener (1978:67) comments:

The key to attitudes regarding men and women is the belief that sexual drive in the adult female is subject to her control, while that of the adult male is physiologically imperative and cannot be controlled.

What is implied by Ardener is that men are excused from sexual immorality as they are regarded as the sex that cannot take full control of its emotions, whilst women are to blame since they can control themselves, if they cannot control themselves, they are negatively labelled and stereotyped, for example, being called *omehlomehlo*, that is, one with a roving eye. Even when Gugu goes through a lot of bad things, she has acquired good values from the village, and sticks with her husband's family no matter what. Berndt (2005:20) notes:

Zimbabwean novels in Shona or Ndebele continue to characterise urban women as loose and vicious, while rural women are portrayed as pillars of the community that may be naïve and poor but also decent and trustworthy.

Ndaba discourages Gugu from going to work because she has to take care of their children. As a married woman, she does not dispute this, and is kept in the domestic space.

The husband, Ndaba, becomes the main breadwinner. Makhalisa (1977:14) writes:

Umkakhe wayesala ukuba adinge umsebenzi asebenze.

(Her husband did not allow her to look for a job.)

Gugu is dominated by her husband, which is typical of the traditional African society where the wife has to fully submit to her husband. Gugu is, therefore, represented as merely a sexual partner and helpmate to her husband. Gaidzanwa (2006:200), talking about the position of women in the Shona and Ndebele societies, and expectations thereof, notes that “the virtuous woman is subservient to male authority and domination”.

Being the breadwinner makes Ndaba have full control over his wife and, therefore, Gugu had no reason to be in town. The fact that women were left behind in rural areas and needed permission from men to go to the city made their mobility and job opportunities limited. Ndlovu and Ngwenya (2012:18) observe that:

Under colonialism, African women’s position in the socio-political domain deteriorated and the power they had in the pre-colonial period was usurped by the bread-winner ethic which stands in direct contrast to gender reality in Africa where men and women laboured equally for family survival.

Berndt (2005:16) notes the shift in economic base resulting from rural urban migration by men:

Colonial rule brought significant changes to the gender division of labour while women’s agricultural responsibilities were intensified, men had to accept wage labour to pay newly enacted taxes. Male labour migration started and most women stayed in the rural areas and guaranteed the upholding of the subsistence economy.

Another critic explains how the city closed its door for women, Jeater (2000:35) argues:

In African perceptions, it was ‘normal’ for an African man to be in town, but African women were seen as very much ‘out of place’.

In the same manner, Hleziphi and others are discouraged from going to the city, since they have to get married and be taken care of by men. Not much is said but Mlilo criticizes young women flocking into the city in search of jobs suggesting that the young women flocking to town were better off married in the rural areas, this we see when *Lifile* crumbles in the city and acquires a sexually transmitted disease, she goes back to the rural space. Her movement suggests that the best performance space for women is the rural space where she can perform her duties fully and the city is just not meant for her. Women’s behaviour is evaluated against cultural values. A woman is depicted as only useful when she is at home, *Lifile*’s friend, Biziwe, says women are better off in the rural areas where they can perform their gender roles better. Rogers (1980:11) argues that it is thought “natural that a woman’s place is in the home and that she has a very

specific set of tasks which are thought to be universal because they are based on the biological imperatives of sex”. Thus, women performing their gender at home are considered close to nature and to their cultural values. This is also evident in the character Gugu in *Umendo* who has faith in her marriage and believes that her husband will forget about Jenny and come back to her. She is mistreated in their matrimonial house but still respects her husband. She only fights Jenny (the prostitute) but humbles herself before her husband and obeys what he says. Even when Ndaba is mistreated by Jenny and sells his property, he still thinks of his virtuous wife. Ndaba states:

Kodwa ngakukhumbula mntakaDube ngisentolongweni.Ngabona ukuba ngabe ngangikuphethe kuhle, wawuzakuza uzangibona ngivalelwe, aluba wawuzwile.

I remembered you when I was in jail Dube’s daughter. I realised that had I treated you well you would have come to see me when I was in prison.Ndaba in Makhalisa (1977: 131),

Gugu treats Ndaba well after being rejected by his concubine Jenny. This depicts the humility that married women had. In all his problems after being cheated and deserted by Jenny he thinks of his virtuous wife who habitually always accepts him, stands by him even towards the end of his life.

Thus, women carry the burden of representation in this as they are supposed to carry the societal values and uphold them and this they can only be under guidance and influence from elders in the village. Lifile contracts a venereal disease in town, a suggestion that she was clean when she was in the rural areas- driving home the idea that rural women are pure and, in the city or outside the control of men, they cannot be good.

5.7.3 Rural women as model mothers in *Umendo*

Gugu, the protagonist in *Umendo*, has two children, Siphos and Ndumiso. She is a young mother. She is not in the rural areas by accident as her husband expects her to remain in the rural area taking care of their children. Ndaba feels obliged to let his wife stay with his aunt maZulu, so that she can take care of her. In traditional Ndebele culture, marriage did not concern a single individual, but one married for the entire clan. Gugu does not hesitate to stay with her husbands, because she has been trained to do so. Schmidt (1992:15) observes, “a young woman’s social

status was greatly enhanced upon marriage; her marriage created a social bond between her kin group and that of her husband”.

Gugu is the epitome of motherhood as whatever she does is family centred. She moves to her husband in town in search of finances from husband so that she takes good care of children. In whatever situation she finds herself in, she does not leave her children behind but she is with them through thick and thin. From Gugu’s behaviour, it can be noted that traditional women were not only mothers but they valued marriage and all its troubles. They do not easily let go. Gugu fights tooth and nail to keep her marriage intact. She is not materialistic like Jenny who values dressing well and buying expensive things.

Gugu’s value for marriage is unparalleled as compared to the young woman. On the other hand, Lifile, in *Lifile* leaves for town, leaving behind a fiancé, which is a clear sign of rejecting the crucial step of marriage. She is depicted as a frivolous woman who goes to town to satisfy her material wants at the expense of marriage. Lifile acquires a sexually transmitted infection, which leaves her with zero chances of being able to conceive. This seems to be punishment for rejecting traditional values of marriage or settling down in the rural areas. She is, thus, deprived of motherhood because of her loss of values. Jenny is, therefore, depicted as a woman who is self-centred and is out there to destroy marriages. She goes after Ndaba to satisfy her material needs. Women who do not value motherhood and marriage are, therefore, represented as she is represented, that is, as being after materialistic things.

Gugu, as an obedient wife, first writes a letter to her husband before embarking on a crucial journey to town. She tells her friend maMlilo that she cannot proceed to town without the approval of her husband, she says:

Ngingakatholi ilizwi elivela kuye kuqala? (Makhalisa (1977: 23.)

(How will I go to town when Ndaba has not yet written a letter asking me to come?)

Gugu’s friend is not happy about the law that restricted women from going to town without receiving approval from their husbands. What can be inferred is that both patriarchy and the colonial system worked together to keep African women in their space under patriarchal control. Schmidt (1996:2) argues, “African chiefs, headmen and older men in general welcomed the

state's effort to restrict women to the rural areas". Thus, the obedient woman is the one who complies with patriarchal demands.

5.7.4 Prostitution in *Lifile* and *Umendo* (The Urban space)

During the colonial period, women flocked to the cities for various things. One of the reasons was to secure jobs, just like their fellow male counterparts. Raftopoulos and Yoshikuni (1999:3) argue that, "the urban space was a temporary space for work." As presented in the novel, when women found themselves jobless, prostitution became the only option that could make them earn a living whilst young men resorted to crime. Young women like Biziwe and Lifile did not go to town to have fun, but they went there to work. However, sometimes despite being educated, they failed to secure jobs, for example Sibonile in the play *Umhlaba Lo!* was not admitted into any of the teachers' colleges and decided to go to town in search of any form of employment to keep her going.

To be noticed is the fact that the colonial system looked askance at women's jobs. Berndt (2005:17) highlights that during the years of the colonial era, "traditional female professions were undermined by the church and state. Their roles as spirit mediums, midwives and brewers of ritual beer were marginalised or even prohibited". Faced with unemployment, women thus empowered themselves by using their bodies.

From Mlilo's title, *Lifile* (It is doomed)', one can note undertones of lament over a dying tradition. Lifile, the protagonist, is given such a name to demonstrate that she has been corrupted by the city and disregards the pristine, traditional values that were once celebrated and intact. There is lament over moral decadence by Mbayiwa:

'Umhlaba suthumbekile, bayakhithika abantu njengamahlamvu esihlahla, (1975:13).

(Gone are the good old days, this new world is rotten and people are falling like leaves).

What Mlilo alludes through the metaphor of falling leaves shows Mbayiwa's exasperation by the induced to loss of values and moral codes by people in towns. In Mlilo (1975:20), Hleziphi's father is shocked about the behaviour of her daughter in town,

Uvuka lapha alale lapha ngumfazi wedolobho lonke leli. Yiwo lowo umsebenzi wakhe...lapha ahola khona lapho

(Hleziphi sleeps everywhere; she is everyone's woman in the city. That is her job and she gets paid for that.)

Hleziphi's father speaks in an ambiguous way that her daughter is a prostitute who is always there at the service of men in town. He does not approve of this as this has eroded the expected cultural values of remaining pure and getting married to one partner.

Gotshombo in Mlilo (1975:21) notes that,

'Khonale akula ngitsho isifazane esizigcinileyo,

(In the city, all women are immoral).

Evident here is that in the city every woman is negatively stereotyped as a prostitute. The major stereotype coming out of this novel is that young women in the city are sexually reckless and have been corrupted by the city. Schmidt (1996:119) argues that:

It was proposed that marriage registration certificates serve as a form of pass document for African women, no woman should be allowed to stay on European farms, in mining compounds or in town locations unless she could produce one.

The title of the book *Umendo* seems to be centred on the struggles that Gugu goes through in marriage, for instance, in dealing with her husband who has an extramarital affair with Jenny. Upon getting into town Gugu inspects her house, she cannot doubt the fact that her husband is living with another woman who wears more expensive clothes than her. Berndt (2005:19) argues that "in the developing cities and mining stations, prostitution also turned out to become a source of income". Jenny derives her income from prostitution because she is not customarily or legally married to Ndaba. Ndaba is officially married to Gugu. Jenny and Ndaba's liason was not recognised culturally. It remained a secret relationship, popularly known as '*ukutshaya amapoto*' (cohabiting).

Obbo (1980:98) in her description of prostitutes notes that, "they become known as the urban woman mistresses or prostitutes". Thus, Jenny fits into this category as she is staying with Ndaba unofficially and unknown to either Jenny or his relatives back home. Jenny is depicted as immoral and materialistic as she uses her beauty to trap married men. Ndaba is, thus, represented

as a victim. Commenting on Gugu's reaction upon discovering that Jenny was cohabiting with Ndaba, Makhalisa (1977:36) quips:

Kakummangalisanga kangako ukuzwa ukuthi lowo wayengumkaNdaba uJenny noma wayengakulindele, ngoba wayevele ekwejayele ukuhlala lamadoda abanikazi kubuye kuxotshwe bona yena asale.

(She was not surprised to hear that this was Ndaba's wife, even though she was not ready for this. She had gotten used to staying with other people's husbands and when this happened the wives were the ones who were chased away and she remained.)

Gugu leaves her matrimonial home because of Jenny. Ndaba is not aware that his relationship with Jenny is based on money, only to realise this later. He later admits this to Gugu: he says:

Ikhikhitha leliyana owangitshiya ngilalo lasuka langiyenga lathi unina uyagula kubi, ngalipha imali yokugada ukuba liyembona...kuthi sekwedlule amalanga amathathu ngilesizungu ngicabanga ngalo, ngizwe ngamahungahunga ethi ikhikhitha lami selizihlalele lomunye eLuveve. (Makhalisa, 1977:130)

(That prostitute that you left me with deceived me. She lied to me that her mother was ill and I gave her money for transport so she could go and see her mother. After three days I learnt through the grapevine that she was now staying with another man in Luveve.

It now dawns to Ndaba that Jenny had deceived him all along. City women are, thus, stereotyped as destructive and characterless. Jenny is a cunning thief who pretends to be in love with Ndaba when all she wants is his money and property. Ndaba notes:

'Ikhikhitha leliyana labutha yonke impahla yami elalingayibutha, okunye ngiyabona lakuthengisa.' (Makhalisa, 1977:131)

(That prostitute took away my property and I think she sold some things as well.)

Ndaba learns a lesson from associating with Jenny. He cannot bring himself to refer to Jenny by name, calling her *ikhikhitha leliyana*, "that prostitute". Towards the end of the novel Ndaba is truly remorseful and asks for forgiveness from Gugu. The novel like many published in the colonial period is a moralistic one. For many writers the encounter with missionaries encouraged the writing of moralistic novels. Chiwome (2002: 32) argues that "with the preoccupation with the moralising mode, fiction became an extension of the folktale".

In *Umendo*, Jenny is leading a life that is not worth emulating and is on the run. On the contrary, Musa, who is Gugu's friend, is a nurse and uses education as her weapon to challenge patriarchal dominance and economic constraints. Okpala (2016:103) notes the importance of female

education in empowering women: “Well-educated female protagonists transcend the confines of patriarchy with education as their weapon”. Women like Gugu bend and accept tradition, accepting men as their providers. Dube (2006:24) argues that “our view of the world is determined by our socialisation, there are gender-based divisions of labour with males as providers”.

It is clear that Musa relies on her job for survival whilst Gugu relies on her husband for provision. Most women with no specified jobs in the colonial period relied on men for financial backup and entered into informal liaisons with married men. Makhalisa (1977:33) comments on the character Jenny, who seems to be living a comfortable life, wearing beautiful clothes. On arrival at their matrimonial home, she notices that there is another woman staying with her husband:

Waqonda ekhabothini le eyayilesibuko sokuzibuka wabona ophawuda, okokuzicomba emlonyeni, ezintshiyeni, amakha ayinhlobonhlobo enuka mnandi, afakwa emzimbeni, lawenwele, amafutha imihlobo ngemihlobo, awobuso, awezandla, lokunye njalo okunengi ayengakuqedisisi.

(She headed towards the dressing table and saw powder, lipstick, nail polish and various types of scented lotions. These types of lotions meant for the hair, the body, hands, the face and so many other things that she could not comprehend.)

What Gugu sees in the house belongs to Jenny, which is a clear indication that Jenny is living large out of prostitution. Jenny is earning a living through an informal liason with Gugu’s husband, which is considered prostitution in the Ndebele culture. Other females like Musa and other women who teach in the same school with her friend Thulani, seem to be morally upright because they are in professional jobs.

Unlike the women who are in white-collar jobs like Musa, the rest of the young women struggle to get employed. Those single young women who found themselves in towns were either suspects of prostitution or were actually prostitutes themselves and this is the reason why there were strict laws over the movement of women. The other reason why the character of young women is doubted in towns by Berndt (2005:19) who argues, “urban women were usually considered ‘immoral’ because they did not live under observation of the male lineage...their self determined life was perceived as a threat to the patriarchal system.”Mbayiwa, in *Lifile*, is not pleased with the movement of women to the city. He says in *Mlilo* (1975:6),

'Sizwa kuthiwa selithumela omama emadolobheni'

(We hear that you are now sending women to the city.)

Thus, independence of women to live self-sustaining lives was unheard of and the societal obligation of men in the family to take care of women who are considered to be perpetual *abantwana* (children), thus women under traditional Ndebele society were to be watched over by their brothers or husbands and outside this context they remain unsafe. Thus, outside the context of marriage, women remain unsafe. Lifile, Biziwe and her friends engage into temporary relationships with married men in town in order to survive. Senkoro (1982:6) argues that:

characters are confronted with the amorphous urban reality which turns most of them into prostitutes. These characters are caught in the tangles of city values, ideals and dreams which swallow them into confusion and sometimes despair.

According to Ndebele society expectations, the man is the one '*ojimbayo*' (one who hunts and gets) who brings basics home. A woman who fends for herself seems to be against Ndebele culture since the man is considered to be the sole breadwinner. This is probably the reason why nakaNcedani and nakaLifile both want Thando to marry their respective daughters, Bahle and Lifile, so that they may gain social recognition, nakaNcedani says:

'Ngubani ongayithandiyo indoda? Balwanje angithi basibangisa indoda? Badinga ukudla okukaMasangonke. Pho ongakuthandiyo ukudla lokho ngubani? Ngubani ongawathandiyo amagcobo?' (p.34?)

Who does not like a man? They are fighting us because of a man. They also want food which the Masangonke family has, so who does not like that food, who does not like riches?

The need to secure a rich son-in-law causes Ncedani's mother and Lifile's mother to fight and, thus, elders consider it better for their daughters to secure marriage with a wealthy man than to go to town and lose their moral values and then later face rejection from their sexual partners.

5.7.5 Problematising the presentation of women in *Lifile* and *Umendo*

As children grow up, they are forced to attach themselves to a particular profession or a known skill. During the colonial period, young people find themselves in an uncertain labour market where they are exposed to all kinds of hardships, temptation and corruption. Writers in the colonial period are forced to give a simultaneous depiction of men and women in both rural areas and cities because people had started flocking into the urban areas for work. Just like *Lifile* and

Umendo, most novels published in the colonial period have two settings, the rural area and the urban area, a depiction of what was happening in the Ndebele society at that time. The rural area becomes the original home where we find the extended family, and in town we find the nuclear family. People live and work in towns. Obbo (1980:70) observes that, “individuals migrate to escape poor positions in the socio-economic stratification system which limits their participation in the rural opportunity system”. The place of the woman seems to be entirely attached to the home that is where it is believed that she performs her gender role well and this is probably the reason why the elders in *Lifile* do not like the city. In the traditional system, men were forced to go out to the jungle to fend for their families. Their values have been carried into the new system of life.

As has been noted in the previous section in novels bearing a pre-colonial setting, women held influential positions at home and assisted in issues concerning governance. In the colonial period, there is a decline in their roles of influence in issues concerning governance solely because the colonial government had more faith in men than women. Gaidzanwa (2006:197) talks of the two versions of womanhood, that is, motherhood and wifeness. According to Gaidzanwa, more value was attached to these roles than any other role. Women, upon seeing the changing environment, also wanted to be part of the change that is taking place around them. They too wanted to secure their economic base. Zelesa (2005:221) argues that, “while the position of women declined during the colonial era, women also took initiatives that reshaped their lives and challenged the colonial order”. The urban areas have taken the place of the jungle; hence the parents see them as places that are safe for men only but not for young women. If young women went to towns, they were exposed to all kinds of hardships. Consequently, that would make them fail to fulfil their expected roles in society. The negative stereotypes associated with women in town are a result of Ndebele culture, which valued women occupying the rural space. Colonialism forced women to abandon their traditional roles as they invaded men’s space in towns in search of jobs and a livelihood. Some women acquired an education which, in a way, was liberating since they could also earn a living. Thus, the dwelling place of women expanded to other areas outside the home and this brought about negative stereotypes as women were now deviating from the norm. Kufakurinani (2015:63) observes that, “the increasing activities of women outside the home compromised their prescribed roles as mothers and wives and this became a challenge to the patriarchal system”. Berndt (2005:19) argues that,

“urban women were usually considered; ‘immoral’ because they did not live under the observation of male lineage...theirself-determined life was perceived as a threat to the patriarchal social system”. This resulted in negative stereotypes associated with women in towns.

Prostitutes are depicted in both novels as single women who move to towns solely to destroy and put to question the moral fibre of the society. Mlilo and Makhalisa fail to bring to the fore the real issues that force women into prostitution. The socio-political, and economic issues affecting single women are not brought to the fore, (Oyewumi 2005:301) argues, “What we must look for, then, is not how African women lost their development opportunity during colonial or contemporary neo-colonial periods but rather the differential impact of such socio-economic conditions on men and women”.

Lulu in *Umhlaba Lo!*, complains that her wages cannot sustain her. In both Makhalisa and Mlilo’s novels, prostitutes are depicted as debauchees; Jenny, who is Ndaba’s concubine, has clothes and is always drinking and having fun. Makhalisa fails to give the real reasons why Jenny leads such a life; to secure her economic base since she is not employed; she depends upon other women’s husbands for survival. Hadebe (2006:176), in his analysis of *UMhlaba Lo!*, depicts that there is widespread crime. The same trend can be noted in *Umendo* (1977) published in the colonial period, and Hadebe argues, (2006:176) “Makhalisa’s portrayal of the city is in line with the colonial ideology of that period, the city was meant to be home for the white settlers while Africans were only to come to the city temporarily as cheap labour”. Jenny is not only a prostitute but also a heartless thief as she steals Ndaba’s property. Women are depicted as the source of immorality; Jenny is the prostitute, and the reader hates her for this. Male counterparts are excused from prostitution.

Rural women are represented as pure, upholders of tradition and values. Gugu is such a woman as juxtaposed to Lifile, Hleziphi and Jenny. Rural women are represented as respecting their husbands despite the husband’s shortcomings. Berndt (2005;20) argues that “Zimbabwean novels in Shona or Ndebele continue to characterise urban women as loose and vicious while rural women are portrayed as pillars of the community that may be naive and poor but also decent and trustworthy”. Gugu, as compared to Hleziphi, Lifile and Jenny, is different because she is married and occupies the rural space; even when she goes to town, she is still rooted to her

culture as she does not talk back to her husband. Single women in the novel are negatively stereotyped because they disregard marriage. The negative side to stereotypes is depicted by Cusack (2010:11), who argues that, “stereotypes ignore particular individual’s needs, wishes, abilities and circumstances; they significantly impact their ability to create and shape the individual identities according to their own values and wishes”. The novelists are out there with the concern of instilling moral values that are acceptable to their societies and keeping things as they were. *Lifile* is a lament of the death of the once cherished traditional values. Women in town are blamed for most of the problems in the society. These writers want to maintain things as they are.

What can be observed from Mlilo (1975) and Makhalisa (1977) is the moralisation of women, and this can be attributed to the factors influencing the writing of novels in the colonial period. In the context of this study, writers with works published in the same historical period somehow met with similar circumstances, with regards to the publications of their novels or even the ideologies informing their writings. Culture, which is not static, is also at the centre in determining the content in the novels. Fiction in the early 1970s -80s articulates the urbanisation period. Writers in Ndebele literature are faithful to what they see. This is depicted through the similar approach that they have in the depiction of women in both the city and the rural area. One can also allude to the fact that, there could be factors influencing the similarity in the depiction of issues in the colonial period. What happens in the novels reflects the socio-historic experiences of Ndebele women and African women in general.

5.8 Impact of Missionary Education and SRLB on Works Published During the Colonial Period

Writing was a product of colonialism and missionary efforts. Mhlambi (2012: 10) notes that early “African writers were to wallow around ... ‘safe’ historical themes... they had to wallow on themes that were ‘incessantly didactic’ Christian moral outlook”. This, in a way, influenced so much the content of most literature published in the colonial period. Some themes were ‘not safe’ to write about. To be noted is the fact that writing was a product of colonialism, and such even the missionaries who encouraged the writings had a gospel that they wanted to preach. In as much as they encouraged writings so that Africans do not forget their culture by learning about

foreign cultures only, they encouraged literacy for other reasons as well. Matshakayile-Ndlovu (2001:v) notes that:

Abanali basebevele sebeqalisile ukukhuthaza ukuthi kulotshwe izingwalo ngendimi zakuleli, bathi ulwazi lokubala lolu luzaphathisa ekuthini baqhubeke bezifundela iBhayibhili bebodwa okuzaqinisa ukholo lwabo

(Missionaries had already started to encourage the writing of novels in African Languages (indigenous languages in present day Zimbabwe), they hoped that through literature written in indigenous languages would help them to read and interpret the Bible and this would help to strengthen their newly acquired religion).

To be realised is that even though missionaries encouraged creative writing in indigenous languages, their main reason was to spread the Christian gospel. The spread of the Christian gospel would be done through writing moralistic stories where finally good triumphed over evil and all villains are punished. This is noted in the moralistic stories created by writers in the 1970s where some of the critical issues of the time were ignored. Topical issues that could have been raised then were the condition of Africans under colonial rule, the unfairness of colonialism system exhibited in the formation of the *1930 Land Apportionment Act* that drove Africans to dry arid lands and several taxes such as hut tax, dog tax, among others that did not work in the interests of the blacks.

Being under colonial rule, the state sought to capture the publishing houses so that they could have access to the content being distributed to the public. Matshakayile-Ndlovu (2001:vi) writes about the Southern Rhodesia Literature Bureau that was formulated in 1954 whose main duty was to control the content in the African literature. Matshakayile-Ndlovu (2001: vi) captures one of the requirements for the writers thus:

Kwakusiba lemincintiswano yokukhuthaza abalobi ekubhaleni-izeluleko zomncintiswano zazikubeka kucace ukuthi izindaba lezi kakumelanga zikhulume ngezombangazwe kumbe ukubuswa kwabantu. Kazimelanga ziveze abamhlophe njengabantu abalochuku ebantwini abamnyama. Kakumelanga njalo ziveze inkolo yesiKhrestu njengenkolo embi kumbe esolwa ngabantu, kakumelanga ziveze inzondano phakathi kwabamhlophe labansundu, kumele zibaveze njengabantu abahlalisene kuhle.

(There were writing competitions which encouraged writers to write and the writing competition was clear on the rules that had to be adhered to, for instance writers were not supposed to focus on political issues (or issues of governance), whites were not to be revealed as cruel people towards blacks. Christianity was not to be depicted in a bad light or a religion that people did not like, and the writings should depict a good relationship

existing between blacks and whites and no hatred should be depicted between these two races they should be depicted as a people who love and enjoy staying together).

Thus, from Matshakayile - Ndlovu's statement, it can be noted that the kind of novels to expect under such restrictions, are novels wallowing around 'safe themes', and artists under such control did not give natural expressions of the things they wanted to talk about. This limited even the content that the writers depicted thus affecting what was communicated by the writers themselves, since a number of factors shape the literary text. Chiwome (2002:21) avers that, "a novel does not emanate from the writer's mind alone. Many unacknowledged forces behind the scenes contribute to its shape". Chiwome (2002:23) concurs with Matshakayile-Ndlovu (2001) as he notes the mandate of the Literature Bureau, "the unofficial day to day role of the Literature Bureau, was to direct the novel along, the path of least ideological resistance to the Rhodesian government..."

It can, thus, be noted that the artist in the colonial period became less creative and moved to the periphery of the society as s/he failed to be the voice of the voiceless by talking about issues that affected the people in his or her community. Novels on political issues became less and those who dared to write about political issues did so in a subtle way. It is not surprising the kind of themes that emanated from these novels, such as, relations between men and women, depicted outside the political and economic issues of the day. Chiwome (2002:24) argues that:

...out of the control arose a novelistic tradition which was silent on contemporary social-political issues. Characters were neutral on colonial economics and politics as a result of channeling a few decades of writing saw artists dabbling stereotypes based on idealistic morality. It caused a dearth of explanatory historical fiction.

Commenting on the role of the colonial governments' control (the Southern Rhodesia Literature Bureau) of the literary landscape, Chiwome, (2002:25) quotes Veit-Wild: "the Bureau was commissioned by the colonial government not only to foster and promote native literature but at the same time to channel and control it, to keep it native and above all out of politics". Thus, Veit-Wild and Matshakayile - Ndlovu's assertions about the government and the Southern Rhodesia Literature Bureau only seeks to depict how authors were limited in their writing in works of art that were published in the colonial period. Those writers who managed to touch on politics did so at their own risk. Hence, most writers avoided political issues, if political issues were depicted this was done in a subtle way and it was up to the reader of the literature to

establish the standpoint of the writer. As a way of example, just to depict how serious the censorship board was on publishing works that had nothing to do with the government of the day, the board read the contents of the novel and advised whether the book was suitable or not for the public, depending upon the content it had. Matshakayile-Ndlovu (2001: vii) opines that:

Umlobi eselobile ugwalo...uma kwakukhona okungafunekiyo kulo, umlobi wayecetshiswa ukuthi akususe anduba lwemukelwe.

(After a writer had written a work of art for publication, if there was something in the text that the Board was not happy about, they advised the writer to remove it before publication.)

With regards to the role that the Southern Rhodesia Literature Bureau played in determining the content in novels, one incident involves a novel by Ndabaningi Sithole, *Umvukela wamaNdebele* (1956) (The Ndebele Uprising) which had its title changed to *AmaNdebele kaMzilikazi*, (The Ndebeles of King Mzilikazi). The first title, *Umvukela wamaNdebele*, was removed as it was thought to encourage the Ndebele to take up in arms against the white government. It was replaced with a more 'acceptable' title which did not have any undertones of resistance. The novel was actually removed from the shelves because of a song that had undertones of resistance; the book was later published after independence under its original title, *Umvukela wamaNdebele*. The second publishing of the book under independence had suggestions that under colonial rule there were limitations and the writer became free after independence.

It is also noble that even from the encouragements of the writing competitions and UNESCO (which saw the importance of teaching and educating children in their mother tongue) black Zimbabweans had the urge to write after having an encounter with novels in universities in South Africa. They also wanted to read about their experiences, missionaries and the government of the day then encouraged them to write. Matshakayile-Ndlovu (2001: v),

Inkuthazo yokuthi kulotshwe izingwalo ngendimi zesintu ezelizweni lakithi yasungulwa ngabafundi abansundu ababefunda emakolishini eZansi, eSouth Africa, labanali kumbe abafundisi bamabandla esiKhristu. Abafundi abansundu bathi ekufundeni kwabo emakolishini lemaYunivesithi eSouth Africa bahlangana lengwalo ezazibhalwe ngezindimi zesintu ezeSouth Africa ezibalisa isiZulu, isiXhosa lesiSuthu, bakubona kuyinto enhle lokhu ngoba bebona ukuthi kuqakathekisa izindimi zomdabuko walelo ilizwe...ekuphendukeni kwabo ekhaya labo baqalisa ukubhala ezabo izingwalo ngendimi zakuleli batshotshozela uhulumende wakulesosikhathi ukuthi abavumele ukuthi badandise izingwalo zabo kubadindi bezingwalo.

The first black students who went to colleges in South Africa encouraged the writing of literary works of art in indigenous languages in Zimbabwe and the preachers in Christian circles. After the black students who had gone to South Africa had an experience and encounter with novels written in indigenous languages in (isiZulu, isiXhosa and siSwati) this they saw as a good move because it enhanced the value of indigenous languages in that country. Upon returning to their homeland, Zimbabwe, they started writing their own novels in indigenous languages they pleaded with the government of the day to publish their novels in the local publishing houses.

Matshakayile-Ndlovu (2001)'s sentiments are that the black elite were the ones who wrote early novels after their encounter with novels written in indigenous languages in South Africa. What the African student had been exposed to was Christianity and the white man's culture of which in his or her writing the early novelist sought to capture all that he had mastered including his indigenous culture. Out of all this emerged an ambivalent African novelist/dramatist/poet caught in between depicting new things that he/she has grasped, depicting his/her culture and paying homage to the system that gave him/her writing skills. Chiwome (2002:3) criticises the educated African and notes that an "educated African would not be as useful as his or her uneducated counterpart". This statement goes a long way in explaining the type of literature depicted by the early writers who had just been schooled in European values and religion.

Chiwome (2002:28) avers that, "schools inspectors helped the editors to act as custodians of social morality". This, on its own, produced a one-dimensional literature and, according to him, "pre-occupation with moralising mode fiction made fiction an extension of the folktale. It imparted traditional truisms about life in circumstances in which such truisms needed fresh scrutiny". The background of the novels published in the colonial period becomes useful in the writers' depictions and in the themes prevalent in the literature at the time. What can be concluded, therefore, is that gender relations and the stereotypes emerging in the novels became part of the social, political and historical, economic issues obtaining at the time.

5.8.1 Early writers and the conventional approach

So as to maintain social morality, women who break away from tradition are portrayed as people who must never be allowed to live. Lifile acquires a venereal disease that leaves her barren. It can be argued that Mlilo fails to realise that women are affected by the same pressures that have forced men to leave their rural lands and flock in town. Lifile cannot be successful because she is unmarried and is in 'unholy alliances' with men. She has no protection in town because she has

run away from the traditional roles of women. Back home she could have enjoyed the protection of her family before she is married off. Cusack (2010:14) argues that:

We stereotype to malign or subjugate people and sometimes we stereotype people to protect them. We stereotype to 'script identities' to assign norms and codes by which men and women can be preconceived and expected to live their lives.

What is not brought to the fore is the fact that women also want to buy new goods introduced by the whites. Matshakayile-Ndlovu (2006:139) when writing about colonial stereotypes in Ndebele fiction in *Bantu Behadlana* and *Lifile*, argues that:

The writer seems to be influenced by the traditional division of gender roles in Ndebele society, where the sphere of the influence for females is around the home and in the kitchen, whereas that of the males is in the forest and around the cattle kraal. Mlilo wants to see things continuing this way; she wants African girls to remain in the rural space helping their mothers until they marry.

Mlilo's traditional approach does not relate to the socio-economic and political issues obtaining at the time, the return to the rural areas by young women is a lesson that in order for them to remain pure, they should be in the rural areas. The venereal disease that Lifile acquires becomes a punishment that their proper dwelling place is the village, but what Mlilo does not seem to understand are the changing circumstances that force women into towns. When they leave their homes, they have no intention of becoming prostitutes; they want to earn a living in a decent way. They become victims of the circumstances. Writers publishing in the colonial period have a marked interest in depicting the emergence of the city and the stereotypes associated with it. It can be noted that the city on its own was a product of the colonial system. The character of the male and female figure finds a different meaning in the city altogether, because the city is different from the rural area where their folks are.

The movement to the city was necessitated by unbearable living conditions in the rural areas especially for the young who still had to acquire wealth to secure an economic base for their families. In the city, things were hard up to a point and time when the masses were up in arms against the government at the time, Muwati (2009:55) talks about some of the issues that necessitated the war of liberation; he notes that:

The liberation was a struggle against varying forms of oppression, particularly white racist rule which manifested itself through acts of law such as *The Land Apportionment*

Act and *The Native Land Husbandry Act* which pauperized Africans by expropriating their only source of authentic livelihood – the land.

Thus, *the Land Apportionment Act* (1930), which forced Africans to occupy dry arid lands where the land became less useful for a sustainable livelihood, necessitated movements to the city. *The Animal Husbandry Act* also reduced the number of rural Africans' domestic animals; each individual was supposed to keep. This is lamented by the character Nyembezi in Mpofu's (1972) novel, *Wangithembisa Lami*, where he says, '*sesiyaphila ngani njengoba inkomo seziqunywa?*' (What will be our source of livelihood, since the number of cattle that are owned by individuals has been reduced). Chiwome (2002) and Muwati (2009) note that land was central to the African and loss of it confused and displaced Africans ideologically and economically. Chiwome (2002:56) states:

Before colonial industrialisation, the inhabitants of the country used to be self-sufficient small-scale farmers and hunters. They had right over land and its natural resources. The displacement of the Africans was often not compensated for. In any case, the former land-owners could not put money value on the land. With the loss of the land, people lost their way of life. Industrialisation replaced self-reliance with dependence on money.

The unproductive land and uncondusive environment forced Africans to move to urban areas to seek employment. People moved to the city because they needed to earn money no matter how little it was. The inhabitants were not comfortable but they just wanted to make ends meet. Raftopoulos and Yoshikuni (1999) argue that "the substantive residence of the African worker was his or her rural home. The urban space was a temporary place for work to be occupied so long as labour functions were being performed and at as little cost as possible to the central state and the city council". It can be noted that the space that was occupied by Zimbabweans during the colonial period was small that is, in the city; the same experiences were also noted in Nairobi. According to Kurtz (1998:78), "Because Africans were only considered temporary residents of Nairobi; workers were generally not allowed to bring their families to the city". This cramped space which did not resonate well with the bigger space they once occupied in the rural life, the city became a hybrid space where different people from all walks of life met and this hybridised space, "made the city a carnivalesque space in the Bakhtinian sense, a place where accepted social norms are temporarily inverted or suspended". (Kurtz, 1998:83).

Hybrid creations translated into moral decadence; people resorted to all forms of behaviour just to get money, "young men and women moved to the city as they regarded the towns as areas of

expanded opportunities and resources” (Obbo, 1980:94). Notable is that there is a crisis where women and men are largely affected. Patriarchy and the external forces have a bearing on the subjugation of women. It becomes difficult, therefore, to remove the female from the mother trope; anything outside that context becomes negative. Bauer (2013:24) argues that, “stereotypes on women span cultural boundaries and gender role stereotypes relegate women to positions in the home as mothers, wives and care givers”. To be realised under the uncritical traditionalist approach is that it is done outside the context of the circumstances obtaining at the time. The approach calls for the exclusion of women in major areas of action such that they become passive and occupy the domestic/ rural space in an ever-changing society; in this case women dwell in the rural areas and leave the city for men. Mlilo (1975) and Makhalisa (1977) are affected by patriarchy in their depiction of women, and this has largely to do with how the female gender is socialised in Ndebele society. Each society peddles its own codes of gender which are usually aligned to the culture in question. These cultural codes are manifested in different discourses such as proverbs, sayings and folktales. All of these are inculcated in the minds of the young from a tender age, thus it can be noted that gender is acquired and taught in various ways. Gender is taught from a tender age so that the concerned individuals grow up and fall in line with the expectations of gender in that particular society and they do not do exactly the opposite of what they were taught to do or behave like from a tender age.

Young girls and boys growing up were/are socialised into seeing marriage as an important social institution. Girls under the guidance of *iqhikiza* (the eldest girl in a family) were/are groomed and taught about womanhood and told to lose their virginity once they get married. Parents prepared their children for marriage through sayings such as, *ibele lendlela kalivuthwa* (a crop that grows by the wayside does not ripe). Remaining single would be an embarrassment, (*ukungavuthwa*) and metaphorically (achievement of nothing in terms of getting a serious partner). Such a saying encouraged young women to get married and be attached to a single partner since marriage was celebrated and being alone was not encouraged through terms like (*uphekeyakhe, umcaba owasala emasini*) meaning (young men and women who remain unmarried when others of their age mates marry). There is also the saying that goes, *sizazidla sizibeka amathambo* (we will eat and leave the bones/we will not use the whole of your lobola) in case the girl behaves badly and the inlaws will ask them to return part of the lobola and come back with the embarrassing term *umabuyekwendeni* (a divorcee). All of this seeks to depict that

being single was never encouraged and society would try by all means to give good counselling to their daughters so that they stay in marriage.

In relation to the novels under study, single women who found themselves in towns staying single lost their dignity in society. Jeater (2000:35) argues that “women who lived independently in town, were not perceived or treated as full members of the society and in this sense, they were not perceived as fully human”. Okpala (2016:3) argues that “women in Africa have for a long time been conditioned by culture, tradition and the philosophy of dominant religions”. What a woman is, in terms of expectations and responsibilities in Ndebele society is determined by culture. A woman performs well when there is a male figure by her side. Okpala (2016:4) argues that ‘the image of the woman in the literary works by African men has always been formed solely on the traditional roles of marriage, motherhood and feminine subservience as dictated by the patriarchal society’.

In terms of socialisation, both boys and girls are socialised into different gender roles which they make use of from a tender age and then later on in adulthood. Okpala (2016:22) argues that “the girl child is instilled with the importance of gendered roles from childhood so that by the time she reaches adulthood she comes to accept them as her *raison d’être* she internalises these images that condemn her to a life of perpetual dependence and diffidence”.

As has been noted, girls are socialised into marriage and the way they behave later on is determined by societal expectations, for example there are negative terms for ladies who have children outside marriage that is, terms such as ‘*izala kanye*’ (a woman who has one child outside wedlock) and *izala kabili* (a woman who has two children outside wedlock), depending on the number of children the girl had before marriage. Thus, singleness or being a single mother is judged negatively outside the social circumstances that lead women to such conditions, for example the unfortunate circumstances that the woman could have faced such as being a widow or rejection, are not taken into consideration. The same men who have children outside marriage are not given negative terms. Dube (2006:24) argues, “our view of the world is determined by our socialisation, the act of seeing is a socially constructed activity, which can either empower or disempower the on-looker or the object being looked at, women is the object of the man’s gaze”. The fact that it is women who are judged seeks to depict the gendered power structures in African Ndebele society, Woodward (2011:3) argues, “gender is about bodies that are situated in

the social world and are made and remade by social forces as well as anatomy and enfolded characteristics.”

In the Ndebele society, a woman is confined to the home and her performance space should be perfected at home by her maternal and paternal aunts, they do so by not tolerating wayward behaviour at home through sayings such as, ‘*uzafika usiyangisa khonale*’ (you will embarrass us in your future in laws’ space). ‘*Khonale*’ would be an unknown zone but definitely her inlaws’ place, and this is the only space that the girl would go to that will be seen as movement from the domestic space to another domestic space. For example, with the advent of colonialism, parents and guardians were not mentally prepared and some did not know how to prepare their children for the new culture and how to teach their children on how to behave when they leave home for the city. The children themselves did not know how to behave in this place known as the city and this somewhat affected their behaviour. Meadows and Mizruchi (1969:5) argue that “urban values are different, movement occurs from rural areas to cities and the behaviour patterns are transformed to conform to those which are characteristic of groups in the cities”. Characters and realities were compromised because of the occupation of different spaces which in turn had different demands.

The emergence of the city brought confusion in the ‘normative’ division of gender roles whereby more demanding work usually done outside the confines of home were done by the male gender, men could hunt, this noted in material culture that belonged to men, the fact that spears, arrows, shield and knobkerrie belonged to men. On the other hand, mats (*amacansi*) pots (*izimbiza*) belong to women, making it clear that the performance space for women is the home. Hence, the roles and identities are created by people who are in that particular culture. On the identities of women and roles that they always played, Berndt (2005:16) argues that “historically, women were responsible for a large proportion of agricultural labour and had to combine these, duties with other reproductive and productive tasks. Raised children and worked on the fields”. Geisler concurs with Berndt as she puts to the fore the economic contribution of women in African societies. Geisler (2004:19) argues that:

Whatever the level and incidence amongst African women in pre-colonial societies of autonomy, power or authority, with an economic basis or political presence, the colonial state and the capitalist penetration of kin-based modes of production changed what was there. Colonialism is held to have deepened, entrenched, re-enforced and created

public/private dichotomies. This effectively removed African women from the public domain and reified them in a Western inspired domestic a private sphere.

During the colonial era, women worked in the fields and provided for their families but this was around the confines of homes as compared to their male counterparts who could go far away, risky places hunting for animals so they could fend for their families. It can be argued that during the colonial period, women contributed towards the economic base of their communities something they did not do before. Uchendu (1995: xi) argues that, “the new colonial superstructure employed only men, and in doing so, initiated men into the new economic order, while women had no recognisable place in the new dispensation”.

It is clear, therefore, that colonialism influenced gender relations, of note also is the fact that culture influenced these gender relations as well. A young woman was expected to be morally upright and faithful to one partner so that she could get a good husband and stay happily in marriage. With men it was different as the term *inkonjwa* (a man who has lovers) had positive attributes for men who had many women ‘*indoda libhetshu lomziki*’, “a man is free to get into sexual liaisons with multiple women” and should/cannot be confined to one woman, since there was polygamy. Moreover, there are terms like ‘*ilikhwa*’ (a man who is loved by women) for men, which when defined referred to the woman’s favourite; such a man would attract different kinds of women. On the other hand, for women, proverbs emphasised female beauty in a negative way as it was thought to be a source of trouble for the man in question, the proverb says, ‘*inkiwane enhle ibolile*’, translated to be ‘a ripe fruit usually has insects inside’. Thus, in this way outside beauty does not mean anything if the woman is characterless. These sayings and proverbs set the background to the expectations of the male and female genders both the male and female in Ndebele society before colonialism and this background is important as negative stereotypes develop for men and women who act outside the confines of their gender. Schimdt (1992:1) argues, “unless we understand the interrelations between women and men, we cannot fully understand the structure of a given society, its history, political and economic systems or ideology”. To be argued therefore is the fact that with culture in the colonial period, there are certain ideologies that the Ndebeles subscribe to in connection to issues concerning men and women that inform their perception towards women. Thus, colonialism might have to an extent destroyed the economic power of women but to a certain extent reinforced pre-existing cultural views concerning women in Ndebele society. Reference to scholars capturing the

African experience only shows that, Africa had a shared experience with issues relating to colonialism and the emergence of the city seeing Africans flocking to the city for better job opportunities.

With regards to gender relations in Ndebele society, there is emphasis on superiority of the male figure over the female figure, with the father being the head and the mother and the children under the father. The man, being *inhloko yomuzi*, is the sole leader and the head of the household, in charge of both his wife and children. A woman could be placed under the category of children. In the Ndebele society, men who could be in the form of (fathers, grandfathers, husbands and brothers influenced the movement of women. Berndt (2005:10) argues that “the Shona and the Ndebele had already been patriarchally structured societies before the onset of European colonisation”. One can argue that colonialism reinforced social structures that were already in existence. In other words, the development of sex role identity is influenced by both biological and historical cultural factors. It can therefore be argued that there are various factors that influence gender from a cultural perspective and also from different forces such as colonialism.

Colonialism somehow translated a different gender discourse for both men and women but being harsher on women. Berndt (2005:6) argues; the female subject is marginalised in post-colonial discourse. She claims that it suffers from “double colonisation’, because it has had to face both colonial and patriarchal domination”. With the emergence of the city, both men and women flocked to the city and, because self-individualism, they did anything at any cost to make ends meet. Lulu in Makhalisa, is heard saying:

*‘Ucabanga ukuthi amadola amahlanu engiwazuza koMagaya
angangifikisa ngaphi?’*

(Do you think that the seven dollars that I get from Magaya can sustain me?)

Berndt (2005:7) argues that “the structure of the female characters corresponds to the hybrid configuration of the texts”. Women, thus, were controlled through labelling; women in the city being labelled as villains and those in the rural areas as morally upright. The colonial system saw the need for women to be kept under patriarchal control. Gaidzanwa (1985: 10) argues that “acts passed have a fundamental impact on relations between the sexes within the family and

marriage. It changes the frame of reference for women's lives within the society to some extent and it is this fact that has discomfited some people". For example, the pass laws for women that controlled the stay of women in cities, Schmidt (1992:119), necessitated stereotypes for women in the city in the colonial period, Schmidt (1992:99) argues:

Colonial officials were predisposed to relegate African women to positions of inferiority vis-à-vis their men. Women were stripped of important social and political roles only for reasons of economic functionality, but because of European racial and gender prejudices.

The above depicts how women were grossly affected by external forces that is the colonial system. Cusack (2010:2) argues that:

Subordination and exclusion of women takes place through the uncritical application of 'stereotyped (often traditional and implicit) ideas, symbols and roles. Analysis of how such typical assumptions are socially constructed and shaped by gender-based judgements regarding women's attributes, characteristics and roles is critical, regardless of whether they are accurate. These assumptions are important sources of social meanings, norms and values on which social structures are built and perpetuated.

From Cusack's submission, it can be noted that society has inherent stereotypes about women in terms of their roles and how they are to behave and this goes a long way in understanding the construction of gender in Ndebele society.

5.9 Writings in the Post-independence Period

This section looks at the background to the novels published in the post- independence period that is, *Etshabhini* (1990) by Sigogo, *Lokhu Akungeke Kwenzeka* by Ncube (1997) and *Esilojeni* (2016) by Sitsha. Writers do not write in a vacuum but, in most cases, their works usually relate and portray the socio-historic circumstances prevailing during the writing of their novels. The post-independence period has brought many complexities. Evident is that between 1990-2016, most novelists portray the urban set up and its challenges after people had flocked to the city for education and employment. Independence brought economic challenges and women resorted to shebeens to earn a living. Even though some people were employed, most workers could not afford low density suburbs and, therefore, stayed in high density suburbs like Mzilikazi and Makokoba. *Etshabhini* exposes situations faced by Africans in an independent Zimbabwe; workers are employed but cannot afford houses in most residential areas. There are no jobs; young girls resort to prostitution and older women become shebeen queens. Women have to

hustle in order to survive. Raftopoulos (2009:203) captures the Zimbabwean situation soon after independence noting the dissatisfaction that the masses had towards the government:

As the economic crisis deepened at the end of the 1980s workers and their unions increasingly demonstrated their opposition to state policies. By the end of 1997, some one hundred job actions had taken place and in January 1998 food riots, in response to the steep rise in the cost of mealie meal, erupted in the capital city and smaller towns such as Beitbridge, Chegutu and Chinhoyi.

Raftopoulos' assertion above highlights that as there was an economic crisis from the early 1980s to the 90s writers could not help but capture this in their works of art. In the history of Zimbabwe, the crisis led to both political and economic decline, with the majority of Zimbabweans going to the diaspora in search for job opportunities. Those who remained in Zimbabwe faced a difficult time, "with hyperinflation recording an official level of 230 million percent by the end of 2008 devaluing both earnings and savings", Raftopoulos (2009:20).

Such a situation made it difficult for Zimbabweans to survive on orthodox means, hence we meet the novelists trying to capture the crisis and how it pushed women to be involved in immoral activities and some of them being shebeen queens and those who were employed doing so through bribery or nepotism. Raftopoulos (2009:201) captures both the political and economic sphere:

From the late 1990s, Zimbabwe entered a period that has come to be known generally as the 'Crisis in Zimbabwe'. This upheaval consisted of a combination of political and economic decline that, while it had its origins in the long-term structural economic and political legacies of colonial rule as well as the political legacies of African nationalist politics, exploded onto the scene in the face of a major threat to the political future of the ruling party, ZANU (PF).

In the midst of the prevailing circumstances, novelists try to capture what is happening in the society. The crisis stretches from the 90s to 2008 before the signing of the (GNU) Government of National Unity between MDC and ZANU PF in January 2009. Life became a bit better with MDC coming on board but the economy was not that stable, Raftopoulos argues, (2009:229), there was little prospect of dealing with the unfolding economic and humanitarian disasters. Therefore, the novelists' creativity borders around all these economic and political issues at hand.

5.9.1 Women as morally decadent in *Etshabhini, Lokhu Akungeke Kwenzeke and Esilojeni*

In *Etshabhini*, we meet maMkhwananzi who is complaining about her neighbours to her friend maMhlanga:

Ngapha lakhona kuhlala imbulu zamankazana. Umsindo awenza ngerediyogramu yawo langemilomo ingathi ngowokuphikisana lalaba abetshabhini engapha (Sigogo, 1990:10).

(In the neighbouring flat there are girls who are wayward; they raise the volume of their radiograms so high that you may think they are competing in terms of noise with the people at the shabeen next door).

The girls who stay in the neighbouring flat are depicted as people who have indecent liaisons with men, but nothing is alluded that really makes them behave this way. MaMkhwananzi strongly believes that they are prostitutes. It can be noted that some women seem to have resorted to prostitution in order to make money. To them, prostitution is work. Raftopoulos and Yoshikuni (1999:3) notes, “the urban space was a temporary place of work”. MaMkhwananzi is not pleased about the presence of prostitutes in her neighbourhood:

Sake sathi huuu kubotshwe ngamapholisa emkhankasweni wawo lowana wokukhukhulwa kwamakhikhitha (Sigogo, 1990:14).

(We were once relieved when prostitutes were arrested during the operation for the removal of prostitutes.

MaMkhwananzi is against prostitution and is happy when the police act to stop it. She dislikes the idea that women involved have to sleep with many men. Prostitution is generally disapproved as shown by the derogatory terms that describe women who have several partners (for example, *ipendeka*). Hadebe, cited in Sayi (2017:247), defines *ipendeka* as:

Ipendeka ngumuntu wesifazana ohamba ekhomba lapho lalapho.

(A woman who is not morally upright and gets into love affairs with numerous males).

In Ndebele society, therefore, having many sexual partners for a woman is considered as immoral behaviour. In the novel *Lokhu Akungeke Kwenzeke*, immorality is attributed towards the female gender the central theme of *Lokhu Akungeke Kwenzeke* is immorality. Thabi and Rose are the ladies who sleep with men for money and who wait for their clients in hotels or outside

hotels. They even fight for clients. Mabhena once had liaisons with these. It can be noted that Thabi and Rose prostitute for money after being hard hit by ESAP. Ncube (1997:43) notes:

Umuntu aze aziphenduleinja kanje uzwa ekukhumbuza ngayo i-ESAP leyo.

(A human being would turn herself into a dog and they would only tell you that it is a result of ESAP that they are now behaving like this).

Of note is the fact that Sodindwa-Ncube (1997) does not blame these women, he blames the economy that pushes people to the edge. Immorality in the novels is depicted as a female problem. Mdlongwa and Mabhena's conversation captures this succinctly. Mabhena manages to escape and the women are the ones who are caught. Men who sleep with these women are not blamed at all. All the blame is on women, giving a hint that immorality is perpetuated by women. To be noted, therefore, is that women use prostitution as a survival strategy amid economic hardships. Senkoro says, (1982:15), "its true that in feudalistic times, people use prostitution for survival, it is not correct to state that there is no future in such peoples 'thirsts' for their freedom from the exploitative bondage of the feudalistic system-'prostitution'".

Immorality is aligned to the female gender. A moral human being therefore is one who acts in line with societal standards and upholds the highest standards of wellbeing in a society. Morality is a virtue that is demanded from every individual, but in the novel, there is silence when it comes to the immorality of males. This can be attributed to patriarchal structures, which always have more demands on women. Berndt (2005:10) notes that "the Shona and the Ndebele had already been patriarchally structured societies before the onset of European colonisation". This on its own serves to depict that patriarchy has always dominated the Ndebele people's lives regardless of the period under review. MaMkhwananz is represented as a morally upright woman when juxtaposed to other women such as maKhuphe and 'the girls' next door. MaMkhwananzi is unemployed takes care of the household and husband and finds comfort in playing with her dog within her house. Commenting on the experiences of the Shona women, Berndt (2005:11) observes that, "In Shona society...the status of women has traditionally been associated with bodies of reproduction and with jobs that extend those bodies into household places to caretake children and male relatives". MaMkhwananzi is such a woman and, thus, is the epitome of moral standards in the novel.

The girls and maKhuphe in the neighbouring flat give mamKhwananzi a difficult time. Of note is that the set up in towns became a platform for immorality. There are child headed households, small cramped living spaces that do not offer privacy. Role models are hard to come by and young people end up copying what is not good from the adults. MaMhlanga speaks negatively about the Mzilikazi flats:

Kuyini okumangalisayo ngeMzilikazi yakho leyo kanye lezindlu zakhona?(Sigogo, 1990:6)

What is so special about this Mzilikazi of yours and its poorly built houses?

MaMkhwananzi responds:

Ngubani umuntu omnyama owake wakholisa ukuhlala ngaphansi kumbe phezu kwabanye? (Sigogo, 1990:19)

Who is that black person who has ever enjoyed staying under or on top of other people's flats?'

It is such a hybridised environment that the traditional Ndebele society failed to understand what perpetuated immorality and restlessness. Kurtz (1998:preface) argues, "I have been impressed by how important the city is as a setting that is also a symbol for so many of the dynamics of post colonial society". The pristine village set up with moral values has been done away with because of change. The towns provide an environment for immorality to occur in the form of child headed households (freedom from patriarchal structures) small rooms, cramped space, little privacy, in this way, people always copied the bad from adjacent homes.

From *Etshabhini* to *Lokhu Akungeke Kwenzeke*, we see immorality as projected by the novelists at its peak. It is way after independence in 1997, where we meet women with morally wanting behaviour, families who had been leading good lives affected by ESAP. The novel *Lokhu Akungeke Kwenzeke* illustrates the aftermaths of ESAP in the family institution as workers are retrenched and inflation cannot be controlled. We meet Mpala, maDewa and Irene in the novel leading a good life as Irene is doing her secondary education. Things change all of a sudden when her father Mpala is retrenched, Irene immediately stops going to school. Ncube (1997:12) notes:

Ekuvulweni komsebenzi waboMpala, baphiwa wona amanganyana lawo oMpala bavalelisana, badobha amabhayisikili abo, bawakhahlela beqonde ngezindlini.

When the company that Mpala was working for closed they were given a small exit package and they bid each other farewell riding their bicycles heading home.

ESAP affected many people in Zimbabwe, and women struggled to make ends meet. Describing women who have to go to town in order to make ends meet, Sodindwa - Ncube (1997:15) says:

Zivuswe phakathi kwamabili ziphanyekwe emihlane emathambo, zabotshelwa khona ngeqhedlanyana elitshiya ingane ihwathwa ngumqando iphenduke ibemhlophe nke,iphume iminkenke ingakalubhadi phansi.

(Babies would be awakened from their sleep early in the morning and be strapped on their mother's backs with small strapping towels that left the back uncovered to an extent that the baby would be affected by the cold and have a dry skin and cracked heels even before walking.)

The situation is appalling because of ESAP, people immediately became poor. Sodindwa-Ncube (1997:13) writes:

Banikizela abantu, zagcwala inhlanya ezitaladeni.

(People wore rags, and mad people flooded the street.)

MaDewa is no exception as she tries to make ends meet through selling tomatoes. This is short-lived as the market becomes flooded. She soon ventures into the business of selling car parts for a renowned businessperson in Bulawayo by the name Mabhena. Mabhena cancels the arrangement due to competition. One day, MaDewa goes to Mabhena with the hope of securing a job for her daughter Irene. Mabhena rapes MaDewa since he feels that it is part of securing a job for MaDewa's daughter. Mabhena in Sodindwa - Ncube says, (1997:34):

Musa ukukhathazeka sithandwa kasonanga lutho kangako, yikunedana lokhu. Umkakho laye ngithemba uzathaba ngokusebenza kwendodakazi yakhe.

(Do not be worried my love we have not really committed a sin. We are just helping each other. I am sure your husband will be happy when his daughter starts working.)

MaDewa, who is Mpala's wife, exhibits immorality when she sleeps with Mabhena and fails to tell her husband and also fails to caution her daughter Irene. Her motherhood is doubted as she fails to protect her own. MaDewa lacks basic morality in mothering her child. She becomes

warped by the system and values material needs instead of her daughter and her future. After being given a job, she looks at Mabhena with awe. Sodindwa-Ncube (1997:35):

Aqhubeke eyisimungulu umaDewa wayelokhe ecabanga ngobubi abenzileyo. Kodwa wabuye wamhawukela uMabhena embona engumuntu olomusa olothando lomuzi wakhe.

(She went quiet, still thinking of the evil that she had done, but at the same time grateful since Mabhena had shown love and kindness towards her family.)

MaKhuphe in *Etshabhini* is depicted as someone who lacks the required standards of morality as she has no respect for herself; society is judging her, unlike maDewa in *Lokhu Akungeke Kwenzeke* who is judging herself in silence. MaDewa suffers in silence and is compelled by poverty to accept immorality, showing that women suspend their morals when there is a crisis, whereas the immorality of men is out of seeking sexual pleasure. Mabhena is punished at the end because he is immoral and there is no happy ending for Thabi and Rose.

MaKhuphe in *Etshabhini* has lost it as she does not care about hosting men in the middle of the night, shouts at the top of her voice and has the volume of her radio high. She wants to be in control and rejects patriarchy. MamKhwananzi attributes maKhuphe's behaviour to the absence of maKhupes' husband:

Kayisiyompilo le! UMguni esaphila kwakungeke kwenziwe izinto ezinje endlini yakhe lapha'.

This is not a life! When Mguni was still alive, nothing of this sort would have ever happened (Sigogo, 1990; 26)

MaMkwananzi's comments suggest that women need men to control them from wayward behavior. This means that they cannot lead independent self-sustaining meaningful lives without the help of men. It can be argued that the writer in such representation of women fails to appreciate the challenges that women in urban centres faced. Faced with unemployment urban women had to find other means of survival like running shebeens which provided an escape route for the women. MaKhuphe soliloquises:

Ucabanga ukuthi ukulala umuntu ekhangele ethengisa utshwala kumnandi? Kakwazi ukuthi umuntu uyabe edinga imali yokuziphilisa! (Sigogo, 1990:46)

(Does she honestly think that staying awake at night selling beer is a joyous activity? Does she not know that I will be looking for money, to earn a living?)

Nyoni, another neighbour who is worried about the noise which disturbs people in the flat, dismisses people from Makhuphe's shebeen and the business collapses. The writer captures MaKhuphe's predicament when she says:

Lefiriji le wayikweleda ethembe ukuthi izazibhadala yona ngokwayo ngotshwala azabuthengisa. (Sigogo, 1990:135),

(The fridge that she has, she bought it on higher purchase with the hope that she would make money from selling beer and secure the fridge.)

MamKhwananzi, as juxtaposed with maKhuphe, is the good woman who does not approve of wayward behaviour and this is what society approves of. Berndt (2005:14) argues, "motherhood is respectable and held in high esteem as long as it goes with or is preceded by socially approved wifhood". The girls who always disturb with the volume of their radio high are accorded derogatory terms because they act in a way that is not societally acceptable. MaMkhwananzi notes in Sigogo (1990:14):

Imeku, akuseyibobantu laba zingebhezi nje ezilenyawo zokuhamba.

(These are wayward, they can no longer be called human beings as they are mere empty shells who still have legs for walking).

From the above, women are blamed for immorality. Chiwome (2002:25) is unsettled with a system that "attributes crime and deviance to individual freewill". The writer is of the view that morality is the way to go. Botshiwe one of the wayward girls in the neighbouring flat goes to mamKhwananzi and makes her realize that she has changed, Sigogo (1990:114)

Ngibonga umama omncane owasikhuzayo mina ngangingaboni ukuthi sasisenza umsindo owawucunula abanye abantu.

(I am thankful to my aunt who reprimanded me as I did not realise that we were disturbing our neighbours through the noise that we were always making.)

We also meet young women who exhibit immorality in *Esilojeni*, young women exhibit wayward behaviour and young men are perplexed. Mthokozisi is very worried about the way Thoko flirts with him. The character Mthoko in *Sitsha -Tsheza* (2016:13) opens up to his friends and says:

Angithi ngalitshela ngathi udlala epesuka phambi kwami, ecabanga ukuthi ngizakhangeka.

I told you that Thoko is flirting with me and thinks that I will be attracted to her.

The immorality of the female figure is realised through Thoko, who tries by all means to lure Mthoko who is committed to his fiancé Nokuthula. Thoko does the unthinkable when she tells Mthoko that she loves him, *'izolo intombi ibikhonjiswa'* (in the past, man courted a woman) it was the duty of the man, to ask the female out). Mthoko tells his friends that he is shocked about Thoko's behaviour, his friends seem not to be surprised as it is now common for women to show interest in men. Ndodana in Sitsha -Tsheza (2016:14) says:

Izinto sezaguquka mngane wami. Amankazana sekuyiwo asezidingela abafana. Abakaze babucele ubuhlobo kuwe kuwatsapu wemThokozisi'.

(Things have changed my friend; girls are the ones who now look for boys or friendship in the whatsapp platform, have they not asked for your friendship in these platforms?)

They note that the behaviour of girls now leaves a lot to be desired, thus they are acting against their gender when they behave this way. Woodward (2011:x) argues, "all human societies have some recognition of differences that are based on gender and these differences are most commonly divided into one of two categories - women or men, although late modernity has seen more acknowledgement of transgender, intersex and more complex ideas about gender".

Berndt (2005:24) has this to say about the portrayal of women in Zimbabwean literature: "In present day Zimbabwe, the propagated image of a woman is a combination of Victorian Christian ideals and pre-colonial images which mutually enhance a perception of women as either the 'weaker sex' which only seeks to seduce men or as the mystical (mother Africa)'. As such, the women can be equated to temptresses.

In Africa of tradition, a young lady was not supposed to initiate courtship to a man, thus Thoko is judged against this cultural matrix. Thoko conspires with her friend Chelesani and connives to entrap Mthokozisi. They manage to take pictures of him with Thoko naked. Chelesani, in Sitsha-Tsheza (2016:43) encourages:

'Mgagadlele Thoko, yenzanjalo gaxa isandla sakho mngane': watsho uChelesani, ekhupha ifoni yakhe esikhwameni. Kuzwakale umsindo wefoni uthatha isithombe' Thatha zibe zinengi izithombe Chelesani.

(Grab him, put your arm around him, Chelesani said all this while taking her phone out of her pocket. The sound of the phone taking pics and Thoko advised that many pictures be taken of her and Mthokozisi.)

What can be surmised from this incident involving Thoko, Chelesani and Mthokozis is how far women could go to ensnare men into marriage. The two women involved are thus represented as thoroughly immoral and would do anything to get what they want.

In *Esilojeni* just like in *Etshabhini*, we meet an elderly woman who conducts herself in a bad way and it's not expected from her, MaNcube does not conduct herself like a grown-up lady, she shouts at Mthoko's friends who help him in moving into the house. MaNcube says in Sitsha-Tsheza (2016:1):

Umuntu othetheyo kangimfuni lapha. Ngihlala lomntwana oyinkazana kuzakuba kuwe nxa ufuna ukuthi akuphekele loba aphinde alungise indlu yakho.

(I do not want a married man here in the house, I stay with a girl child here, it is up to you whether you want her to cook for you or clean your room.)

From a cultural perspective, it can be argued that maNcube lacks morals as she is trying to push her daughter to Mthoko. MaNcube (2016:56) appears as if she permits immorality. This is what she says to Thoko when she is about to go to see her ailing grandfather:

Akula ngenye indlela Thoko, valelisa wonke amajaha akho, uwatshela ukuthi ususiyabona uyihlomkhulu ogulayo.

(There is no other way Thoko, bid all your boyfriends farewell and tell them that you are going to see your ill grandfather)

MaMkhwananzi has no agency at all since she wants to leave Mzilikazi but has no money and is entirely dependent on the insufficient earnings that Gwebu has. Women who lack morals in the novels are the girls next door and maKhuphe. MaMkhwananzi in a conversation with her friend maMhlanga says upon seeing the girl.

Yizo phela imeku lezi ebengizitsho. (Sigogo, 1990:14).

(These are the naughty girls that I was referring to).

The young women are depicted as characterless. These types of women are seen as *ingebhezi* (empty shells) because they do not conform to societal standards; they do whatever they can in order to make money. Chiwome highlights the stereotypes associated with women who conform to societal expectations and those who do not, Chiwome (2002:130) notes that:

Chakaipa's portrayal of women is not balanced. Like most Shona writers, he is caught in between two stereotypes, one positive and the other negative. The woman is either a conformist or a free agent.

Botshiwe, one of the girls who keep the volume of the radio high, apologises to maMkhwananzi and exposes maKhuphe's plan of hurting and killing maMkhwananzi's dog:

'akukhulwa kubuyelwa emuva mama...ngibonga umama omncane owasikhuzayo. Mina ngangingaboni ukuthi sasisenza umsindo owawucunula abanye abantu. Kwathi dlwe kimi mhlalokho, ngazisola ngalokho esasikwenza (Sigogo, 1990:118).

(Growth is inevitable, mother. I am thankful to my aunt who rebuked us. I did not even realise that we were disturbing our neighbours with all the noise we were making. It only dawned on me when she talked to us and I was filled with remorse.)

Their repentance shows that they have been moralised and seek approval from maMkhwananzi, an epitome of morality and, by all standards, a true Ndebele woman since she is a married woman. Gaidzanwa (1985:14) notes that "mothering is respectable and held in high esteem as long as it goes with or is preceded by socially approved wifedom". In this way, maMkhwananzi plays a motherly role to the girls and is also a good wife.

Even though maKhuphe is older than these girls, it seems as if they are her agemates, this however does not earn her any respect since what she is doing is disrespectful, not only to her but to the society at large, that is beer drinking at her home, encouraging promiscuity since young men and women drink together. This is immoral since in the olden days, even though there was beer-drinking, males and females drank separately. Society is against this since it encourages immorality. Sigogo (1990:25) notes:

Behliswa utshwala bezimbodlela bafakwa ezindaweni zabo njengensukwini isihambile imota eyayilethe utshwala umaMkhwananzi wanikina ikhanda wakhangelela umkakhe ngamehlo akhuluma inkulumo ezinengi, wabopha ubuso bakhe uGwebu wathi, 'Kayisiyo impilo le. UMguni esaphila kwakungeke kwenziwe izinto ezinje endlini yakhe lapha esaphila.

(The beer was offloaded and stored in its right place like always, when the car that had brought the beer had gone maMkhwananzi shook her head and looked at her husband with disapproving eyes, then Gwebu said, this is not a life, when Mguni was still alive such things would not even happen in his house.)

MaKhuphe is not judged as an individual but judged on the basis that she does weird things because she is a widow and no longer controlled by a male figure. Okpala (2016:3) attests that

women are disadvantaged on the grounds not only of gender but also of race, social class and in some cases religion and caste.

Notable, is the fact that MaKhuphe finds her own agency in the shebeen, but society seems to be blind to this. She is the *indodamfazi* (woman with the strength of a man), the independent woman who takes care of herself where jobs are scarce. Berndt (2005:22) notes that “independence sharpened the divisions between women in the urban and rural areas, between educated and uneducated women and between the old and the young”. MaKhuphe’s business collapses and she is livid with the society:

Lefiriji le wayikweleda ethembe ukuthi izazibhadala yona ngokwayo ngotshwala azabuthengisa. Pho nxa sokunje ayithathe ngaphi imali leyo njengoba ifunakala nyanga zonkenje...yisihluku esikhulu esenziwe kuye.

(The fridge that she has, she bought it on higher purchase hoping that she would pay the full amount using the money gotten from selling beer. Now when it is like this where can she get the money since the installments are needed every month ...this is cruelty at its best.)

MaKhuphe’s agency is weakened by society, and in this stance Ndebele society seems to be ambivalent on the roles of women as positive attributes are for those women who are confined to the domestic arena, raising children and being taken care of by their husbands. Women do not seem to be safe when they are independent playing the breadwinner role. Bhabha (1990:2) argues that “ambivalent figure of the nation is a problem of its transitional history...the comfort of social belonging, the hidden injuries of class, the customs of taste, the powers of political affiliation, the sense of social order, the sensibility of sexuality...” Such depiction of defeat of self-sufficient women does not make society improve. Okpala (2016:4) notes that “the negative portrayal of women arguably has negative influence on women readers by imposing traditional stereotypical roles on them. Some of these stereotypes include false assumptions that women are intrinsically inferior, powerless and dependant on men”.

MaKhuphe does what she does in order to earn a living where there is no employment, she seems to be in the same predicament with MaDewa in *Lokhu Akungeke Kwenzeke* as she is caught in between behaving well, like a married woman, and also trying by all means to secure a job for her daughter Irene.

Sodindwa-Ncube (1997:35) describes the internal conflict that she had to deal with:

Waqhubeka eyisimungulu umaDewa wayelokhu ecabanga ngobubi abenzileyo. Kodwa wabuye wamhawukela uMabhena embona engumuntu olomusa, olothando lomuzi wakhe. Wakubona ukuthi kungesuye, lokhu ithemba beliyaphela. Yebo wayemenzise ihlazo eliphezu kwamahlazo onke, kodwa wakhwabitha umoya wakhe wozwelo.

(She went quiet, still thinking of the evil that she had done, but at the same time grateful since Mabhena had shown love and kindness towards her family. If it was not for Mabhena, then all hope would be lost. It was indeed a fact that he had made her do a dispeakable act but at the same time she loved his sympathy.)

5.9.2 Women as evil in *Etshabhini* and *Esilojeni*

This section depicts women as people with evil. MaKhuphe is depicted as heartless, evil and self-centred when she decides making money at her shabbeen day and night disregarding the comfort of her fellow neighbours. MaMkhwananzi expresses her concern over maKhuphe's insensitivity to maMhlanga:

Enekisi dowa lapha kusetshabhini. Ireddyo yakhona ivulwa kucinwe lapho okuphelela khona amandla ayo okukhala. (Sigogo, 1990:10)

(Next door there is a shebeen, the volume of their radio is always at full blast.)

Just like in *Etshabhini*, we have an elderly woman (maNcube) who is cruel and heartless as she mistreats her tenant. The novel by Sitsha-Tsheza (2016) depicts a society in the middle of a cash crisis and inflation, and Zimbabweans are struggling to make ends meet. There is maNcube who is a widow; she is depicted as heartless and cruel. In her first encounter with Mthoko, her would-be-tenant, her insensitivity and cruelty are revealed as she limits the number of friends and relatives that can visit Mthoko at the house.

All these demands make maNcube an insensitive woman who is self-centred. Noting that the author is male, Okpala (2016:76) avers that, "It is the patriarchal structure of the society and its deep – rootedness that gives rise to masculinist beliefs and attitudes, which are detrimental to the female gender".

In the novel *Esilojeni* by Sitsha-Tsheza (2016) we meet Thoko securing accommodation at maNcube's place, maNcube is a difficult woman as she is inconsiderate. She makes Mthoko buy groceries for her, uses up electricity carelessly and when Mthoko faces problems at work and fails to pay rentals on time she does not empathise with Mthoko and lashes out at him despite the economic meltdown. Sitsha-Tsheza (2016:16), through his protagonists, opines:

Imali yayisiqalile ukutholakala nzima elizweni. Izisebenzi zazisebenza nzima kuthi kuphela inyanga zilandulelwe imiholo. Ezinye zazihlala izinyanga zizezibe nhlanu zingaholanga.

(Money had started to be scarce in the country, workers would work very hard but at the end of the month get nothing in return. Some would go for five months without receiving their salaries.)

In such an economic situation, maNcube remains inconsiderate, she responds in a bad way when Mthokozisi apologises for the delay in paying house rentals. She says, (2016; 17):

Pho mina ufuna ngenzeni? Mina lo angidli kuxoliswa. Lokho akufaki kudla phambi kwetafula yami'

(What do you want me to do? I do not eat apologies. That does not put food on my table.)

In addition, maNcube steals food from Mthokozisi and her daughter is also cruel and plots evil. Thoko, who is maNcube's daughter, is portrayed as an evil person. She plans on breaking Mthokozisi's relationship in spite of him pleading with her to leave him alone, since he has a fiancé Nokuthula. She schemes with her friend Chelesani, saying, "*Mhlubule iyembe ukuze kukhanye kuhle ukuthi lizilalele kamncwa.*" (Take his shirt off so that it is clear that you are sleeping peacefully with him.) (Sitsha-Tsheza, (2016:43).

Thoko schemes to break Mthoko's relationship with Nokuthula. Mthoko is taken advantage of whilst drunk, and their plan succeeds. Thoko gives him the impression that they slept together when they did not. In the rural areas, an innocent Nkanyiso is caught unawares. Thoko gets pregnant for him and denies that he is responsible for the pregnancy and says the man responsible is a town boy in Bulawayo. Nkanyiso is hurt by all this, but later finds comfort in Siphilisiwe who has reformed and marries her. Nkanyiso is heartbroken and says this to Thoko:

"Hawu, Thoko kanti sibili usufuna ukumupha bani umntanami? Manje okwami kuyakhanya, wawungichothoza usithi ngingumnyanga manje usuzakwendela ebuyangeni." (Sitsha-Tsheza, 2016: 99)

(Thoko who really do you want to hold accountable for this pregnancy that I'm responsible for. You used to despise me, saying that I am poor; behold now, you are going to marry into poverty.)

Nkanyiso says this jokingly to Thoko hoping that she will repent, but Thoko is inconsiderate and hurts Nkanyiso:

Kangisoze ngendele ngakini mina, umthwalo lo kasuwakho, okwami lawe Nkanyiso sekuphelile. Ngakutshela kudala ukuthi umuntu okufaneleyo nguSiphilisiwe. (p.99)

(I won't get married to you, this pregnancy is not yours, and our relationship is over. I told you a long time ago that the rightful person for you is Siphilisiwe.)

From Thoko's behaviour to be noted is that women are depicted as evil schemers. Thoko herds for Bulawayo where she discovers that Mthoko will be getting married in a few days time. She stops his wedding day by telling the pastor that the pregnancy that she has is Mthokozisi's. They act quickly as they go for DNA tests where they discover that the pregnancy is not Mthoko's, Thoko is jailed, and maNcube loses the house as her husband's child claims it. To be considered therefore here is the fact that good always triumphs over evil. Mthoko gets married to Nokuthula and they buy a house, the cruel maNcube loses the house and this appears to be a punishment. The general impression given throughout is that single women (*omazakhela*) are evil, thus the need to always keep women under patriarchal stances so that they are always in line. It is like women in times of trouble go for the easier way and seduce men for survival.

In *Etshabhini*, a 'heartless' MaKhuphe does not consider the comfort of others despite several warnings. She could do anything to get what she wants as we see her poisoning maMkwananzi's dog to get back to her.

She lacks *Ubuntu/unhu* "humanness" expected of her. The narrator in Sigogo (1990:63) states:

Bonela ukusuka oGwebu, umaKhuphe wabelilungisa iqatshana ayezalifaka umuthi alinikeinja.

(As soon as Gwebu and his wife left, maKhuphe took out the meat and poisoned it).

MaKhuphe is unsettled because of maMkwananzi's dog and discusses this with friends who come to her shabeen, Dumane advises her to burn the dog with boiling water; maKhuphe is excited to do this and executes her plan. When she tries to burn the dog with hot water, her plan fails. Sigogo (1998:159) writes:

Ibhavu yakhe yayimphunyukile umaKhuphe yayawela phakathi kwendlu yenja. Ngesiqubu eyayiphume ngaso yayifike yameqela, yagxila esifubeni sakhe ngenyawo zayo zangaphambili, yhawabha isimvulele ingavula zamazinyo ayo alithanga.

(Her dish slipped out of her hands and fell into the dog's house. The dog came out and jumped on her chest with its front legs and roared showing its yellow teeth.)

MaKhuphe is angered by the treatment that she gets from neighbours and the dog to the extent that she approaches an *inyanga* (traditional healer), Muntukahlokozwa, for revenge. MaKhuphe tells Muntukahlokozwa that she wants Nyoni dead; she declares, “*Mina ngifuna atshone phansi.*” (I want him dead.)

The fact that she wants him to die is an indication of the evil in her, because she does not want to correct her ‘misdeeds.’ It can be argued that women are sometimes represented as evil and incapable of forgiving. Peace only returns to Mzilikazi when MaKhuphe leaves. Sigogo (1998:28) notes:

‘Bathi konela ukuzwakala kumaKhuphe ukuthi uMguni wayenikwe imali enengi kakhulu eyempentsheni laphoayesebenze khona okweminyaka engamatshumi amabili lanhlanu, uMguni wavuka ethe ma endlini yakhe. Kwathiwa ingubo zakhe zazitholakele zigcwele umswaneowawuhlangene lomophelo, laye efe ebambe isisu’

(The moment maKhuphe found out that her husband Mguni had a lot of money for pension where he had worked for twenty-five years, Mguni was found dead in the morning in his house, his blankets had human waste and blood and he died holding his stomach.)

From the above, it can be noted that when a man dies, the wife is suspected of killing him. Okpala (2016:32) argues:

The problem with stereotypes is not that they are untrue, but that they are incomplete. They make one story become the only story...the need to portray multiple female identities that are complex, dynamic and probable.

They suspect that maKhuphe could have been the cause of her husband’s death because she is ‘self centred’; Okpala (2016:94) argues that “in many instances, the widow is believed to be the prime suspect in her husband’s death”. In this way, Okpala exposes the negative stereotypes associated with women, in that they are depicted as a people who have the potential of killing their husbands. One can say that maKhuphe is pressured by life because she is a tenant, but maNcube’s behaviour in *Esilojeni* is unjustifiable Mthoko is mistreated by the landlady maNcube. The women that we have here are Nokuthula, maNcube, Chelesani and Thoko. MaNcube is a difficult and heartless woman, we are presented with a woman who has a house but the author strips her off this high social standing as she steals from her tenant, also asking for food and cheating when it comes to the payment of electricity bills.

Mthoko's relationship is at the verge of breaking up because of Thoko who lies that she is pregnant, she does this so as to win Mthoko's love, whilst deserting Nkanyiso the father of her child, and she looks down upon Nkanyiso because he is in the rural areas and poor. This only shows how evil women can be.

MaNcube is depicted as ununderstanding when Mthoko fails to pay rent on time despite the cash crisis. Sitsha-Tsheza (2016:170) maNcube says:

'Pho mina ufuna ngenzeni?Mina lo, angidli kuxoliswa. Lokho akufaki ukudla phambi kwetafula yami'.

(What do you want me to do? I do not eat an apology that does not put food on the table.)

MaNcube misguides her daughter and the author seems to be giving the impression that if there was a male figure in the house there would be stability. Both maNcube and Mthoko try to trap Mthoko who does not fall for the trap. MaNcube is defeated at the end as she loses the house to her husband's son, and this seems to be a form of punishment for mistreating Mthoko. Thus, single women do not succeed and they are the weeds that have to be removed, their defeat becomes a sign that women when alone cannot progress.

5.9.3 Women as victims of the system in *Etshabhini* and *Lokhu Akungeke Kwenzeke*

In the novel *Etshabhini* we meet maMkhwananzi and Mahlangu at maMkhwananzi's place. MamKhwananzi expresses dissatisfaction over the noise in the flats and wishes to get better accommodation; maMhlangu expresses the same concern and notes that there are good houses in Matshamhlophe. The novel is set in the city of Bulawayo, where we meet Gwebu's family and Gwebu is the breadwinner and is employed in a formal job and has 'decent employment'. MaKhuphe and the other noisy girls take care of themselves but as noted, the way in which they make money is looked down upon by the rest of the members of the society. Shebeens are looked down upon, since there is a lot of noise in shebeens (a source of immorality and where men spend money carelessly with concubines). The novel *eEtshabhini* centres on the shebeen and how it affects residents in Mzilikazi flats where maMkhwananzi and Nyoni stay. The novel depicts the post-independence period, just soon after independence, captures the experiences of both men and women in the city. It captures how they adjusted to the demands of the city. There was unemployment generally, the few women we meet are in informal jobs and Gwebu is the

one who is employed formally and when maMkhwananzi thinks of buying a house, she thinks of her husband's earnings. Gwebu makes it clear that he cannot afford a loan, since he earns too little. This is the social condition in the writing of the novel. Kaarlsholm (2005:40) argues that, "unemployment was high, as was the percentage of illegal residents and the drinking of beer and skokian as well as mbanje smoking continued unchallenged as the most popular 'recreational' activities". To be noted is the fact that employment was a challenge in Bulawayo and there was no decent accommodation. In all this, women were affected; springing from the fact that they had been previously trodden down upon by colonial officials and not only was this but also patriarchal structures and thus it was going to take some time for them to recover. Schmidt (1992:99) argues that: "colonial officials were predisposed to relegate African women to positions of inferiority vis-à-vis their men. Women were stripped of important social and political roles, not only for reasons of economic functionality, but because of European racial and gender prejudices".

To be realised is the fact that with the coming of independence, things did not change for the better immediately, thus men and women were not on an equal footing. Schmidt (1992:1) argues that, "unless we understand the interrelations between women and men, we cannot fully understand the structure of a given society, its history, political and economic systems or ideology, to be noted therefore is the fact that men and women experienced capitalism differently". Because women could not secure employment easily this made them resort to other forms of making money such as shebeens.

Raftopoulos and Yoshikuni (1999:4) observe that:

Through their own decisive economic, political and cultural interventions, African workers confronted the limitations of colonial surveillance and struggled for spaces of creative intervention and in determinate ways began the process, always uneven, of claiming the city as home.

The restructuring of shebeens by women in the city made them claim the roles that they used to do in the colonial period. This can be realised by the fact that most shebeens in the towns were named after women, for example maDlodlo, maNcube and maMoyo etc. For example, maKhuphe has a shebeen at Mzilikazi flats and her neighbours are disturbed by her as they have sleepless nights. Mapetla and Schlyter (1998:155) maintain that, "beer brewing was viewed as an economic and social means for survival in urban areas of Lesotho". In this sense it can however

be noted that even though maKhuphe was not physically brewing the beer, but selling and making money out of it, women generally were the ones in charge of beer in Ndebele society of tradition. The same society accuses them of immorality instead of sympathizing with them as they try to make ends meet. In *Lokhu Akungeke Kwenzeke*, it is considerably after independence but there is a crisis. In the novel *Lokhu Akungeke Kwenzeke*, we meet Mpala and wife maDewa and their daughter Irene. Mpala relays the not so pleasant news to maDewa that he has been retrenched. The owners of the company intend to go back to their countries. Mpala does not get employed elsewhere because a lot of companies have been shut because of ESAP.

Unemployment in the formal sector increased by 2% earnings increased by 36%, Mhone (1995:18):

ESAP brought retrenchments. Between 1989 and 1992 emplo prices increased by 75%, the government debt increased by 100% and exports increased by 4% while imports increased by 200% and by 1992 the Zim dollar had been devalued to 38% of its 1989 value in relation to the U.S dollar, by 1992 about 25000 employees had been retrenched, school leavers looking for work increased.

This is the background that led to the conflicts in the novel ESAP. People did not understand the objectives of ESAP as they did not benefit or understand much about it. Sodindwa-Ncube (1997:8) narrates:

Bayithuka kanenginengi i-ESAP leyo. Kuthiwa yeza ukuzanceda inotho yelizwe kuthiwa yeza ukuze kudaleke amathuba emisebenzi, ukuze bonke abangelayo bayithole, bekungangcono na ukuthi kumane kudalwe imisebenzi kungaqalwanga kwavalwa eminye? Kakufani na lokhu lomuntu osuka anyathele ameva esenzela ukuwabangula, nanku phela i-ESAP leyo ifuna ukuvula imisebenzi ngokuqala ivale leyo ekhona? Angithi imihla ngemihla bayanda abangelamsebenzi.

(People were upset with ESAP which they thought it had been introduced in order to revive the economy and help in job creation so that people may get employed, wasn't it better for them to create more jobs before closing others? Isn't it equivalent to one who deliberately steps on thorns so that he or she can remove them later? Day by day, the level of unemployment increases.)

It is this level of unemployment that left people in dismay. Mpala is given a small exit package which is soon used, Mpala fails to send his daughter to school, maDewa's lifestyle deteriorates and this generally affected everyone, people wore rags and a lot of people appeared to be like mad men. It can be noted that men are the ones depicted as losing jobs. One of the protagonists

maDewa gets into an informal job during the economic meltdown; they suffer most as a result of ESAP. Sodindwa-Ncube (1997:15) describes:

Uzabona wena ukudlephana lokukhamana kwamanina sekubangwa khona ukuba ngabakuqala ukuthenga okuthengwayo.

(You will see the women scratching and jostling, fighting and competing for customers.)

Women, in all this, are the ones depicted as suffering when a crisis hits. MaDewa exercises her agency when she says, Sodindwa-Ncube (1997:14):

Kambe akungcono lami ngenze njengabanye abathengisa imibhida lamatamatisi.

(Isn't it better for me to do what other women are doing, that is, sell tomatoes and vegetables?)

Selling of tomatoes worked for sometime but the market unfortunately became flooded again. MaDewa somehow manages to buy things for a certain businessperson in town called Mabhena maDawu becomes a victim of the system maDawu becomes a victim of the unjust system since a person cannot be employed on merit. Sodindwa-Ncube (1997:35) justifies her act:

Wayesebenzile ububi, hatshi ngokuthanda kwakhe, njalo kuyinto angazange ayilungiselele, Yamane yamehlela.

(She had done something bad unwillingly and without planning it.)

The fact that maKhuphe sells beer for survival does not make people admire, applaud or envy her, despite the cultural notion of 'ukuba yindodamfazi' (a man woman), one who is admired solely because she can do the duties of a man and woman singlehandedly. Patriarchy does not approve of single women who are self-sustaining individuals. The moralisation of Ndebele women is at the peak since shabeens are associated with concubines, men who are spendthrifts and people who are always fighting all the time. MaKhuphe can be placed under the category of women known as 'urban women', mistresses or prostitutes-independent women renting rooms in urban areas' (Obbo, 1980:98). Self-sustenance in towns for women is unapproved of. To be realised also is the fact that the girls in town are always blamed by their neighbours for making noise. Of note is the fact that women depicted in the novels are not and they can only make it through selling beer and having clients they are victims of the system since whatever they do, they do solely to make ends meet. MaKhuphe says:

'Kambe ngubani ongathakazeleli ukulala ongafuna ukulala ebangelwa umsindo yirediyo' (Sigogo, 1990:7)

(Who does not delight in a good sleep who wants to be disturbed by the sound of the radio all night?)

One can infer that even the owner of the shabeen does not like shabeens but it is somehow a way of survival (of making money). MaMkhwananzi a married woman also acknowledges that money is a problem and relies solely on her husband, this she says in a conversation that she has with Mahlangu. Sigogo (1990:7):

Kodwa ke kuyini engingakwenza ngingumaMkhwananzi nje njengoba uGwebu engafuni ukusuka ezitezi zaboyisemkhulu lezi.

(What can I do alone, Gwebu does not even want to leave these flats where our grandfathers used to stay.)

To be noted also is the fact that MaMkhwananzi is not comfortable with staying in the old noisy flats but is inhibited by lack of money. She is a victim of the system; she suffers throughout in dealing with MaKhuphe and the girls. MaMkhwananzi is depicted as a woman who is between the devil and the deep sea. She is a victim because she is poor, she says in Sigogo (1990:11)

Uhlupho olukhulu yiyo eyesono engabonwayo. Aluba silayo ngabe siyazithengela umuzi ongcono okwakuhlala khona abelungu sitshiyane lezinto ezingaphucukiyo lezi.

(Our biggest challenge is that we do not have money. If we had money, we were going to buy ourselves a better house where white people used to stay and, once we do that, we will be free from these uncivilised people.)

MaMkhwananzi blames the people making noise in shebeens and fails to understand that they too have a money problem just like her. The system is heartless and cruel to women, single women or female headed households suffer the most as we see MaKhuphe finally leaving the place, Obbo (1980: 94) talks of this literature that has this focal view, she notes, 'the proliferation of literature that deals with female-headed households has led to the term matrifocality (meaning, loosely, 'women-centred'). *Etshabhini* seeks to advance this notion and shame single women who run households singlehandedly.

The novel *eTshabhini* depicts two women who are portrayed in different ways. MaMkhwananzi is the victim of circumstances by mere fact that she stays with 'uncivilised people' like MaKhuphe who have no respect for other people. She is forced to stay in such an area instead of

low density suburbs because she cannot afford it; maMhlanga, the friend, criticises the area saying, 'Mzilikazi, maMhlanga says:

'Kuyini okumangalisayo ngeMzilikaziyakho leyo kanye lezindlu zakhona wona ungumuzi wezalukazi lamaxhegu nje.' (Sigogo, 1990:6)

(What is so special about this Mzilikazi of yours and its houses that are inhabited by old men and women?)

MaMkhwanazi is sad and feels that she cannot do much about the situation, since her husband Gwebu determines everything and they have no money. She laments to maMhlanga, saying:

'Kodwa uGwebu wenkosi ayidobhe ngaphi imali yonke leyo maMhlanga' Sigogo (1990:8).

(But maMhlanga, where will poor Gwebu get all that money from?)

It can be noted that maMkhwananzi is not settled because of the noise emanating from the shebeen and the other neighbouring girls who always keep the volume of their radio high. She clearly does not lead a happy life at all:

Enekisi dowa lapha kusetshabhini. Irediyo yakhona ivulwa kucinwe lapho okuphelela khona amandla ayo. (p.10)

(At the neighbouring house there is a shebeen, and the volume of their radio is kept full blast.)

MaMkhwananzi is blaming the people and not the system that is forcing people to have shebeens to make ends meet. Women are, thus, seen as social renegades outside the context of socio-political and economic challenges. Oyewumi (2005:299) argues:

The position of women in contemporary Africa is to be considered at any level of analysis an outcome of structural and conceptual mechanisms by which African societies have continued to respond and to resist the global processes of economic exploitation and cultural domination.

Thus MaMkhwananzi sells beer in order to overcome the economic hardships she is facing. MaMkhwananzi and maKhuphe's neighbours are single women. These are the free-spirited, 'untamed' women who have no husbands and, thus, being single is criminalised. The narrator says:

Ekufikeni kwabo lapha, umka maKhuphe engakafi, lendlu le ephezu kwabo isahlala uNdlovu, lamankazana akomaKhanye la engakafiki, babezihlalele ngokuthula (Sigogo, 1990:24).

When they arrived here before the death of maKhuphe's husband, and the apartment upstairs was occupied by Ndlovu before these maKhanye girls arrived, they were living in peace.

MaMkhwananzi contends that the two wayward girls' source of living determines their way of life. What she misses is that the high volume on their radio is a strategy to get attention from potential customers. The economic situation leaves them with no choice except to survive on prostitution.

It is, therefore, unfair to judge the women without considering the socio-political and economic context. Their case illustrates the vulnerability of women to economic down turns. On the surface, they are represented as immoral and evil, yet they represent a deeper problem in the Ndebele society. Gwebu notes that maKhuphe was running the shebeen as a form of survival:

'Ngingumasimpala mina na? Umuntu ngingamyekelisa njani into yakhe aphila ngayo?...Ha!athi eselamba akhale ngami'. A, wena!' (Sigogo, 1998:22).

(Am I the municipality? How can I stop someone's source of livelihood? Huh, you want them to start blaming me when they go hungry? No ways!)

MaKhuphe soliloquises and responds to the way people treat and judge her, especially maMkhwananzi:

'Ucabanga ukuthi ukulala umuntu ekhangele ethengisa utshwala kumnandi?Kakwazi ukuthi umuntu uyabe edinga imali yokuziphilisa!' (Sigogo, 1990:46).

She honestly thinks that spending the whole night awake, selling beer is fun? Doesn't she not know that I would just be looking for money to survive.

Through MaKhuphe, the writer invokes the reader's empathy with the circumstances that women are exposed to in post-independent Zimbabwe. They, like their male counterparts have to survive, and shebeens (though notorious for promoting prostitution and other illegal activities) put food on the table for the women. However, the writer – while seemingly supporting the cause of women, inadvertently purveys the patriarchy discourse since maKhuphe has to resort to surviving through running a shebeen because she is now a widow. Okpala (2016:77) argues that, “under patriarchy, a woman's identity is validated only in association to a male figure – from

birth until adolescence, her identity is subsumed under her father and after marriage she is accorded recognition in association to her husband". In *Lokhu Akungeke Kwenzeke*, the reader easily empathises with Irene. Irene, on the other hand, becomes a victim as she is raped and infected with HIV by Mabhena. Kawewe and Dibie (2000:79) note that ESAPs' devastation of the poor translates into recurrence of socio- economic crises that threaten peace and social justice, compounded by natural calamities and the relentless HIV/AIDS pandemic. The poor, thus, become victims of the system and women suffer the most out of this.

In *Etshabhini*, maKhuphe exhibits resilience by running a shebeen. Okpala, (2016:58) describes such women as, "game changers who have the ability to utilise whatever resources are available to them to make ends meet; they refuse to cower under the strain of their circumstances. Instead, they demonstrate resilience and intelligent adaptability".

5.10 Conclusion

The chapter traced the background to the novels in the colonial and post-colonial period and the issues affecting the depiction of women in the selected novels under study.

In the portrayal of women within the pre-colonial setting, it can be noted that women who are portrayed in the novels *Laphuma Elinye Lingakatshoni* and *Umbiko kaMadlenya* are women holding positions of power as they are royal women who can act as the king's 'eyes' and 'ears' in his absence. The central issues in the pre-colonial setting are the formation of the Ndebele nation and the succession of king Mzilikazi. Women are portrayed as having positive and more empowering stereotypes such as motherhood, advisors of men in issues to do with politics, cultural custodians and fighters fighting side by side supporting their male counterparts. Stereotypes of women in these novels are, somehow, ambivalent in that even though women contribute to the national discourse, there are some men who still feel that the rightful place of the woman is the kitchen and any other space occupied by the woman outside the home generates negative stereotypes as she will be viewed as too clever in the eyes of the society - resulting in phrases like *olamehlo esiphundu* (the one who has eyes at the back). Thus, stereotypes about women are affected by internal forces such as patriarchy, which holds that the rightful place of the woman is in the kitchen. Thus, more positive stereotypes come up that align women to motherhood nurturing roles.

In the colonial period, the issues highlighted that affect the novelists' depiction of women in the colonial period are the Southern Rhodesian Literature Bureau, which was a censorship board that controlled the content in the novels published in the colonial period. The rural-urban migration affected the portrayal of women, since women were expected to stay in the rural space. Thus, a rural-urban dichotomy is placed at the fore, with women in the rural areas having positive stereotypes such as mothers and cultural custodians. Unmarried women in the urban set up in novels such *Lifile* and *Umendo*, on the other hand, are portrayed as prostitutes, heartless and evil schemers. Authors seem to be in agreement in their portrayal of women in the colonial period since the prevalent stereotypes of urban women are those to do with prostitution and evil scheming, while those in the rural areas have more positive attributes, as depicted in *Lifile* and *Umendo*.

In the post-independence period, a background into the factors that might have affected novelists in their portrayal of women is brought to the fore; issues like unemployment, ESAP that brought about retrenchment and loss of jobs by most Zimbabweans affects the characters that are presented by the novelists. The prevalent stereotypes are that of women at work for survival as they try to make ends meet through prostitution and other desperate means. Novels published in the post-independence period depict most characters as based in towns, and there are single women who take care of themselves. The single women are, however, portrayed in a negative way- driving home the idea that a woman maintains dignity only when she is married. In *Etshabini* and *Esilojeni*, we find women who are heartless, evil schemers and who do not exhibit good mothering skills.

In their projection of women, some novelists for example, in *Lokhu Akungeke Kwenzeke* and *Etshabini* lay bare the assertion that these women are victims of the system as their unbecoming behaviour is a result of the economic meltdown. In the colonial period, Makhalisa blames the system that permits women to go to town only after they have been granted permission by their husbands; hence the fate of women is partly to do with the government in power at that time. While other authors like Mlilo lament the old order that has changed as a result of colonialism, they, however, support patriarchal forces that keep women at home under the guidance of their fathers and husbands, hence negative stereotypes of women who go to the city. In every historical period stretching from the pre-colonial setting to the post-independence period, women

are affected grossly by internal forces such as patriarchy and external forces like colonialism and the issues highlighted in the post-independence period.

CHAPTER SIX

FINDINGS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION

6.1 Introduction

This chapter summarises the whole research and carries the findings, recommendations and conclusion of the study. The study is based upon selected novels published in the colonial and post-independence period in Zimbabwe, bearing a pre-colonial, colonial and post-colonial setting – namely, portraying stereotypes accorded to women in novels published in the period 1975-2016. The stereotypes discussed are that of women as mothers, cultural custodians, prostitutes, immoral, evil, and victims in different historical periods and in different spaces (rural and urban). The study also discussed the background to the various stereotypes, revealing that they are fuelled by internal forces like patriarchy and the position of women in Ndebele society; external forces like colonialism and how they contributed to the subjugation of women; the country's political and economic problems, namely ESAP and the Decade of crisis. The research also focused on how women are negatively and positively stereotyped when assuming different roles in Ndebele society. Apart from presenting research findings, the chapter also makes recommendations for future research involving Ndebele literature.

6.2 Research Findings

It has been observed in this research that stereotypes start from the society and then novelists, just like the rest of artists, cannot help but depict what is happening in the society. In the stereotypes accorded to women, it has been found that both men and women take part in the perpetuation of stereotypes. Stereotypes, just like representations, are located in time and space; novelists have various stereotypes that they advance in the different historical periods that they portray. Stereotypes have to do with how women are viewed and represented in various situations. They evolve endogenously from culture, internal forces like patriarchy and external forces like colonialism. Further, the way women view and portray themselves is also governed by culture and entrenched societal perceptions that shape up over a long time. To that extent, women themselves end up being a critical cog in the engineering and further perpetuation of stereotypes about them whether wittingly or unwittingly, as they play a pivotal role in the socialisation of children who grow into these moulded stereotypes – be it as protagonists or

antagonists. One can have a glimpse of Ndebele culture through proverbs and sayings like *indoda yinhloko yomuzi*, (the father is the head of the house). This presumes that the position of the woman in the family is underneath that of a male figure and, thus, a woman can offer support only and not lead the family.

It was found that space is an important variable in governing the different stereotypes that are accorded to women. For example, women in rural areas are not stereotyped or viewed the same way as women in urban areas. Positive stereotypes of women as mothers and cultural custodians are associated with women in the rural areas, while negative stereotypes of women as prostitutes, immoral and evil schemers are associated with women in towns, who have lost their ethos and cultural values. The latter are viewed as women who have eyes at the back of their heads, *amehlo esiphundu*, which is a negative characterisation suggesting that they have roving eyes and restless spirits.

It was noted that stereotypes are better understood within the matrix of socio-political and economic environment occupied by women in different historical periods. Stereotypes are not only shaped by gender but by class and race issues. In this case, colonialism— through the imposition of a Western culture, affected male and female relations in Zimbabwe and in the Ndebele society in particular. There are a number of stereotypes accorded to women, for example, women in the pre-colonial setting are depicted as flexible role players as they are depicted as mothers, cultural custodians, mother warriors, fighters, and advisors to their male counterparts. This is depicted in novels *Laphuma Elinye Lingakatshoni* (Ndlovu, 1992) and *Umbiko kaMadlenya* by Sibanda (1986). Women in these novels assume elevated roles but, however, although they have these positive roles, it can be noted that they are not supposed to be outspoken and assertive like their male counterparts. It was found that, even though women in the pre-colonial period assumed high respectable positions in society, their roles were subdued by male authority since it emerges that the original performance space of women is within the home. The character Zinkabi in *Umbiko kaMadlenya* is criticised for behaving like men and loving political issues. She is, thus, seen as a social misfit. Thus, stereotypically, women can contribute politically but should not be as outspoken and assertive like their male counterparts— their contribution to politics should not be as explicit; they can only advise men at home.

It was found that women in the colonial period are stereotyped negatively, especially those women who leave rural homes and head for towns. In town, women who are unemployed go for prostitution in novels like *Lifile* (Mlilo, 1975) and *Umendo* (Makhalisa, 1977). It is only women who are viewed as immoral and not their male counterparts, following the perception that immorality and prostitution in Ndebele society is associated with the female gender. Ndebele sayings like *ibele lendlela kalivuthwa* (a crop that grows by the wayside does not ripen) are associated with the female gender, emphasizing the need for a woman to be attached to one sexual partner.

There is change and continuity in stereotypes associated with women, over time. Women still have stereotypes associating them with the motherly role of nurturing pre-social beings around the home, just like in the pre-colonial period, and this is a stereotype that traverses different historical periods. Positive stereotypes are aligned to cultural roles of women as mothers. Subsequently, women who continue to play motherly roles in urban areas are stereotyped positively. In the novels published in the colonial period, women are stereotyped negatively outside the context of socio-political and economic issues affecting them. Urbanisation affected both men and women and contributed to the immorality of women as there was unemployment, thereby decreasing chances of women earning through conventional means. In the colonial period, a deterioration of women's roles is noted from the advisory and mother warriors to prostitutes and mere mothers who have no voice in the domestic space. In this regard, colonialism and patriarchy contributed to the deterioration of the place and perception of women. This is particularly noted in the prevalent stereotypes associated with women in the colonial period being more on the negative side.

It was also found that when there is a crisis, be it politically and economically, both men and women are affected. The ESAP economic crisis; the political crisis with ZANU PF contributing to the country's economic instability and other malaises affected the masses grossly, resulting in unemployment. This political crisis contributed to stereotypes associated with women being that of moral decadence. It was established that post-independence writers like Sodindwa-Ncube in *Lokhu Akungeke Kwenzeke* (1997) and Sigogo in *Etshabhini* (1990) depict that immorality and prostitution are not necessarily out of free will. This, they clearly depict through characters like Thabi and MaKhuphe, who resort to immoral behaviour so as to earn a living as victims of the

system. The stereotypes leveled against these women can be justified, whereas this is not the case with women in the pre-colonial period. The shebeen, for maKhuphe, is seen as a survival strategy, but in a way, being a single woman is somewhat criminalized. This can be concluded through maKhuphe and maNcube's depiction as heartless and evil in *Esilojeni*.

Interviews conducted with authors helped in understanding that stereotypes accorded to women were determined by social, cultural, political, and economic issues at the depicted time. The position of women in society was determined mainly by patriarchy, which ruled the day. Interviews carried out with literary critics also provided insights in the understanding of stereotypes accorded to women, as they note that women's organizations like the Zimbabwe Women Writers Association's sponsoring the production of poetry and short story anthologies helped in recognising the women's voice and prevailing sentiments about female subjugation. Makhalisa's writing in the post-independence period becomes more or less protest literature; this is noted in Makhalisa's poem, *Batsho ngani?*

It was discovered in novels published in the post-independence period that women are depicted as victims of the system and are not prostitutes out of free will. In *Etshabhini*, Sigogo (1990) depicts how maKhuphe is a social misfit by running a shebeen and, at the same time, he exonerates her – arguing that the shebeen is her major source of earning a living as she too, like other human beings, wants and deserves rest at night, but goes out of her way to be up the whole night so as to earn a living out of it. Shebeens were rampant during the 90s, this can be noted in the names of shebeens being characteristically attached to female names in Bulawayo, such as *emaDlodlo* (at maDlodlo's place), *komaNkiwane* (at maNkiwane's place). In the novel *Lokhu Akungeke Kwenzeke* (Sodindwa-Ncube, 1997), prostitutes like Thabi are justified as the author sympathises with them and blames ESAP for turning human beings into dogs, as the young ladies jostle for clients and sell their bodies. Ncube blames the level of unemployment in the country as a result of ESAP. Thus, women's resorting to prostitution and being stereotyped as prostitutes is a result of the economic and political instability in the country.

On another extreme, it was noted women are portrayed as evil and heartless in *Esilojeni* (Sitsha-Tsheza, 2016), but this is out of individual free will, unlike in the other novels. MaNcube, for example, is a landlord who is seen harassing a tenant and disenfranchising her through stealing from her. Thoko, on the other hand, is an evil schemer who falsely accuses Mthoko of getting her

pregnant. The stereotypes accorded to women in this novel have largely to do with their individual characters and not the overall economic and political issues affecting people in this historical epoch. Thoko is generally morally wanting, and this seems to be a continuation of the stereotypes from the colonial period, where women are viewed as prostitutes.

6.3 Recommendations for future research

In light of the research findings, the researcher makes the following recommendations:

1. Since stereotypes in literature are not only found in novels, other researchers can also focus on poems and plays, establishing stereotypes found in these works of art.
2. The study focused on female stereotypes in selected Ndebele novels from 1975 to 2016; Future research can explore stereotypes beyond 2016 so as to unmask different stereotypes found in the Ndebele society and in the nation at large. This should be done to establish any change or continuity in these stereotypes and how these stereotypes affect women emancipation.
3. Since this study focused on Ndebele literature, it can be noted that the issue of stereotypes can also be studied across languages, thus giving a comparative approach so as to unravel various stereotypes in different ethnic groups.

6.4 Recommendations for future practice

1. Issues to do with stereotypes are open-ended, and various issues are related to stereotypes accorded to women in terms of how they revolve. There is need for a holistic approach in the presentation and understanding of stereotypes in Ndebele literature.
2. The way women are viewed should not be divorced from circumstances – be it socio-political, economic or historical circumstances, so as to improve conditions of women affected by historical, political and cultural practices. Women's organisations advocating for gender parity should take into account the social, historical and political issues affecting women.
3. Viewing and depiction of women in stereotypical ways should not be the case all the time with Ndebele authors; this even inhibits growth of literature and development of women in society.
4. Since stereotypes evolve endogenously from culture; there is need for policy makers and academics to spearhead programmes on re-education of society on various stereotypes affecting

women's growth, taking into consideration changing roles of women in Ndebele society and the nation at large.

5. A need for an understanding that culture is not static and so are gender roles, thus women are bound to occupy different spaces in society. Women empowerment should begin at home; women can also be heads of families.

6. The mindset of both readers and educators of literature on gender-based stereotypes can be achieved by adopting a holistic approach to the issue of female gender stereotypes through focusing on both external forces and internal forces that continue to affect women so that emancipation of women is achieved

References

- Abdullahi, A. A. Senekal, A, Zyl-Schalekamp, Amzat, J., Saliman, T.S., Seneka, A. 2012. Contemporary Discourses in Qualitative Research: Lessons for Health Research in Nigeria. *African Sociological Review*. 16(1)17-38.
- Adams, E.1974. Feminism and Female stereotypes in Shaw.*Shaw and Woman*, 17 (1): 17-22.
- Adell, S. 1990. Towards Defining an African feminist aesthetic.*Indian University Press. After the women's Decade: The Task Ahead for Africa*. 37(1)71-72
- Alison, K and Shutt, A.K. 2007. The natives are getting out of hand: legislator manners, insolence and contemptuous behavior in Southern Rhodesia, C. 1910-1963. *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 33(3):653-672
- Ambert, A.M, Adler, P.A., Adler P. & Detzner, D.F. 1995. Understanding & Evaluating Qualitative Research.*Journal of Marriage and Family*. 57 (4) 879-893.
- Anthias, F.1992. *Ethnicity, class, Gender and Migration*. Aldershot: Avebury.
- Appiah, K.A.2000.Stereotypes and the Shaping of Identity.88(1).*The Brennan centre Symposium on constitutional law*. California Law Review,88 (1)41-53.
- Ardener, S.1978. *Defining Females: The Nature of Women in Society*. New York: Halstead Press.
- Arndt, S. 2000. African gender trouble & African Womanism; An Interview with Chikwenye Ogenyumi & Wanjira Muthoni.*Signs*. 25(3): 709-726.
- Arndt, S. 2002. *The Dynamics of African Feminism. Defining and Classifying African feminist Literature*. Trenton: African World Press.

Badejo, D.L.1998. African feminism, Mythical and Social power of women of African Descent.*Research in African Literatures*. 29(2):94-111

Badenhorst, C and Mather C. 1997. Tribal Recreation and Recreating Tribalism: Culture, Leisure and Social control on South Africa's Gold mines, 1940-1950. *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 23 (3):473-489.

Bailey, D. 1978. *Methods of Social Research*. University of California: Free Press.

Barnes T. 1999. *We women worked so hard. Gender, urbanization &social reproduction in Colonial Harare, Zimbabwe, 1930-1956 (Social History of Africa)*. United Kingdom: James Currey.

Bauer, N.M. 2013. Rethinking stereotype reliance: Understanding the connection between female candidates and gender stereotypes. *Politics and the Life Sciences*, 32 (1); 22-42.

Bender, C. 2017. Gender stereotyping in Little women: "Let us be elegant or die!".*MJUR*, (8): 140-153.

Benoit, C. et. al. 2018. 'The Prostitution Problem': Claims, Evidence, and Policy Outcomes.*Arch Sex Behavior* 48, 1905-1923.<https://doi.org/10.1007/s10508-108-1276-6>.

Berndt, K.2005. *FemaleIdentity in Contemporary Zimbabwean fiction*. Germany: Pia Thielmann& Eckhard Breiting; Chancellor College, University of Malawi & Bayreuth University.

Bhabha, H.1990.*Nation and Narration*. New York: Routledge

Bhabha, H.K.1994.*The Location of Culture*. London: Routledge.

Bhana, D. 2010, 'Here in the rural areas they don't say that men and women are equal!' Contesting gender inequalities in the early years. *Empowering Women for Gender Equity*, 84: 9-18.

Boehmer, E. 2005. Stories of women and mothers, gender and nationalism in early fiction of Flora Nwapa in *Stories of Women: Gender and Narrative in the Post Colonial Nation*. United Kingdom: Manchester University Press. 88-105.

Borg & Gall, M.D. 1989. *Education Research: An Introduction*. 5th edition. New York: Longman.

Bozongwana, W. 1983. *Ndebele Religion and Customs*. Gweru: Mambo Press.

Brooks, C and Bolzendahl, C. 2004. The transformation of US gender role attitudes: Cohort replacement, socio structural change and ideological learning. *Social Science Research* 33 (1) : 106133. Do.:10.1016/ 50049-089x (03) 00041-3.

Burra, N. 2001. Cultural Stereotypes and household behaviour: Girl child labour in India. *Economic and Political Weekly*, 36 (5/6): 481-488.

Butovskaya, M.L and Guchinova, E. B 2001. Men and Women in Contemporary Kalmykia, Traditional gender stereotypes and Reality. *Inner Asia*, 3 (1) :59-69.

Bull-Christiansen, L. 2004. *Tales of the Nation: Feminist Nationalism or Patriotic History?: Defining national history and identity in Zimbabwe*. Uppsala: Nordiska Afrikainstitutet.

Charamba, T and Charamba, B. 2012. 'A Critical Appreciation of the Dual – Sex system in the 'traditional' Shona family: In defence of African culture-derived gender perspectives' in I. Muwati, Z. Mguni, T. Gwekwerere and R. Magosvongwe [Eds] *Redisoursing African Womanhood in the Search for Sustainable Renaissance*. Harare: College Press. 177-192

Chiang, M.2018. Why Literary Studies Still Has ‘Value’. *Journal of Modern Literature*. 41(4): 187-19.

Chinyowa, K.C,1997, ‘Gender and Development in Shona literature’, Paper presented at the culture and Development Conference, University of Zimbabwe, Harare 68 August.

Chitando, A.2011. Narrating Gender and Danger in Selected Zimbabwe Women’s writings in HIV & AIDS.Unpublished Doctoral thesis. South Africa. University of South Africa.

Chivandikwa, R. 2006. ‘Zimbabwe Women Writers (ZWW) portrayal of women’s oppression and struggles for liberation in Masimba and Vus’inkophe’ in in Z. Mguni, M. Furusa & R. Magosvongwe [Eds] *African Womanhood in Zimbabwean Literature: New Critical Perspectives on Women’s Literature in African Languages*. Harare: College Press. 182-194.

Chiwome, E.M. 2002.*A social history of the Shona Novel*. Harare.

Chiwome, E.M.1994. Factors that underdeveloped Shona literature with particular reference to fiction 1950s-1980s.Unpublished doctoral thesis. Zimbabwe: University of Zimbabwe

Chojnacki, S.2017. ‘What is socio-historical approach in literature?’ Thought Co, April 9, 2017, <https://www.quora.com>

Clarke, M.F and Nyathi P. L.2011.*LozikeyiDlodlo : Queen of the Ndebele “ A very dangerous and intriguing woman”*.Bulawayo:Amagugu Publishers.

Cole, M& Scribner, 1978.‘Introduction’. In M.Cole, V Johns-Steiner, S. Scribner, & E. Souberman , Vygotsky, L.S, (Eds) in *Mind in Society: The development of higher psychological processes*. Cambridge, M.A: Havard University Press.1-16.

Conrad, J.1995. *Heart of Darkness*. Harmodsworth, UK: Penguin.

Cook, J and Cusack S .2010.*Gender Stereotyping: Transnational legal perspectives*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.

Coutler, 2008. Female fighters in Sierra Leone War: Challenging the Assumptions? *Feminist Review War*, 88:54-73.

Collins English Dictionary. 1979: Glasgow: Harper Collins.

Corbeta,P.2003. *Social Research: Theory, Methods and Techniques*. Sage Publications. DOI: <https://dx.doi.org/10.4135/9781849209922>.

Creswell, J.W.2014. *Research Design: qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approach*.Los Angeles: Sage Publications.

Dade, L.R and Sloan, LR.2000. An Investigation of sex role stereotypes in African Americans.*Journal of Black Studies*, 30 (5): 676-690.

Daiches, D.1956. *Critical Approaches to Literature*. Longmans, Green &Co London , New York.

Dangarembga, T.1988. *Nervous Conditions*.United Kingdom: The Women' Press.

Davison, J and Kanyuka, M 1992.Girls participation in basic education in Southern Malawi, *Comparative Education Review*, 36(4): 446-466.

Denzin, N.K. & Lincoln, Y.S.2008. Introduction: The Discipline and Practice of Qualitative Research. In N.K. Denzin & Y.S. Lincoln (Eds).*Strategies of qualitative inquiry*: SAGE Publications. Pp1-43

Desai, S and Banerji, M 2008, Negotiated identities, male migration and left behind wives in India. *Journal of Population Research*, 25 (3) : 337-355.

Diagne, S.B, Mama, A, Melber, H. and Nyamnjoh, F.B. 2001. Identity and Beyond: Rethinking Africanity, Discussion Paper 12. Nordiska Afrikainstitutet, Uppsala.

Dipio, D. 2008. Unearthing Motherhood myths & stereotypes: Gender Roles in Madi Folktales. *Family Politics*. 76. 141-153.

Dolan, 2014, Gender stereotypes, Candidate Evaluations and Voting for women candidates: What really matters? *Political Research Quarterly*, 67 (1). 96-107.

Dosekun, S. 2007. 'Defending Feminism in Africa'. *Postamble*, 3 (1): 41-47.

Dover, P. 2005. 'Gender & Embodiment: Expectations of Manliness in a Zambian Village' in L. Ouzgane & R. Morrel (Eds.) *African Masculinities: Men in Africa from the Late Nineteenth Century to the Present*. South Africa: University of Kwazulu Natal Press. 173-187.

Drew, A. 1995. Female consciousness and Feminism in Africa: *Theory and Society*. 24(1). pp 1-33.

Dube, B. 2006. '(Dis) empowering Women: The Gaze in Barbara Makhalisa's Selected Works'. In Z. Mguni, M. Furusa & R. Magosvongwe (Eds.), *African Womanhood in Zimbabwean Literature New Critical Perspectives on Women's Literature in African Languages*. Harare: College Press, pp 24-41.

Duchet, C, Gaillard F. and Lovitt, C.R 1976. Introduction: Socio-criticism. *SubStance*. 5(15):2-5.

Easton, G and Toner, C. 1983. Women in Industrial Advertisements. *Industrial Marketing Management*: 12 145-149.

Eaton, R.M. 1921. The value of Theories. *The Journal of Philosophy*. 18(25):682-690.

Epprecht, M. 1998. The unsaying of indigenous homosexualities in Zimbabwe: Mapping a Blindspot in an African Masculinity. *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 24 (4) 631-651.

Evans, J. 1986. 'Feminism and political theory' in *Feminism and Political theory* in (editors)J Evans, J Hills, KHunt, EMechan, Tessa ten Tusscher, UVogel and GWylen. London Beverly Hills, New Delhi :Sage Publications.1-16.

Eriksen, H. 1994.*Ethnicity & Nationalism. Anthropological Perspectives Third Edition*: London: Pluto Press.

Fleming, G.2019. 'The Importance of Historic Context in Analysis & Interpretation', Thought Co, Sep.2, 2019, [thought co.com/ what-is –historical-context-1857069](https://www.thoughtco.com/what-is-historical-context-1857069)

Flick, U. 2014. *An introduction to Qualitative Research*. London: Sage Publications.

Flick, U.1998. *An Introduction to Qualitative Research*. London: Sage

Fraenkel, J.R., Wallen, N.E. and Hyun, H.H.1990. How to Design and Evaluate Research in Education. *In proceedings* (Fraenkel1990 HowTD

Furusa, M.2002. An Appreciation of Critical Practice in Zimbabwean Literature.Unpublished doctoral thesis. Harare: University of Zimbabwe.

Furusa, M.2006. 'The Muse of History and Politics of Gender Representation in Zimbabwe Women's Literature' in Z. Mguni, M. Furusa & R. Magosvongwe (Eds.) *African Womanhood in Zimbabwean Literature: New Critical Perspectives on Women's Literature in African Languages*. Harare: College Press.1-23.

Gaidzanwa, R. 1985. *Images of Women in Zimbabwean Literature*. Harare: College Press.

Gaidzanwa, R.B.2006. 'Continuity and change in women's Shona and Ndebele writing in Zimbabwe: A gender analysis' in Z. Mguni, M. Furusa & R. Magosvongwe [Eds] *African Womanhood in Zimbabwean Literature: New Critical Perspectives on Women's Literature in African Languages*. Harare: College Press. 195-211.

Gash, H.Morgan, M and Sugrue, C1993.Modifying gender stereotypes in primary school.*The Irish Journal of Education*, 27(1/2): 60-70.

Geisler, G. 2004. *Women and the remaking of politics in Southern Africa*.Uppsala; Nordiska African Institute.

Ghosh, D. 2004. Gender and Colonialism: Expansion or marginalization? *The Historical Journal*, 47 (3) 737-755.

Glazer, N. 1981.Sociology of women and gender.*International Review of Modern Sociology*. 11(2):175-200.

Gmur, M.2006. The Gendered Stereotype of the ‘Good Manager’ Sex Role Expectations towards Male andFemale Managers. *Women in Management, and Other Professions: Stagnation or Progress? Management Revenue*, 17(2) 104-121.

Gordon, R. 1998. ‘Girls cannot think as boys do’: Socialising children through the Zimbabwean school system. *Gender and Development*, 6 (2) 53-58.

Gordon, R. 1996. Legislation and education policy in Zimbabwe: the state and the reproduction of patriarchy. *Gender and Education*. 8:2

Goredema, R. 2009. African feminism: the African woman’s struggle for identity. *Africanrhetoric org. Yearbook Section* 4.33-41.

Gray, D.E.2014.*Doing Research in the Real World*. 2nd Ed. London: Thousand Oaks, C.A: Sage Publications.

Green, M. 2002. Solar cookers: A potential mechanisation for challenging gender stereotypes. *Agenda: Empowering Women for Gender Equity*, 52.62-67

Greenglass, E.R. 1982. *A world of difference, Gender Roles in Perspective*. Toronto:Wiley

Guidette, M.J, Glitzer, B and Greenwood, J. 1976. AlteringSex - Role stereotypes: The Soft Sell. *The School Counselor*, 24(2): 128-131

Hadebe, S. 2007. The significance of Ndebele historical fiction. *Matatu – Journal for African Culture and Society*, Volume 34, Issue 1,77-89.

Hadebe, S. 2006. ‘The portrayal of urban women in Umhlaba Lo!’ in Z. Mguni, M. Furusa & R. Magosvongwe (Eds.) *African Womanhood in Zimbabwean Literature: New Critical Perspectives on Women’s Literature in African Languages*. Harare: College Press.168-181.

Hall, S.1996. *Cultural Identity and Diaspora, Contemporary Postcolonial Theory*. London: Arnold Publishers.

Hall, S.1997. *Representation: Cultural representations and Signifying practices*. London: SAGE Publications.

Harcourt, F.1992. Women and gender in Southern Africa to 1945. *History*, 77(250):256-257

Hegtvedt, K.A.1991. Teaching Sociology of Literature through Literature. *Teaching Sociology*. 19 (1): 1-12.

Hennick, M, Hutter. I & Bailey A. 2013. Qualitative research methods. *Critical Public Health*.22 (1).11-112. DOI::10.1080/09581596.2011.565689.

Heyink, J.W. & Tymstra T.J 1993.The function of Qualitative Research. *Social Indicators Research*, 29 (3):291-305.

Hodgson, D & McCurdy A, 2000. ‘Wicked’ women & the Reconfiguration of Gender in Africa. Portsmouth: Heinemann.

Hofmeyer, I. 1993. *'We Spend Our Years as a Tale that is Told' Oral Historical Narrative in a South African Chieftdom*. Portsmouth: Heinemann.

Hooks, B.1984.*Feminist theory, from margin to center*. Boston: South End Press.

Hudson - Weems, C.2004.*Africana Womanist Literary Theory*. Trenton; NJ: Africa World Press.

Hudson–Weems, C 2012. Ending de-womanisation, de-feminisation and de-humanisation via self naming, self-definition and genuine sisterhood in I. Muwati, Z.Mguni, T.Gwekwerere and Magosvongwe [Eds] in*Redisoursing African Womanhood in the Search for Sustainable Renaissance*.Harare:College Press.pp1-7.

Hutchings, K. 2000. Cultural norms and gender inequality in Malaysia. *Race, Gender and Class*, 7 (2): 122-148.

Irele, A.1981. *The African Experience in Literature & Ideology*. London: Heinemann.

Istemic,M.C.2007. Attitudes toward gender roles and gender role behaviour among urban, rural and farm populations in Slovenia.*Journal of Comparative Family Studies*, 38 (3):47-496.

Ivekovic, R.1993. Women, Nationalism and War: Make LoveNot War. *Hypatia*. 8 (4)pp.113-126

Jeater, D. 1993. *Marriage, Perversion and Power: the construction of moral discourse in Southern Rhodesia*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.

Jeater, D.2000. No Place for a woman: Gwelo Town, Southern Rhodesia, 1894-1920. *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 26 (1):29-42.

Jenkins, J.P. 2020. Prostitution.*Encyclopedia Britannica*.<https://www.britannica.com>.Access date25 October 2020.

Jones, C.2008. Shona Women Mbira Players: Gender, Tradition and Nation in Zimbabwe. *Ethnomusicology Forum 'Sounds of Power'*, 17 (1): 125-149.

Kaarsholm,P. 2005. 'Si ye pambile-Which way forward?Urban development, Culture and Politics in Bulawayo' in B. Raftopoulos and Mlambo [Eds] *A historyfrom the Pre-Colonial period to 2008*.pp227-256.

Kanaiaupuni, S.M.2000. Reframing the migration question: An Analysis of Men, Women, and Gender in Mexico.*Social Forces*, 78 (4): 1311-1347.

Karim, W.J. 1993.Gender Studies in Southeast Asia.*Southeast Asia Journal of Social Science*, 21(1):98-113.

Karmel T.S& Jain M 1987.Comparison of purposive and random sampling schemes for estimating capital expenditure.*Journal of the American Statistical Association*, 82 (39):52-57.

Kawewe, Saliwe M. and Dibie, Robert (2000) "The Impact of Economic Structural Adjustment Programs [ESAPs] on Women andChildren: Implications for Social Welfare in Zimbabwe,"*The Journal of Sociology & Social Welfare*: Vol. 27 :Iss. 4 , Article 6.

Available at: <http://scholarworks.wmich.edu/jssw/vol27/iss4/6>.

Kendall, D.2003. *Teaching Sociology in our times.(Instructor's edition)*. 4th Edition. Belmont. C.A.Wadsworth

Kerevele, Y.P and Atkeson, L.R. 2015.Reducing stereotypes of female political leaders in Mexico.*Political Research Quarterly*, 68 (4): 732-744.

Kim, E. H.W. and Cheung, A.K.L.2015. Women's attitudes toward family formationand life stage transitions: A longitudinal study in Korea. *Journal of Marriage and Family* 77 (5): 1074-1090.

- King, J. 1973. The politics of sexual stereotypes. *The Black Scholar*, 4 (6/7): 12-23
- Kufakurinani, U.2015. White Women and Domesticity in Colonial Zimbabwe, c 1890 to 1980. Unpublished Doctoral thesis. Zimbabwe. University of Zimbabwe.
- Kumar, R. 2014. *Research Methodology: a step by step guide for beginners*. Los Angeles: Sage Publications
- Kurtz-Costes, Copping, K.E, Rowley, S.J and Kinlaw, C.R.2014. Gender and age differences in awareness and endorsement of gender stereotypes about academic abilities. *European Journal of Psychology of Education*, 29 (4):603-618.
- Kurtz, R. 1998. *Urban obsessions, urban fears. The post-colonial Kenyan novel*. Trenton: Africa World Press.
- Kuumba, M.B.2006. African women, Resistance Cultures & Cultural resistance. *Culture*. 68:112-121.
- Laite, J.A. 2009. Historical Perspectives on Industrial Development, Mining and Prostitution: *The Historical Journal*. 52(3).pp.739-761.
- Lee, K. 2013. Why Asian female stereotypes matter to all. Beyond Black and White, East and West. *Critical Philosophy of Race*, 1(1): 86-103.
- Lips, H.2001. *Sex & Gender, An Introduction, 4th Edition*. Cambridge. The MIT Press.
- Lisa, L.2002. Women's' Voices: the representation of women in the contemporary fiction of South Asian Women. Unpublished Doctoral thesis. London: Durnham University.
- Lisenby, D. 2014. Dark Ambivalence: Resurgent Stereotypes of Afro- Cuban Masculinity. *Revista Canadiense de Estudios Hispánicos*, 38 (2): 329-349.

Lunneborg, P.W.1970. 'Stereotype aspects in masculinity-femininity measurement. *Journal of counseling and clinical psychology* 34 (1): 113-118.

Magwa S and Magwa W. 2015.*A guide to conducting research: a student handbook*. Singapore: Strategic Publishing & Rights.

Mahowald, M.B. 1986. Sex role stereotypes in medicine.*Hypatia*, 2(2):21-38

Makawudze, G and Gudhlanga, E.S.2012. 'Gender and socialisation: Attitudes towards the female sex in Shona child socialisation' in I. Muwati, Z. Mguni, T. Gwekwerere and R. Magosvongwe [Eds] *Redisoursing African Womanhood in the Search for Sustainable Renaissance*. Harare: College Press. 161-169.

Makhalisa, B. 1977a. *Umendo*. Gwelo: Mambo Press.

Makhalisa, B. 1977b.*Umhlaba Lo!*.Gwelo. Mambo Press.

Mandelbaum, D.G. 1986. Sex Roles & Gender Relations in North India.*Economic & Political Weekly*. 21 (46): 1999-2004.

Mangena, T.2013. Theorising Women Existence: Reflections on the relevance of the Africana Womanist Theory in the Writing & analysis of literature by and about Zimbabwean Women. *International Research Journal*, 1V(1):7-14.

Mannheim, K.1955. The Socio-Historic Approach.*World Politics*. 8 (1):134-145.

Mapetla, M and Machai, P. 1998. 'Beer Brewing as a Survival Strategy in Urban Lesotho'. In A. Larsson, M. Mapetla, and A. Schlyter [Eds] *Changing gender relations in Southern Africa: Issues of urban life*.Institute of Southern African Studies.155-183.

Marini, M.M. 1990. Sex and gender: What do we know? *Sociological Forum*, 5 (1):95-120.

Marsh, R.1998. 'Women in contemporary Russia and the Soviet Union' in R. Wilford & R Miller (Eds.), *Women, Ethnicity and Nationalism: the Politics of Transition*. New York: Routledge.90-119.

Masowa, A.2017. Gender and Humour: Complexities of women's image politics in Shona humorous narratives. Unpublisheddoctoral thesis.South Africa.University of Cape town.

Masuku, N.2005. Perceived oppression of women in Zulu folklore: A feminist critique. Unpublished doctoral thesis. South Africa: University of South Africa.

Matshakayile - Ndlovu, T.2006. 'Perpetuation of colonial stereotypes in Ndebele fiction written by women: Its impact on the changing roles of women in modern society' in Z. Mguni, M. Furusa & R. Magosvongwe [Eds] *African Womanhood in Zimbabwean Literature: New Critical Perspectives on Women's Literature in African Languages*. Harare: College Press.138-152

Matshakayile-Ndlovu, T.2001.*Ukuhluzwa Kwamanoveli esiNdebele aka 1956 kusiyafikaku1971*:Harare :University of Zimbabwe Publications.

Matshakayile-Ndlovu T, Ndlovu D &Sodindwa-Ncube B. 1995.*Imikhuba lamasiko amaNdebele*. Gweru: Mambo Press.

May, J. 1979. *African Women in Urban Employment*. Gweru: Mambo Press.

Mbaru, M. Tabengwa, M and Vance, C. 2018. ' Cultural discourse in Africa and the promise of human right based on non-normative sexuality and/ or gender expression: exploring the intersections, challenges and opportunities' in N.Nicol, A Tjuuko, R. Lusimbo, N.J. Mule, S.U.A.Wahab,

P.Waugh.[Eds]*Emisioning Global LGBT Human Rights: (Neo) colonialism, Neoliberalism, Resistance and Hope*. London: School of Advanced Study Institute of Commonwealth Studies.

Mboti, N.2012. Wife and Whore:Imaging African Women in the Last King of Scotland and Blood Diamond in I. Muwati, Z. Mguni, T. Gwekwerere and R. Magosvongwe [Eds]*Redisoursing African Womanhood in the Search for Sustainable Renaissance*. Harare: College Press. 24-32.

McFadden, P.2016. Becoming Contemporary African feminists: Her stories, legacies and the new imperatives.*Feminist Dialogue Series*. 1-7

Meadows P & Ephraim H. Mizruchi,H, H & W. Wesley.1969. *Urbanism, Urbanization, and Change: Comparative perspective*. London: Addison, Wesley Publishing Company

Melton, M. L. 2011. Sex, lies and stereotypes: H.I.V positive Black Women's perspectives on H.I.V stigma and the need for Public Policy as HIV/AIDS, Prevention Intervention. *Race, Gender and Class*, 18 (1/2): 295-313.

Mguni, Z.2006.“Zimbabwean Women Writers and Activism” in Z. Mguni, R. Magosvongwe & M. Furusa (Eds.), *African Womanhood in Zimbabwean Literature: New Critical Perspectives on Women's Literature in African Languages*. Harare: College Press.42-57.

Mhlambi, I. 2012.*African-language literatures.Perspectives on isiZulu fiction and popular black television series*. Johannesburg: Wits University Press.

Mhone, G.1995. The Impact of Structural Adjustment on the urban informal sector in Zimbabwe. (in proceedings) [https://www.semanticscholar.org/paper/The impact of structural adjustment: Economics](https://www.semanticscholar.org/paper/The+impact+of+structural+adjustment%3A+Economics).

Mies, M. 1983.Towards a Methodology for Feminist Research. In G. Bowles and R. Duelli Klein (eds), *Theories of Women's Studies*. London: Routledge.pp.120-130.

Mlilo, O.1975. *Lifile (It is doomed)*.Gwelo: Mambo Press.

Mooij, J.J.A.1979. The Nature and Function of Literary Theories, Poetics Today: *Literature, Interpretation, Communication*. 1(1/2):111-135

Moyana, R.1988. The Changing Role of the woman in the African novel. Unpublished Masters Dissertation: Harare: University of Zimbabwe.

Mpofu, IN.1990. *Giya Mthwakazi: Iqoqolezinkondlo*.Harare:Longman.

Mpofu, I.N.1972.*Wangithembisas Lami*. Pietermaritzburg: Shuter and Shooter.

Muchemwa, K & Muponde R. 2007.*Manning the nation: Father figures in Zimbabwean Literature & society*. Harare: Weaver Press.

Muganiwa, J.2018. Shifting Identities; representation of Shona women in selected Zimbabwean fiction. Unpublished doctoral thesis. South Africa. University of South Africa.

Musiyiwa, M & Chirere M. 2007. 'The nature of fatherhood and manhood in Zimbabwean texts of pre-colonial and colonial settings'.In K. Muchemwa & R. Muponde (Eds.), *Manning the nation: Father figures in Zimbabwean Literature & society*. Harare: Weaver Press.156-169.

Musiyiwa, M & Matshakayile-Ndlovu.2005. 'Ethnicity in Literature of Shona and Ndebele expression'. In R. Muponde & R. Primorac (Eds.), *Versions of Zimbabwe: new approaches to literature and culture*. Harare: Weaver Press, 75-88.

Mutopo, P. 2010. Women trading in food across the Zimbabwe – South Africa border: experiences and strategies. *Gender and Development*, 18 (3):465-477.

Muwati,I, Gambahaya,Z, Chabata, E.2013.A gendered analysis of the Decade of Crisis in Virginia Phiri's Highway Queen.*UNAM book lexlies*, indd. 118-130.

Muwati, I.2009. Interface of History and Fiction : The Zimbabwean Liberation War Novel.Unpublished Doctoral Thesis.South Africa. University of South Africa.

Muwati, I. and Mguni 2012. 'An anatomy of negative male- female relations in Mabasa's novel, *Ndafa here? A human rights issue*' in I. Muwati, Z. Mguni, T. Gwekwerere and R. Magosvongwe [Eds] *Redisoursing African Womanhood in the Search for Sustainable Renaissance*. Harare: College Press. 50-62.

Muwati, I. Mguni. Z, Gwekwerere, T. and Magosvongwe, R.2012.*Redisoursing African Womanhood in search for a Sustainable Renaissance*. Harare. College Press.

Mwatwara, W.2012. 'Waiting for the men to bring money home, Impact of male emigration on Zimbabwean women and male-female Related Dynamics, 2002-2010' in I. Muwati, Z. Mguni, T. Gwekwerere and R. Magosvongwe [Eds] *Redisoursing African Womanhood in the Search for Sustainable Renaissance*. Harare: College Press. 148-160.

Nako, N.2003. 'Possessing the Voice of the Other: African Women and the 'Crisis of Representation' in Alice Walker's Possessing the secret of Joy' in O. Oyewumi(Editor). *African Women and Feminism.Reflecting on the Politics of Sisterhood*. Trenton, NJ:Africa World Press. 187-196.

Nnaemeka, O. 2004. Mapping African Feminismsin Readings in Gender in Africa,in A. Cornwallin *Readings in Gender in Africa*.31-40

Ndlovu, L and Ngwenya, T.2012. 'Public transport stickers: Degrading Zimbabwean womanhood'in I. Muwati, Z. Mguni, T. Gwekwerere and R. Magosvongwe [Eds]*Redisoursing African Womanhood in the Search for Sustainable Renaissance*. Harare: College Press. 17-23

Ndlovu, S.J.J. 1990. *Giya Mthwakazi: Iqoqo lezinkondlo*. Harare: Longman

Ndlovu T.M, Ndlovu D & Ncube B.S. 1995.*ImikhubalamasikoamaNdebele*. Gweru: Mambo Press.

Ndlovu, T.2011 *The family as a Contested Arena: Voices of Discontent in Charles Mungoshi's works in Shona and English*. Unpublished doctoral thesis. South Africa: University of the Witwatersrand.

Ndlovu, B.D. 1992. *Laphuma Elinye Lingakatshoni* (The sun that rose before another one set) Gwelo: Mambo Press.

Ngambika, 1990. *Studies of Women in African Literature*. African World Press, Trenton NJ

Nicolaides, A. 2015. Gender Equity, Ethics & Feminism: Assumptions of an African Ubuntu Oriented Society. *Journal of Social Sciences*, 42 (3): 191-210.

Nkealah, N.2011. Commodifying the female body: Xenophobic Violence in South Africa.*Africa Development*, 36 (2):123-135.

Nyanhongo, M. 2011. Gender oppression and possibilities of empowerment: Images of women in African literature with specific reference to Mariama Ba's So long a letter, Buchi Emecheta's The Joys of motherhood & Tsitsi Dangarembga's Nervous Conditions. Unpublished Masters thesis. South Africa: University of Fort Hare.

Nyathi, P. 1994. *Igugu likaMthwakazi; Imbali yamaNdebele 1820-1893*. Gweru: Mambo Press.

Nyembezi, S. 1972. *Wangithembisa Lami*. Gweru. Mambo Press

Obbo, C. 1980. African women. Their struggle for Economic Independence, Londn: Hutchinson University library for Africa in association with Zed Press.

Ochwada, H.1997. Politics and gender Relations in Kenya: A historical perspective: A historical Perspective. *Africa Development*, 22(1):123-139.

O' Connor, B.O.1984.A spectrs of Representation of Women in Irish Film. The Crane Bag, 8(2):79-83.

Ogundipe - Leslie, M.1994.*Re-creating Ourselves.African Women & Critical transformations.*
Nigeria: Africa World Press.,

Oguz, A. 2007. A look at transition from sociohistorical theory to sociocultural theory. *Journal of the Hason Ali Yucel Faculty of Education*, 4(1).1-19.

Okpala, A. S. 2016. Redefining the African woman in contemporary African literature: a study of Adichie's Purple Hibiscus, Half of a yellow sun and Americanah. Htt pdf (1.133Mb).<https://dspace.nwu.ac.za/handle/10394/25644>:Unpublished masters dissertation South Africa: North West University.

Oyebade, B.1990. African studies and the Afrocentric Paradigm: A Critique. *Journal of Black Studies*, 21 (2):233-238.

Oyekan, O. 2014. African feminism: Some critical considerations. *International Journal of Philosophy*, 15 (1): 1-10.

Oyewumi, O.2003.a'Introduction: Feminism, Sisterhood and Other Foreign Relations' inO. Oyewumi (editor) *African Women & Feminism, Reflecting on thePolitics of Sisterhood*.Trenton, NJ:Africa World Press.1-24.

Oyewumi, O.2003.b 'The White Woman's Burden: African Women in Western Feminist Discourse' in O. Oyewumi (Editor)*African Women & Feminism, Reflecting on the Politics of Sisterhood*. Trenton, NJ: Africa World Press.25-44.

Oyewumi, O.2005. *African Gender Studies: A Reader*.London:Palgrave Macmillan.

Paget, J.C. 2012.Albert Schweitzer and Africa.*Journal of Religion in Africa*, 42 (3): 277-316.

Pape, J. 1990. Black and White: The 'Perils of Sex' in Colonial Zimbabwe. *Journal of Southern African Studies*, 16 (4):699-720.

Patton, M.Q. 2015. Qualitative research and evaluation methods: Integration theory and practice (4th ed). Thousand Oaks, C.A: SAGE Publications.

P' Bitek, O. 1986. *Artist the ruler*, Nairobi: Heinemann.

Pessin, L and Arpino, B.2018. Navigating between two culturesImmigrants' gender attitudes towards working women.*Demographic Research*, 38:967-1016

Pereira. J.R. 1975.Towards a theory of literature in Revolutionary Cuba.*Caribbean Quarterly*. 21 (1):62-73.

Phillips, O.2004. Discontinuities of Custom in Zimbabwe and South Africa.The Implications for Gendered and sexual rights. *Health and Human Rights*, 7(2) 82-113

Phiri, V. 2010.*Highway Queen*. Harare: Corals Services

Porter, E. 1998. Identity, location, plurality: women, nationalism and Northern Ireland in [Wilford and Miller] *Women Ethnicity and Nationalism*.pp36-61.

Rabichev, R.1996. *Female Stereotypes in the Book of Proverbs*. Contending perspectives: South Africa University of the Witwatersrand: Unpublished Doctoral thesis.

Raftopoulos, B. 2009.'The Crisis in Zimbabwe, 1998-2008', in *Becoming Zimbabwe. A history from the pre-colonial period to 2008*. [Eds] Raftopoulos and Mlambo. Harare. Weaver Press.201-232.

Raftopoulos, B &Yoshukuni, T .1999. *Sites of Struggle: Essays in Zimbabwe's Urban History*. Harare: Weaver Press.

Ranger, T.1993.*The Invention of Tradition Revisited: The Case of Colonial Africa*. Harare. University of Zimbabwe.

Reeves, S., Kuper, A. & Hodges, B.D. 2008. Qualitative Research, Methodologies: Ethnography.*BMJ: British Medical Journal*, 337 (7668) 512-514.

Reid, G and Walker, L.2005. Sex and Secrecy: A focus on African Sexualities. *Culture, Health and Sexuality*, 7 (3):185-194.

Reynolds, G.2010. Africa joins the world: The missionary imagination and the Africa motion picture project in Central Africa. 1937-9. (459-479). *Journal of Social History*, 44 (2):459-479.

Riphenburg, C.J.1997. Changing gender relations and structural adjustment in Zimbabwe.*Africa: Rivista trimestrale di studi e documentazione dell Istituto italiano per l' Africa e Oriente*, 52 (2): 237-260.

Rogers, B.1980. *The Domestication of Women. Discrimination in Developing Societies*. London& New York: Routledge.

Romer, C.T, Motel-Klingebiel and Tomasik, M. J.2008. Gender differences in subjective well being: Comparing Societies with respect to Gender Equality. *Social Indicators Research*, 85 (2):329-349.

Rosenmeier, C. 2011. Women stereotypes in Shi Zhecun's Short stories.*Modern China*, 37 (1):44-68.

Said, E. 1979. *Orientalism*. New York: Vintage Books.

Sanday, P, R. 1981. *Female power and male dominance .On the origins of sexual inequality*. New York: Cambridge University Press.

Savitt, D. J. 1982. Female Stereotypes in literature (with a focus on Latin American writers).[http://teachersinstitute.yale.edu/curriculum units/1982/5/82.05.06.x.html](http://teachersinstitute.yale.edu/curriculum_units/1982/5/82.05.06.x.html)

Sayi, S.2016. Troping Women and rethinking gender stereotypes in Ndebele fictional works.*South African Journal for Folklore Studies*, 26 (2).38-51.

Sayi, S. 2017. Gender Sensitivity in*IsichazamazwiSesiNdebele*.*South African Journal of African Languages*, 37(2).245-250.

Schildkrant, E. 1982. ‘Dependence and Autonomy: The Economic Activities of Secluded Hausa Women in Kano, Nigeria in *Women and Work in Africa*, edited by E G. Bay. Westview Press.U.S.A, Boulder, Colorado.55-82.

Schipper, M.1996. Emerging from the shadows: Changing patterns in Gender Matters.*Research in African Literatures*, 27 (1):155-171.

Schmenk, B.2004. Language Learning: A feminine domain? The role of stereotyping in Consructing Gendered learner identities.*TESOL Quarterly*, 38 (3): 514-524

Schmidt, E.1992. *Peasants, Traders and Wives*, Harare: Baobab Books.

Seidman,A.1978.*Working Women: A study of women*. Westview press/ Boulder. Colorado. U.S.A

Seiter, E.1986. Feminism and Ideology: The “Terms” of Women’s Stereotypes:Feminist Review. *Palgrave Macmillan Journals*. 22.pp58-81.

Senkoro, F E.M.K.1982. *The prostitute in African literature*. Dares-Salaam: Dares- Salaam University Press.

Sheriffs, A.C and R.F.Jarret.1953.Sex differences in attitudes about sex differences.*Journal of Psychology*. 35: 161-168.

Shnucker, R.V.1994. Women and gender in early modern Europe by Merry Wiesner-Hanks.*The Sixteenth Century Journal*, 25 (2):439-441.

Sibanda, L.2013. Socialisation and gender stereotyping in Zimbabwe: A feminist ethics discourse. Harare: Unpublished Honours dissertation

Sibanda, M.1986. *UMbiko kaMadlenya* (Mbiko son of Madlenya). Gwelo: Mambo Press

Sigogo, N.1990. *Etshabhini* (At the Shabeen) Gwelo: College Press.

Sigogo, N.S.1986. *NgenziwaNgumumoWelizwe*. Gwelo;Mambo Press.

Silva, 2004.African feminists, towards the politics of empowerment.*Literatura de Autoria Feminina*.44(2): 129-138.

Silverman, D.2007. *Interpreting Qualitative Data: Methods for Analysing Talk, Text & Interaction (Third Edition)*. London: Sage Publications. ISBN 9781412922449

Singer, A.E.2011. A novel Approach: The Sociology of literature, Children's Books, and Social Inequality. *International Journal of Qualitative Methods*.10 (4): 306-320.

Sithole, N. 1956.*UmvukelawamaNdebele*. Gwelo: Mambo Press.

Sitsha-Tsheza, M. 2016.*Esilojeni* (The Life of a Tenant). Harare: Sunshine Publishers.

Sodindwa-Ncube, B. 1997.*Lokhu Akungeke Kwenzeke* (This cannot happen). Gwelo: Mambo Press.

Stam.R. and Spence.1983 Colonialism, racism and representation. An Introduction.<http://screen.oxfordjournals.org/>:2-20

Steady, F.1981. *The Black woman crosses culturally*. Cambridge. Schenkmon.

Steen, S.1981. *European and African Stereotypes in Twentieth- Century fiction*. New York: New York University Press.

Steady, F.1981. *The Black woman crosses culturally*. Cambridge. Schenkmon.

Stratton, F.1994.*Contemporary African Literature and the Politics of gender*. New York. Routledge.

Suk.J.C. 2010. Are Gender Stereotypes Bad for Women? Rethinking Antidiscrimination Law and Work-family Conflict. *Columbia Law Review*, 10(1):1-69.

Taiwo, O. 2003. 'Feminism and Africa: Reflections on the Poverty of Theory' in O. Oyewumi(Editor)*African Women & Feminism, Reflecting on the Politics of Sisterhood*. Trenton, NJ: Africa World Press.45-66.

Tamale, S. 2008. *Law, Sexual morality &subversion: A feminist analysis of Urban sex work in Uganda*. Kampala: Faculty of Law Makerere University

Taylor, F.2003. Content Analysis and Gender stereotypes in children's books. *Teaching Sociology*, (31 (3):300-311

Tegomoh, E.2002. Experiencing African Feminisms. *Empowering Women for Gender Equity*, 17 (54): 122-128.

Thompson, K.D.2012. "Some Were Wild, Some were soft, some were tame, and some were fiery": Female dancers, Male Explorers, and the Sexualization of Blackness, 1600-1900. *Black Women, Gender and Families*, 6 (2):1-28.

Tongco, M.D.C. 2007. "Purposive sampling as a tool for informant selection". *Ethnobotany Research and Applications*, (5):147-158.

Traore, R.L. 2004. Colonialism Continued: African students in urban High School in America. *Journal of Black Studies*, 34 (3):348-369.

Tumusiime, A.E. 2012. Art and gender: Imagining the new woman in Contemporary Ugandan Art. Unpublished Doctoral Dissertation. South Africa: University of South Africa.

Tusscher, T. 1986. 'Patriarchy, capitalism and the New Right' in Judith Evans, Jill Hills, Karen Hunt, Elizabeth Mehan, Tessa ten Tusscher, Ursula Vogel and Georgina Wylen (Eds). *Feminism and Political theory*, London Beverly Hills, New Delhi: Sage Publications. 66-84.

Tymstra, T. J. and Heyink, J.W. 1993. The Function of Qualitative Research. *Social Indicators Research*. 29(3).291-305

Uchendu, P. 1995. Education and the changing economic role of Nigerian women.

Ussher, J. 1999. 'Feminist Approaches to Qualitative Health Research', in M Murray and K. Chamberlain (eds), *Qualitative Health Psychology; Theories and Methods*. London. Sage. pp.98-110.

Veit-Wild, F. 1992. *Teachers, Preachers, non believers: a social history of Zimbabwean Literature*. London, New York: Hons Zell Publishers.

Verveij, C. and Quayle, M. 2012. Whiteness, Racism and Africaner identity in Post-Apartheid South Africa. *African Affairs*, 111 (445):551-575.

Wang, H.C. 2009. Language and Ideology: gender stereotypes of female and male artists in Taiwanese tabloids. *Discourse and Society*, 20(6): 747-774.

Ward, D and Balswick J. 1978. Strong men and virtuous women: A content analysis of Sex Roles Stereotypes. *The Pacific Sociological Review*, 21 (1):45-53.

Wasosa, W.2014. Deviance and Moralisation as portrayed in selected Post-Independence Shona novels and Short Stories.Unpublisheddoctoral thesis. South Africa:University of South Africa.

Weiss, R.1986. *The women of Zimbabwe*. London: Kesho.

Wertsch, J.V. Del Rio, R, & Alvarez, A.1995. Sociocultural studies: History, action, and mediation. I J.V. Wertsch, P.Del Rio, & A. ALvarez (Eds), *Socio cultural studies of mind*. New York: Cambridge University Press.1-34.

White, H.1978. *Tropics of Discourse. Essays in Cultural Criticism*. London: The Johns Hopkins University Press.

White, L. 1990. *The comforts of home.Prostitution in colonial Nairobi*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Wilford, R & Miller R.1998.*Women, Ethnicity &Nationalism*. New York: Routledge.

Wilford, R.1998. Women, ethnicity and Nationalism: Surveying the ground in R.Wilford and R.Miller [Eds] *Women, Ethnicity &Nationalism*.New York: Routledge.1-22.

Wilson, F.R.1982. 'Reinventing the Past and Circumscribing the future: Authenticate and the Negative Image of Women's Work in Zaire' in *Women and Work in Africa*, edited by E G. Bay. Westview Press.U.S.A, Boulder, Colorado.153-170.

Wolpe, A. 1994. 'The official ideology of education for girls', in R Dale, G Esland, R Fergusson and M Macdonald (Eds) *Politics, Patriarchy and Practices*, Lewes, Flamer Press,

Woodward, K.2011. *The Short guide to gender*. Bristol: Policy Press

Xiaojiang and John. 2005. Women and feminism in China and India: A conversation with Li Xiaojiang. *Economic and Political Weekly*. 40 (16): 16-22.

Yates, A. B. 1982.Colonialism, education and Work: Sex Differentiation in Colonial Zaire in *Women and Work in Africa*, edited by E G. Bay. Westview Press.U.S.A, Boulder, Colorado

Yeganeh, N,1993. Women, Nationalism and Islam in Contemporary Political Discourse in Iran.Nationalisms and National Identities.*Palgrave Macmillan Journals*. 44:3-18.

Yuval-Davis. 1997. *Gender and Nation*inWilford and Miller [Eds] *Women Ethnicity and Nationalism*.London: SAGE Publications.pp 23-35.

Zalewski, M. 2010. ‘I don’t even know what gender gender is’: a discussion of the connections between gender, gender mainstreaming and feminist theory. *Review of International Studies*, 36(1) :3-27.

Zelesa, P.T.2005. ‘Gender Biases in African Historiography’ in Oyewumi, O. (editor) *African gender studies. A reader*207-232.

Zimbabwe Women Writers, 1998. *Inkondlo. Inkondlo ezalotshwa ngamalunga eZimbabwe Women Writers kusukela ngo1990 kusiya ku1998*.Harare: Zimbabwe Women Writers.

LIST OF APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR AUTHORS

My name is SANELISIWE SAYI, a PhD student with the UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH AFRICA. The title of my thesis is; FEMALE STEREOTYPES IN SELECTED ZIMBABWEAN NDEBELE NOVELS (1975-2016).The study seeks to establish and interrogate the different gender stereotypes accorded to women in different historical dispensations in Zimbabwe's Ndebele fiction. The research interrogates the stereotypes that can be deduced from the politics of representation of women in the selected novels. It analyses the dynamics that influence the novelists' depiction of women in pre-colonial, colonial and post- colonial socio-historical contexts with the intention to evaluate the ramifications of stereotypes on gender discourse in Zimbabwean literature. The study looks into ways in which various factors come into play that

affect gender representation on the Ndebele novels, such as culture, and as well as political and economic issues. The study therefore unravels how culture continues to have a bearing on the representation of women. It also seeks to trace the development of stereotypes accorded to women and unravel the implications of this on the development of Zimbabwean literature and the nation at large. The study therefore hopes to re-educate society through deconstructing and demystifying these long standing stereotypes with the aim of contributing to a change in perception towards women among scholars of African culture, literature and gender studies as well as the society at large. I therefore kindly ask you to contribute to this research by responding to the following questions. Information obtained from you will be used for purposes of this research and shall remain confidential. Your cooperation will be appreciated.

1. Is your writing in any way linked to the socio-political and economic history of the country?
2. What affected your writing during the period your novel was published?
3. Did the literature Bureau have an impact in the structure and themes projected in your novel?
4. How are women represented in your novel?
5. Does the historical period affect male and female relations in your novel?

APPENDIX B

INTERVIEW GUIDE FOR LITERARY CRITICS

My name is SANELISIWE SAYI, a PhD student with the UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH AFRICA. The title of my thesis is; FEMALE STEREOTYPES IN SELECTED ZIMBABWEAN NDEBELE NOVELS (1975-2016). The study seeks to establish and interrogate the different gender stereotypes accorded to women in different historical dispensations in Zimbabwe's Ndebele fiction. The research interrogates the stereotypes that can be deduced from the politics of representation of women in the selected novels. It analyses the dynamics that influence the novelists' depiction of women in pre-colonial, colonial and post- colonial socio-historical contexts with the intention to evaluate the ramifications of stereotypes on gender discourse in Zimbabwean literature. The study looks into ways in which various factors come into play that affect gender representation on the Ndebele novels, such as culture, and as well as political and

economic issues. The study therefore unravels how culture continues to have a bearing on the representation of women. It also seeks to trace the development of stereotypes accorded to women and unravel the implications of this on the development of Zimbabwean literature and the nation at large. The study therefore hopes to re-educate society through deconstructing and demystifying these long standing stereotypes with the aim of contributing to a change in perception towards women among scholars of African culture, literature and gender studies as well as the society at large. I therefore kindly ask you to contribute to this research by responding to the following questions. Information obtained from you will be used for purposes of this research and shall remain confidential. Your cooperation will be appreciated.

1. How are women represented in Ndebele fiction?
2. Is there any change or continuity in the way women are represented in various historical epochs?
3. Do male and female novelists project women the same way?
4. What is your take on female stereotypes in Ndebele fiction?