

**Interrogating the narrative “#MenAreTrash” in Namibian women’s spoken
poetry with a focus on Gender Based Violence**

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NAMIBIA UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

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DECLARATION

I, *Frieda Ndeutala Mukufa*, student registration number 214050505, hereby declare that the work contained in this Thesis, entitled Research Topic: Interrogating the narrative “*#MenAreTrash*” in Namibian women’s spoken poetry with a focus on Gender Based Violence is my own original work and that I have not previously in its entirety or in part submitted it at any university or other higher education institution for the award of a degree.

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to examine and interrogate the narrative that *#MenAreTrash* as highlighted in selected Namibian women's poems, *Cadaver* by Faustina M Namatshana (2018), *You Broke Me, Daddy* by Jane "LuNa" Mungabwa (2018), *Trauma* by Jane S. Mungabwa (2017) *This is to you men by the side of the road* by Emma Vilho (2008), *Your Rape is not different from mine* (2017) and *Daddy Issues* (2018) by Lydia October, *The Absence of a Man* (2019) and *Childhood Trauma* (2016) by Jacobina Tangi Uushona. The study will fully provide separate insight into the writings of these Namibian poets as well as the texts combined in terms of the narrative and other relating issues such as patriarchy, abuse and the many forms it is represented in the poems, Electra complex, Daddy issues, Carrying the baggage, abandonment and how these women have used their writing to create a new identity for themselves as well as overcome their trauma and becoming resilient.

DEDICATION

I dedicate this research to my loving mother, *Faustina Ndiwanena Gideon Hafyeenanye*. She is the strongest woman to walk this earth.

I am also dedicating it to all the survivors of any form of abuse. I believe you and your voice matters.

Lastly, this research is as well dedicated to my best friend *Rio Romando !Haseb*. You are heaven sent.

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POEMS: CADAVER

Faustina M Namatshana

Before me lays a naturalist
Draped in a cascade of dark kinky coils.
The epitome of melanin beauty
Clear skin yet cold.
Life.

Before me stands a male doctor
With eyes burning to know me.
So I tell him.

I'll be 23 in a week's time,
Celebrating my dreams and freedom.
For last week I had courage to leave him.
Boldly voicing the unhappiness of our relationship,
The burden of bruises covered with makeup,
The suffocations of being ridiculed, manipulated,
And maimed by the reek of beer and cheatings on his breath.
I spat out the hurt that accompanied his control over me
Whenever his stealth seared and projected within my delicateness.
Fulfilling the cunning desires of his ego
And forgetting about my existence, my soul, my dignity.
Honestly, I stayed because he promised that it won't happen again,
Promises after promises,
Cycle after cycle,
And screaming in silence.

It became too complicated to leave
Until I finally had it in me to stop being a victim

How I regret it.

And for the last time, that day,
I was bruised, strangled and raped

Until my final breath.

All in my moment of courage.

But now 23 will be celebrate in death.

Ashamedly, he pulls the plastic over my tagged body

And walks away.

YOU BROKE ME, DADDY

By Jane "LuNa" Mungabwa

I'm cold

I'm freezing cold

Don't say I never said, because I always told;

And no matter when the story will be spoken of it's still old.

Come and see daddy, come and see the monster that you with your cold demeanour mould.

Couldn't you see that instead of hard blows, mama cries and booze all I needed was a daddy to hold?

I sought your affection in the beds and arms of men and women who are cold just like you,

And no matter how much pain they caused me, I stayed; I had to be brave because I felt that by trying to save them in a way I was saving you, daddy.

You never even noticed how much I cried, but then again, maybe you noticed daddy but you just never cared to be my dad, you never even tried.

All I needed was your love daddy, but all you gave me was rage.

But it's okay now daddy, it's okay.

I won't cry anymore daddy, just like you taught me not to.

I Hope you are proud now daddy,

Cos' I' m cold now daddy,

I'm cold just like you.

TRAUMA

By Jane "LuNa" Mungabwa

You broke me too mama,
Every time you said that you would leave but you never did,
You broke me mama,

Everyday that you stayed , you were just an accomplice to my childhoods theft,
You broke me mama,

For every excuse you made, when he battered your mind , body and soul,
You shattered me, now I can never be whole,
You broke me Mama,

For every unfounded accusation, the monsters provocation,
Complaining about the situation, but never leaving,
You broke me mama,

For every night that I don't sleep,
Loud noises make me anxious, I can't listen to music
"turn the music down!"
'cause every time I can't hear you mama,
I think he's finally got the courage to end you and now I have no mommy,
"Turn the music down!,"
I don't hear music , I hear gunshots instead,
Or you are choking taking your last breath,
You broke me mama.

You broke me daddy.

All I needed was your love daddy, but all you gave me was rage.

But it's okay now daddy, it's okay.

I won't cry anymore daddy, I won't cry anymore.

I hope you are proud now daddy, because I'm cold,

I'm cold daddy, I'm cold just like you.

THIS IS TO YOU MEN BY THE SIDE OF THE ROAD

Emma Vilho (2008)

This is to you men by the side of the road

“The men who whistle at me as if I were some dog.

The men who insult me when I don’t respond.

The men who make my blood boil and my head run with all sorts of insults.

The men who never cease to remind me that I need my body caressed and that my boobs are perfect for
fondling.”

THERE IS NO DIFFERENCE BETWEEN YOUR RAPE AND MINE.

Lydia October

There is no difference between your rape and mine.
Whether yours was done once and mine, many more times.
Whether your rapist was a stranger and I still have to live with mine.

You tell yourself you cannot wash him off,
no matter how many times you try and wipe him off.
His scent, infused with the sweat from the pressure forcing his way inside of you.
Your heart racing whenever a man approaches you.

There is no difference between your rape and mine.
I had to kiss mine and look him in his eyes, share the same bottle of wine and pretend that everything
was fine.
I fell into a trap hoping I was going to fall in love.

You have decided to lock yourself indoors for a few days, hoping to forget, a memory so old and yet it
feels so new.

I have decided to go out, I allow my man to taste me.
I will offer him what he wants before he too decides to steal it.

There is no difference between your rape and mine.
We are both hurting and dearly sleepless at night.

We see the same man in a million stories,
We bled the same way in a million different experiences.

See what connects is, our hunger for closure, some nights I wish him dead and I would do it myself.

Most nights, I lie awake wondering what you're going through.

I hope you're not beating yourself up, although I understand if you're asking yourself Why.

There is no difference between your rape and mine. I hope and trust that you are doing fine.

Tribute to anonymous

DADDY ISSUES

Lydia October

I have a father, an actual biological father,
I never had him send me airtime out the blue,
He never paid for my hair, nails or even bought the clothes on my back.
He didn't text on a random day and ask how my day was,
Many times, he left, months, gone and almost a memory.

So here you are presenting yourself in such an alien way.
You hop, step and reach to open every door, the doors to your car, the doors to your apartment, the
doors to your bedroom.

And just like that, a room, a room with a bed covered in white sheets, rose petals everywhere, that
white wolf fur rug, that shining armour silver chair.

You lay me onto that bed, and you whisper sweet, bitter, sweet rubbish in my ear;
I'll give you the world,
I'll show you my favourite cars, you could pick one, I can give you anything.
Trust me.
And just like that, in one snap, they became one.

Inside, all the way up, all the way down, all the way down, all the way up, inside her veins, her
bloodstream has turned rusty, her system is breaking down.
Human Immunodeficiency Virus.

THE ABSENCE OF A MAN

Tangi Uushona

How you just leave a child behind,
To this day drives me mad
Cause I hadn't been alive long enough
To have done something so bad,
As to be deserted by a man,
Who I later learnt was my Dad.
Who I still have trouble recognizing,
And I'm well over 18,so really it's just sad,
How his back is the most vivid memory of him I still have.
I no longer say goodnight,
Cause I'm afraid it will mean goodbye,
Because the night he left,
He tucked me and sung me a lullaby,
which was to make me rest easy,
But in fact, he made me cry.
because I heard him go mute downstairs,
When mom asked him, why?!
Because he didn't answer,
that one major question,
my life inevitably became a commotion,
that always lead me to question the notion,
of whether I have enough strength,
to fight off emotion,
when it's the month of June
And it becomes a 'Daddys day' situation

I just needed him there, for atleast a game or graduation
Maybe then this day would have meaning,
and make me call for celebration,
and put the seed of a possible relationship into germination,
But he didn't,
So I put the idea of having a father into termination.
Who's gonna walk me down the aisle,
and will I have the father-daughter dance.
If he had asked for another,
I would have no doubt given him a chance,
to be the man I needed him to,
when I still did sums with my hands.
I had great love for this man
although the world saw hate,
I always wished for his return,
it would have never been too late,
to take me to the movies,
or drop me off at a play date.
Off my shoulders this would have been a huge weight,
Of having to lie to my friends
that, "my dad was running late"
Although moms tales of your return helped,
they soon became overrated.
And so the future without the past of a father,
was a picture I clearly painted.
The child in me died,
when for your return I no longer waited.
You're a man I always loved,
And never, ever hated.

CHILDHOOD TRAUMA

Tangi Uushona

When I was little I told my mom I wanted to be catholic, and I was 6,
So yeah it probably sounded a little off ish but it wasn't because I understood the culture,
It's cause that way every once a week on Sundays,
I'd get to see my Father.

My mom had a garage to her name before she did anything else cause that's all she could afford for us
to live in,
Cause painfully,
What other people knew as change,
Was salary,
To popular belief though
I'll be contrary,
Just because we weren't rich
Doesn't mean we weren't wealthy,
And so I skipped a few meals,
That doesn't mean I was unhappy.

He'd always talk about how my skin seemed so soft,
And once I was old enough to start wearing a bra, my uncle tried taking it off.

But because "boys will be boys" that turn into psychopaths who get to be excused from persecution
because they're men,
And my mom raised a good girl and we don't cause a scene,
I never said anything.

So yeah, I don't like going to the village and it makes me a mbwiti
But I'm not about to spend 8 hours on a bus just to visit the place where my uncle molested me.

Now probably,
You're thinking "she's running away from her problems"
But honestly,
I am free, mentally and emotionally.
Besides it's thanks to that day that I understand the value of giving myself to someone sexually.

Whilst other kids learnt how to play hop scotch,
I was playing hide-and-don't-speak with my emotions.
Because I was too young to claim to feel the way I did. They said this to me as if I had a choice, forgetting
that emotions demanded to be felt and didn't ask for permission.

My first relationship was my longest and most abusive. His name was make up.
Homeboy only felt good about himself when he had my face-beat,
And for the longest time he made me feel like the only place that I'd ever find a reason to call myself
beautiful was on the inside of a mirror.

See growing up, guys could never handle my baggage,
so I started traveling light and carried all my bags under my eyes.

My first brother moved out cause MA was always stressin'
Second one got married without her blessin'
Third one screwed too many girls, I mean since we're here confessin'
And my sister has 2 kids, no husband or boyfriend cause her worth, she always second guessin'

As for me,
I remember staying at my aunts and when I wanted food I had to ask for permission.
And I could never watch the TV oh no, cause my cousin would never stop talkin' about how it's was her
daddy's TV,
I was just tryna watch SpongeBob like can a girl please breathe.

So yeah that's why to this day when someone asks me to tell them about myself, I say there's nothing much to say and only say the surface shxt.

The shallow, puddle type shxt.

Because the rest is too deep and some people never learnt how to swim.

And my waters they do not come with life guards meaning even for the best swimmers?

If I threw you deep enough,

You wouldn't make it out alive.

See that is why I'm sarcastic with a little hi t of funny,

And I don't really tell people things about me.

Because not even the worst drug addict,

Could swallow the pill that is my reality.

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CHAPTER ONE

1. GENERAL INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of the study

In Windhoek, Namibia, there is a platform given to the public who are poets, called Spoken Word. “In the first decade of the 2000s, performance poetry experienced a resurgence in urban Namibia, especially among young Namibians. This movement was led mainly by the Spoken Word Organisation” (Ellis & Stevenson, 2018, p. 136). Spoken Word Namibia enables young Namibian poets to speak about pressing issues in their communities and respective lives, such as the relief of poverty, social injustice and an end to violence. Ellis and Stevenson (2018) state that the presence of female performers at Spoken Word Namibia and themes of sexual identity, feminism and respect are popular and well-articulated. It is through this platform that the notion *Men Are Trash* has gained popularity amongst female poets. Although the movement started on Twitter, with a thread where women posted about their discomfoting experiences with men, poets have also been part of discussions offline, sharing the same sentiment about how men treat women.

The movement started on social media in South Africa when a young woman, Karabo Mokoena, was murdered and burned by her boyfriend. Since then, women started coming forth with their stories, leading to Spoken Word Namibia, a platform that offers this space. This platform has provided female poets with the chance to further express their frustrations of how men treat them as trash, and how the notion is not only aimed at men who rape and or kill, but the man who cover up for their friends who rape women. It is, however, worth noting that the movement is not a hate speech towards all men, as there are good men who are willing to protect women.

Through the Spoken Word Namibia platform, female poets use their voices to articulate their experiences. It is through this interaction with the audience that the performers convey their feelings of anger, anguish and frustration through poetry. It is, however, noteworthy that through the sharing process, not all experiences shared are negative, as there are women who share the good deeds men have done for them. Through Spoken Word, the poet or performer has direct contact with his/her audience, making performance poetry “an art form created in the warm presence of an audience as against the cold privacy of the written work” (Okpewho, 1992, p. 42). Through performance poetry and the Spoken Word dais, women who openly articulate the unspeakable issues are empowered and

become agents of change. The dais gives them “the opportunity to say publicly things one wouldn’t even consider saying in private” (Ellis & Stevenson, 2018, p. 142). The women then talk about how men get physical and how, during sexual interactions, they are treated as sexual objects for the gratification of men (Olaussen, 1992).

Silencing women has always been one of the most effective weapons used by patriarchy to gain control over women. Anthropologist Irene D’Almeida argues that “silence presents the historical muting of women under the formidable institution known as patriarchy, a form of social organisation in which males assume power and create women an inferior status” (Kolavole, 1997, p. 4). Although not many Namibian women publicly write about their discomforting experiences with men, the Spoken Word platform has provided a voice and space for them to openly talk about it.

It is against this background that this study sought to interrogate, by carefully studying the poems, how the notion *#Men Are Trash* is represented by women in Namibia through the submitted poems;

Thus, the main purpose of this study is to interrogate, by carefully studying the poems, how the notion, *#Men Are Trash*, is represented by women in Namibia, through the submitted poems; *You Broke Me Daddy* and *Trauma* by Mungabwa, (2018), *Cadaver* by Namatshana (2018), *This is to you men* by Thomas (2008), *Your Rape is not different from mine* (2017) and *Daddy Issues* October, (2018), *The Absence of a Man* (2019) by Uushona and *Childhood Trauma* by Uushona, 2019.

1.2 Statement of the problem

Namibian women have been oppressed into silence for too long by patriarchy and fear. As Walby (1990) defines, a “system of social structures and practices in which men dominate women”, patriarchy, has been a part of many Namibian women’s lives. The beginning of the *#MenAreTrash* narrative started because of the ill-treatments men continue to subject women to. These are inclusive of rape, murder, sexual harassment, cat-calling, slut-shaming and physically abuse, to mention but a few. It is against the background of these issues that this study aims to create an awareness that will assist in dismantling patriarchy and the way it is manifested in. By analysing the chosen poems by the Namibian female poets, this study will provide insight on how men project their toxic masculine ways and manners on Namibian women. By clearly voicing their experiences through spoken word, the Namibian female poets bring forth the ways in which men are trash because of what they do to women.

In order to fully understand the problem and reason behind the movement that started as a thread with confessions, the study will pay close attention to the language that is used and the context. Understanding this movement and not retaliating with a 'not all men are trash' opinion is the beginning of eradicating and educating the boy child about imposing toxic masculinity towards the girl child.

In a report submitted to the UN Human Rights Council in November 2010, the government of Namibia stated that violence against women is a "serious challenge" in the country, and that rape and domestic violence are "widespread" UN Human Rights Council in November 2010, p. 80). The UN Human Rights Council reported that in 2010, almost 12 000 cases of gender-based violence were reported to the police of which the victims were primarily women and girls, and that at least 1 070 of the reported cases involved rape (UN Human Rights Council in November 2010:80).

1.3 Research Objectives

The main research objective is to interrogate why men are called trash by Namibian women.

The specific objectives are:

- a) To assess, based on the chosen poems, the commonalities that classify men to be trash.
- b) To examine the role of Spoken Word Namibia with regards to the *#Men Are Trash* movement and its growth.
- c) To analyse whether the *#Men Are Trash* movement has been significant to women.
- d) To evaluate whether the Spoken Word platform is an effective means for women to articulate their experiences.

1.4 The significance of the research

This study will add more to the knowledge on literary studies, making it a useful reference tool to academics in Namibian and other African countries. Moreover, this study will bring to the fore a clearer understanding of the concerns on women, power and patriarchy and in African literary studies.

By assessing the commonalities that classify men to be trash, the study will bring forth a clear depiction of what makes the narrative *#MenAreTrash* credible. It will also assist with the exposing of the Spoken Word platform as a safe means of articulating their experiences as well as how much of an effective safe space it is for victims to publicly air their survivor stories. Lastly, by analysing whether the *#MenAreTrash*

movement has been significant to women, the study will create an element of change of women who are not afraid to tell their stories.

1.5 Delimitations of the research

The delimitations that this research consist of are that, the study focuses only on female poets and their selected poems. The poets are from different ethnic backgrounds in Namibia, which means their writings and experiences differ in terms of culture and norms. Two of the writers are from the Oshiwambo ethnic group, one is of the Khoekhoegowab ethnicity and the last one is of the Lozi ethnic group.

1.6 Ethical considerations

The researcher will adhere to the Namibia University of Science and Technology rules and avoid plagiarism by acknowledging all the authors and contributing scholars' knowledge. The researcher will also adhere to the confidential agreement between the poets, whose poems are factual and about the poet's experiences. Should the researcher be interviewed, permission will be asked from the poets, whether to mention their names or use fictional names.

CHAPTER 2

2. Literature Review

This segment will review literature that is significant and contributing towards the *#MenAreTrash* discussion. These are inclusive of Feminism as a movement that fights against the oppression of women in the world, patriarchy and its ways of manifesting itself into society and lives of women, as well as provide insight on performance poetry as a genre in the 21st century that gives a platform for people to air their journeys through poetry. Finally, yet importantly, it will also provide reviewed literature on the *#MenAreTrash* movement.

2.1 Feminism

The Oxford dictionary defines feminism as “the advocacy of women's rights on the ground of the equality of the sexes” (Encyclopedia Britannica, 2018). Initially, in the western countries, women revolted to fight for emancipation and liberation from all forms of oppression by the state, by society and by men. It has been argued that "feminism" or "feminist" first appeared in France and The Netherlands in 1872 (as les féministes), Great Britain in the 1890s, and the United States in 1910. The Oxford English Dictionary lists 1894 for the first appearance of "feminist" and 1895 for "feminism. Scholars such as Grown, Cagatay, and Santiago further argue that feminism constitutes the political expression of the concerns and interests of women from different regions, classes, nationalities and ethnic backgrounds. There is, and must be, a diversity of feminisms responsive to the different needs and concerns of different women, and defined by them for themselves. This diversity builds on a common opposition to gender oppression and hierarchy which, however, is the first step in articulating and acting upon a political agenda (Grown et al, 1986: 41).

Defining feminism can then be challenging, but a broad understanding of it includes the acting, speaking, writing, and advocating on behalf of women's issues and rights and identifying injustices to females in the social status quo. When discussing feminism, there is often referencing to the three waves of feminism that give a larger timeframe to the development of the movement. (Dorey-Stein, 2015). Each wave is described as dealing with different aspects of the same feminist issues and advocates for something specific. Each of these feminist movements falls under the category of either

first, second, or third wave feminism. Each wave denotes a generational difference, thus in order to gain a comprehensive understanding of feminism, it is imperative that we take into account these different movements because each represents a unique product of their society and time period. Although each movement shares the same purpose of enhancing feminist ideals, each does so with different rhetorical methods and premises in mind.

The first wave started in the 19th century, until early 20th centuries, and it dealt mainly with suffrage, working conditions and educational rights for women and girls. During the 19th century, the first wave of feminists was advocating for the rights of women to vote and be recognised within the political arena as well as the sphere of decision making. The advocacy for women rights during this time-frame meant that women in that era were fighting hard for women to get better working conditions, if granted an opportunity to work. This meant that, instead of a woman being subjected to working under harsh conditions such as in the scorching sun as a field worker, the active women fought for lunch breaks and or times where women were allowed to rest when the sun is too much.

The second wave (1960s-1980s) dealt with the inequality of laws, as well as cultural inequalities and the role of women in society. The women of the second wave were imperilled to the sphere of domestic chores and the unequal laws against them. For example, women were not allowed to work because their place was regarded to be in the kitchen. When Ngugi wa Thiongo was interviewed in 1982 about his novels *Devil on the Cross* and *Detained*, he described women as the most exploited and oppressed section of the entire working class: exploited as workers; at home; and also by the backward elements in the culture (Boyce-Davies et al 1986: 11). One may argue that, during the time of wa Thiongo, women were exploited by the people they worked for, by their spouses as well as double oppression from the culture. The publication by Betty Friedan entitled *The Feminine Mystique* (1963) marks the dawn of the second wave. It reveals frustrations of white, heterosexual, middle-class American women. They were depicted as careless and trapped in domesticity. This second phase was said to have helped to shape the liberationist movements of the 1960s. It is during this phase that women gained a voice to speak up about their discomforts regarding their domestic spheres. This wave of feminism is essential because with the *#Men Are Trash* movement, the discussion also touches on how the domestic sphere has influenced and fueled patriarchy to the extend it is today.

The third wave of feminism (late 1980s-early 2000s (decade)), is seen as both a continuation of the second wave and a response to the perceived failures of the first two waves. These women worked on

the laws the first and second wave could not bring forth into existence. Henceforth, it is arguable that, these are the 21st century women who were introduced and carried forth the torch of feminism into the 21st century. This is because, an aspect of third wave feminism that mystified the mothers of the earlier feminist movement, was the re-adoption by young feminists of the very lip-stick, high-heels, and cleavage proudly exposed by low cut necklines that the first two phases of the movement identified with male oppression. The "girls" of the third wave stepped onto the stage as strong and empowered, eschewing victimization and defining feminine beauty for themselves as subjects, not as objects of a sexist patriarchy. This means that they fought for their body and views on how their bodies ought to be viewed by men. Most of the ways in which these women advocated for equality was through retaliation. These acts included wearing short skirts because they were called whores and bitches, and or wearing red lipstick because they are called prostitutes. By doing these things, these women were owning up to the derogatory terms that men use to address them because of what they are wearing. They developed a rhetoric of mimicry, which appropriated derogatory terms like "slut" and "bitch" in order to subvert sexist culture and deprive it of verbal weapons. To substantiate, within the Namibian spectrum, women who are feminists have taken up the initiative of organising an annual walk called the '*The Slut Shame*' walk. This comprises of women wearing short skirts and shirts that are barely covering their upper body. Usually, these protests are done with women writing the derogatory words such as 'slut' and or 'whore' on their body. This is done in order to reclaim their identity, not as a whore, but as an independent woman. Putting it out there subverts the norm that women are whores, thus it echoes the sentiment of acceptance as a normal word that a woman owns up to.

This then means that, the feminist movement is a movement aimed at fighting the oppressive ways of the patriarchy that women are tied to. It also means that women started to fight for the rights of every other woman, be it the right to vote, the right to be employed in a position that is known as a male environment or simply giving women the freedom of sexual authority over their own bodies.

Within the spectrum of feminism, there exists another wave of feminism. Which is of paramount importance when discussing the narrative, *#Men Are Trash*. This is the forth wave of feminism.

Scholars have argued that we are currently witnessing a resurgence of interest in feminism across the world, with a claim that we are experiencing a 'fourth wave' in the global North that has its birthplace primarily on the Internet (Baumgardner, 2011; Leupold, 2010; Solomon, 2009). The fourth wave of feminism is said to exist virtually and it is one that reflected postmodern ideas; it allowed for individual choice, and some of the certainties (the 'grand narratives' of second wave feminism) could no longer be

taken for granted (Mani, 2013). One may argue that the fourth wave feminism focuses on many aspects, especially the grand narratives regarding women, being primitive and weak. It seeks to engage an audience from all over the globe, through the click of a button and participation from wherever one may be (Baumgardner 3). According to this new wave, modern technology is allowing people everywhere to immensely spread their views and beliefs on feminism. In other words, mass globalization has the ability to cause mass change and recently has been utilized as a powerful tool for spreading awareness on women's rights and essentially creating worldwide change in an easier and more accessible manner; the internet. (Phillips & Cree, 2014). This is important when assessing the *#Men Are Trash* movement. It started on social media; Twitter, and spread throughout all other platforms on the internet. With the ripple effect of an abused woman who got tired of the way she was being treated, more women came out and this brought forth the inception of the *#Men Are Trash* movement.

Social Media has thus opened up significant spaces for the rebirth of feminist debates and resistance and it has been argued that this is the birthplace of fourth wave feminism (Leupold, 2010; Solomon, 2009). To substantiate, Baumgardner (2011) pinpoints that the starting point of this was 2008, and she further proposes that the fourth wave evolved to take forward the agenda of third wave feminists, observing that 'their experience of the online universe was that it was just part of life, not something that landed in their world like and an alien spaceship....' ; while zines and songs were innovations of the third wave, the fourth wavers introduced the use of blogs, Twitter campaigns and online media with names like *Racialicious* and *Feministing* (Baumgardner, 20011). This was done in order to bring forth the idea that, women do not need to assemble in order to create a full effect about their advocacy. It also brings forth the point that, for women of the 21st century, they did not need to sing chimes and sit around and or form groups in order to bring forth their cries. They just needed assistance from technology, which is inclusive of social media platforms such as Twitter, Facebook, Instagram, to mention but a few. For example, *Feministing* is an example of a blog that demonstrates the power social media can have in terms of spreading feminism. According to their website, "Feministing is an online community run by and for young feminists" offering a "diverse collective of writers who cover a broad range of intersectional feminist issues- from campus sexual violence to transgender rights to reproductive justice" (Feministing.com). This is in correlation with the third wave feminism which caters for the protection of the female sexual rights and their transgender rights.

In terms of success, *Feministing* is viewed as the most highly viewed feminist blog (both online and offline) that exists with over 600,000 readers per month (Solomon 1). That being said, this extremely mass viewership exemplifies the success fourth wave feminism communication strategies have when it comes to garnering public attention. This is worth an applause because, in the past, women could not provide information to a lot of people at once in such a short frame. This is seen as a success because of how fast the information spreads, as well as how many people, including men, it has reached. Never before did feminists of the past have the opportunity to disseminate feminist messages this quickly to such a large amount of people worldwide, but due to the Internet and society's prevalent use of it on a daily basis, feminists today now have the opportunity to facilitate activism on a global scale.

As we are currently living in the fourth wave of feminism, which is defined as both a generational and ideological change, can be defined into that time frame, when compared with the feminists before, their age and their actions in gender politics. (Gillis, et al., 2007). In order for women to fully reach out and not be silenced by patriarchy (Kolavole 1997: 4), women have made use of the technological aspect of life, social media. Through social media, women have started expressing their discomforts with men (Budgeon, 2011). Social media is a popular platform for younger women to engage in politics. Therefore, the *#Men Are Trash* campaign and its vast spread in social media is a great example of how fourth wave feminism is implemented by young women. (Keller, 2012) Soon enough, the viral hashtag became extensively used across all social media platforms such as Twitter, Facebook, Instagram and Snapchat, where victims of sexual harassment and abuse tweeted, posted or shared *#Men Are Trash*. This ignited a conversation encouraging several women with different lifestyles to come forward and give an account of their discordant realities.

Munro (2013: 3) argues that the new social media-based feminism is intolerant of all 'isms' and inclusive of diverse sexualities and cultures. It reflects the popularity of intersectionality as a theoretical frame for analysis and has created a 'callout' culture in which sexism or misogyny can be challenged (Feminist activism is alive and well and asserting itself in new ways, making it accessible to waves of technology 'savvy' younger ('generation-Y') people. This is exactly what is happening with the *#Men Are Trash* movement. It is a callout for the misogynistic ways that men use in order to impose them on women. This movement started on social media, with a woman putting up a thread on twitter with her abuse story and how masculinity is nothing but trash. This has then been an engagement that many women took part in and shared their stories of how men have been trash towards them. This was in the form of

abuse, cat calling, psychological abuse, attempted rape and rape, to mention but a few. The movement gained momentum in all countries, especially Namibia and South Africa, where more women came forth about their abuse, rapist and or abusive husband. These callouts by women also included the male counterparts who either witnessed the victim at the hands of the perpetrator and did nothing, as well as those men that were quick to say, "I am a good guy, " or "it was not me, so I am not trash."

Below is a Namibian thread about how women have suffered at the hands of men, through any masculine imposed way. (<https://twitter.com/ShadowsOfWolf/status/1001358334568648704>) One may argue that, with regard to feminism, this is a projection of the third wave feminism together with the fourth wave feminism. Yes, women have long preached about patriarchy and masculine toxic ways, wasting away the lives of women, yet nothing has been resolved. By starting the conversation with the phrase, *#Men Are Trash*, women are using a different way of telling men that masculinity has not improved for the better. Through social media, women have found a better and faster way to discuss the ways in which patriarchy is being imposed on women. Through social media, women have found a platform that helps them ease into conversations without a man interjecting or invalidating their points regarding how men are imposing toxic mannerisms towards them. It is through the fourth wave feminism that the 21st century woman has gained confidence to speak up about the ill-treatments from men. It is this very same platform that gives women the freedom to openly talk and write about patriarchy and the many toxic ways it has been manifested into. "The only thing that's changed is, now women speak up. Patriarchy has been in existence for longer than we can remember." (Aaleya Omar, 2018). To substantiate, women have moved away from being regarded as child bearers and kitchen bound objects, yet, they are killed because of refusing to either cook a meal the way a man wants it. It has also elevated from women wanting to leave a relationship when it does not befit her, to women being killed because of ending a relationship with a man. In a recent incident, a 22-year-old University of Namibia student was stabbed to death by her boyfriend for wanting to leave the relationship. (The Namibian, pg.1, 2019). A similar incident happened last year, where a man, the boyfriend of the deceased, went to the work place of the deceased and shot her and himself as well. (Namibia Broadcasting Corporation, 2018). These are the results of the shift of patriarchy from the modern way of women being confined to domestic chores, to being murdered mercilessly because they are taking matters into their own hands.

As women who speak in many tongues, black women utilize the written word to deconstruct misconceptions of our realities and to retell those stories from the voices of experience. (Jennifer, D.

Williams. 1998). One may choose to argue that this is relevant because it liberates the African woman by giving her a voice to speak of and about her experiences as a woman. Objective of women writing and talking about women is that “it should describe reality from a woman’s perspective.” (Molara Onugundipe –Leslie 1987, 5)

2.2 Patriarchy

With regard to the *#Men Are Trash* movement, one cannot discuss it in full context without including patriarchy. Walby (1990) defines patriarchy as a ‘system of social structures and practices in which men dominate women. This goes as far as in all aspects of the woman’s life; homestead, work environment and her sexuality. Walby also argues that there are two distinctive forms of patriarchy that exist in the social world: private patriarchy and public patriarchy. These are essential when dissecting patriarchy as it brings out the different forms of discomforts that patriarchy imposes on women.

#Men Are Trash. Dating back to the days of our forefathers and mothers, men have been celebrated for their masculinity. This has been passed on from generations of men to the ones of today and females have since then suffered because of the patriarchy social institution which functions on the principle that “male shall dominate female.” (Millet 1994: 25). Men have been celebrated for their dominating and superior ways of infringing the freedom of women through making them feel inferior. This has been evident from the days of our mothers when they were confined to the household and were not allowed to question the doings of men. The idea of masculinity puts women on a remote margin. Wolpe (1997:23) observed that “many African women are trapped in traditional roles...” Within a traditional setting, dating as far back as the 19th and 20th century, decision-making powers were always vested in the man. The man is given recognition as the head of the household. (Ipinge et al. (2000)

2.2.1 Private patriarchy

Private patriarchy is a form of patriarchy that can be found in the household and or any other private sector. It sees one individual patriarch (the dominant male) dominate and oppress the subjugated female. Walby believes that this acts as an exclusionary tactic as women are prevented from taking part in public discourse. One may choose to argue that, this is the form of patriarchy that forces women into corners where they are silenced because of the physical abuse they face. Further argument would be that; these women are not allowed to take part in public discourse. Of which, public participation such as attending women meetings and or going to work is forbidden by the dominating spouse. In other

words, these very same women suffer in silence and are not allowed to speak up. Thus, for the private patriarchy victims, social media and or literature has become their way of venting. Women have become their own agents of change by writing about their experiences. This is where the fourth wave feminism is most crucial as it allows for women to openly vent about their discomforts, without having to leave their confined private settings and or without judgement. Through social media, women have access to communicating with other women without being judged and or told to stop by the men within their lives. 'Women are not passive victims of oppressive structures. They have struggled to change both their immediate circumstances and the wider social structures'. (Walby. 1990). Thus, the movement of *#Men Are Trash* has gained popularity amongst women through social media, as "the madness silenced by society is given voice by literature." Felman's (1985). This is of paramount importance because it is where aspects like the online blogs and or pages that cater for the empowerment of women come in place as being effective.

2.2.2 Public patriarchy

Public Patriarchy: As inferred from its name, it operates in the public world and is mostly often associated with the working world. Public patriarchy is the existence of oppressive factors that still function in the public life. Walby (1990) argues that, women are more collectively separated from power, wealth, and influence than men are. This type of patriarchy is often associated with how women are treated by men in public spaces. Emma Vilho brings this out in one of the poems; *this is to you men*, when she writes about how men catcall women with degrading names such as slut and or whore, and how women become subjects of harassment in public, through men. "...the men who insult me when I don't respond." (Vilho, 2018). This is evidence enough that patriarchy is not just about being beaten and raped in private. It goes beyond the privacy of your home into the streets and work places. "To be a woman in this country is to constantly live in fear. Women cannot stay out too late or take moonlight meanders because their gender makes them prey. There are ravenous beasts out there who lurk in various spaces, threatening a woman's very existence. In the club, in homes, on the streets, on campuses, in taxis, EVERYWHERE – women are not safe" (Blaque Life Quarterly, 2017). This quote is evident enough that, the imposing of patriarchy does not only stop with a woman being beaten in her home, it goes as far as her having to go through the process of being harassed in the street, because of what she is wearing, as well as her being raped and or molested because of walking alone at night. Through this process, women also suffer double oppression if not double the imposition of patriarchy. To substantiate, when a woman gets raped by a man, and she reports the case, she is often told that she

might have provoked him, because of what she was wearing. This is double imposition of the misogynistic ways that men impose patriarchy on women. For instance, on January 24, 2011, a Toronto police officer giving a safety-information session to students at York University reportedly told the audience: "I've been told I'm not supposed to say this; however, women should avoid dressing as sluts in order not to be victimized" (Rush 2011).

Walby (1990) asserts that, in the west, there has been a shift in patriarchies. She believes that where private patriarchy was once far more common than its public counterpart, domination of women through a male-orientated world is now more prevalent in the public realm. This is evident in the spaces where women are harassed because they refuse to accept a drink from a man, and or are followed at night, raped and murdered. This is evident in an incident that happened in South Africa, where a woman, Karabo Mokoena, was raped and murdered and burned by her boyfriend because she refused to take him back.

'I put a tyre around her and burnt her, I put petrol on her and then I walked away.' (Sandile Mantsoe, 2018)

Sandile Mantsoe gave these chilling words to a police officer as he stood at the scene of where he disposed of the body of his girlfriend, Karabo Mokoena in the High Court in Johannesburg. (Sunday Times, pg., 1, 2018). Mantsoe murdered Mokoena because she wanted to leave the relationship she had with him. One cannot talk about *#Men Are Trash* without remembering the lives of Namibian women lost at the hands of Namibian men. (The Namibian, pg. 1, 2012).

It is safe to assert that, there has been a shift in patriarchal ways. Patriarchy is based on a system of power relations, which are hierarchical and unequal where men control women's production, reproduction and sexuality. It imposes masculinity and femininity character stereotypes in society, which strengthen the iniquitous power relations between men and women. Patriarchy is not a constant and gender relations, which are dynamic and complex, has changed over the periods of history. The nature of control and subjugation of women varies from one society to the other as it differs due to the differences in class, caste, religion, region, ethnicity and the socio-cultural practices. (Suranjita Ray, 2017)

With regard to patriarchy, these are mostly the forms in which it is manifested. Firstly, there is production relations in the household. This falls under private patriarchy where it happens in the home and the woman must work free under the expectations of her husband. To substantiate, this is mostly

evident within the African homes where women, some uneducated, are subjected to being a homemaker and child bearer. Neshani Andreas, *The Purple Violet of Oshaantu*, bring this out in the novel where Mee Kauna is expected to just be at home, cook and take care of the children and the mahangu field by Tate Shange. (*The Purple Violet of Oshaantu*, pg. 117)

Secondly, it is brought out through paid work. This is evident in the working world where women suffer from discriminatory pay, unfair treatment, and often find themselves in less demanding roles than their male counterparts. To substantiate, there has been a recent incident in South Africa where male employer asked a female student to sleep with him in order to keep her job. (Politics Web, 2019)

Thirdly, patriarchal relations in sexuality. This is where different rules apply to both genders in social norms and expectations regarding sexual behaviour. To substantiate, men argue that, women should not wear short skirts because this lures men into committing crimes such as rape. Many men have also argued that, for a woman to wear something that reveals body parts that should not be seen, is a woman that does not respect herself. Because a woman's identity is embedded into her gender, society deems it fit to subject her to only being respected when she is dressed fully covered and not showing cleavage. This is evident in many instances, where men see a woman dressed and or acting in a certain way, as an invite to either harass them, if not rape them. On the 2nd of October 2019, Nicholas Ninow, a man from South Africa raped a 6-year-old girl in a bathroom at a restaurant because he said she looked older. Another incident is of a woman who was harassed by a man because she was alone on a date and refused a drink offer. The man apologised, but said that she was too beautiful, he did not know what to tell her. (lileka, 2018)

2.3 Culture

It is evident here that with tradition, patriarchy was at the forefront. So much so that as a woman, you could be handed over to a man whom you knew nothing about and you do not have the right to question the process. "... problems are made worse because of the patriarchy social institution which functions on the principle that "male shall dominate female" Millet (1994: 25). Within the African household, particularly within the Nigerian tradition, research shows that from time immemorial, Nigerian society has been a patriarchy society (Aina, 1998). Patriarchy structure has been a major feature of the traditional society. It is a structure of a set of social relations with material base which enables men to dominate women (Stacey 1993; Kramarae 1992; Lerner 1986; Humm 1989; Aina 1998). Which is evident in the novel by Emecheta, *The Joys of Motherhood*, through which, Nnu Ego was

married off to Nnaife. It is a system of social stratification and differentiation on the basis of sex, which provides material advantages to males while simultaneously placing severe constraints on the roles and activities of females.

Traditionally, women are to be confined and relegated to the margins of the culture, and confined to the domestic sphere and are represented as the happy, 'primitive'..." (Megan Vaughan on Colonial Power and African Illness (1994). To substantiate, within the Namibian context, it is no different, especially within the Oshiwambo culture. A comprehensive study was done by Ipinge et al. (2000) together with the University of Namibia focusing on the gender roles men and women are expected to and do fulfil within various ethnic groups in Namibia. The concluded research has shown that decision-making powers are vested in the man. The man is given recognition as the head of the household.

2.4 Patriarchy and its relation to *#Men Are Trash*

The shift of patriarchal practices has however moved from the traditional space of women being stationed in the kitchen and being slaves to the hot fires and being sexual satisfying objects to women paying with their lives at the hands of men in the 21st century. The *#Men Are Trash* phrase, has come into existence and gained popularity with the high killing, rape and abuse rates being committed by men towards women. "...rape reigns supreme among crimes reported in Namibia, statistics for the last three months reveal an even more worrisome fact - violent crimes against women, in particular rape, have increased. Having started on social media, the *#Men Are Trash* movement blew up when more women started coming forth with their own experiences. The outlines and confessions of women coming forth regarding their experiences with men were accompanied by the *#Men Are Trash* and everyone that read an update by a woman with it, knew that it was concerning a woman escaping patriarchy in any form. *#Men Are Trash* is not an indictment of men but rather of patriarchy. However, the case, as women were opening up about their experiences, men still came forth to say that not all men are trash. This was then seen as a defence against the toxic masculinity that is projected towards women by men. To say that not all men are trash is to invalidate women's lived experiences (that's if they even come out of these interactions alive) and make men feel less uncomfortable about their role in advancing and maintaining the dangers women face. Intellectualising or witnessing women's pain without making any tangible effort to destroy the status quo is a waste of time. Thus, the *#Men Are Trash* topic has very little to do with men's roles in relationships, and much with their role in society. The movement is then centred at pointing out structural oppression and the multiple ways in which patriarchy has backed up

women into corners, to the extent where women feel unsafe around men (Thabi Myeni, 2016). One may argue that, making it a social media focus caters for the women who are not able to speak up for themselves as it also allows anonymous submissions from victims of patriarchy. This way, there are accounts to substantiate for the *#Men Are Trash* movement. It is not a cry for sympathy and or needing to make men look like they are evil creatures; it is a notion that is aimed at highlighting the discomforts that women face in the name of modern patriarchy.

Thus, the notion that *#Men Are Trash* does not only apply to men who abuse and kill women and children, but also applies to those men who cat-call women and are complicit when it comes to the injustices women experience in the workplace, men who listen to stories of woe about the female lived experience but still do nothing about it because “It’s not my problem, it wasn’t me so, I did nothing”. The hashtag is about how men as a group or collective have created a world that is unsafe for women to live in. It aims to highlight the fact that being a man comes with privileges that women don’t have (Maledu, 2017; Morrell, 1998)

Although the phrase *#Men Are Trash* has been described as the one discussion that aggravates men in the millennial generation, it is rather a new sub field and way of getting the attention of the victim at hand, men, to re-evaluate their actions and listen to women, their cries and calling out men to ease their hand of patriarchy on women and not impose their masculinity on the feminine gender. However, with the many decades that the discussions on patriarchy has been exhausted, no change has taken place. Thus, the narrative that *#Men Are Trash* is a campaign that is meant to create awareness on the issues society takes for granted which propagate patriarchy to what it is today. It is of paramount importance to understand that in order to change a situation, we need to discuss it first and the only way to do this in this time and era, is through an initiative emotive channel that will challenge people to actively address their issues and help in creating awareness to the dangers of patriarchy as a system of oppression. *#Men Are Trash* helps to ease into the conversation because saying that patriarchy is oppressive is a narrative that has been exhausted yet to no avail. “The only thing that’s changed is, now women speak up. Patriarchy has been in existence for longer than we can remember.” (Aaleya Omar, 2018).

2.5 Performance poetry

Poetry; the etymological meaning of the word itself, comes from the Greek noun *poeses* whose verb means, “to make”, therefore “to create poetry” not necessarily to write it down on paper.

Although suggestion to the effect that fiction is the genre that most appropriately renders postcolonial experiences are made by scholars such as Jenkins (2002), it has been said that modern African poetry has been very active in projecting the inner experiences of the people as well as mediating socio-cultural and political experiences since its inception. This is evident with the Spoken Word platform that is offered at the Warehouse Theater. The opportunity for poets or artists to showcase their talent used to happen every first Wednesday of every month, however, now it has changed because it became Open Mic Night and it happens every second Wednesday of every month. This platform usually caters to either, rappers, actors and singers, but mostly, it is for poets to recite their poetry. Open Mic has provided female poets with the chance to further express their frustrations of how men treat them as trash and how the notion is not only aimed at men who rape and or kill, but also the ones who do not call out their friend for vile acts towards women.

Through the platform of Spoken Word Namibia, female poets use their voices to articulate their experiences. It is through this interaction with the audience that the performers convey their feelings of anger, anguish and frustration through their poetry. Through Spoken Word, the poet or performer has direct contact with his/her audience, because that is what makes performance poetry “an art form created in the warm presence of an audience as against the cold privacy of the written work” (Okpewho, 1992, p. 42). Through performance poetry, and the Spoken Word dais, women who openly talk about their issues become agents of change. The dais gives them ‘the opportunity to say publicly, things one wouldn’t even consider saying in private.’ (Ellis & Stevenson, 2018, p. 142). The women then talk about how men get physical and how in sexual interactions, they are the objects to satisfy men while their satisfaction is ignored. (Olaussen, 1992). Silencing women has always been one of the most effective weapons used by patriarchy to gain control over women in an African society. Anthropologist Irene D’Almeida argues that “silence presents the historical muting of women under the formidable institution known as patriarchy, that form of social organisation in which males assume power and create women an inferior status” (Kolavole 1997, p. 4). Although not a lot of Namibian women publicly write about their discomfiting experiences with men, the Spoken Word platform has provided a voice and space for them to openly talk about it.

“In the first decade of the 2000s, performance poetry experienced a resurgence in urban Namibia, especially among young Namibians. In Windhoek, this movement was led mainly by the Spoken Word Organisation.” (Ellis & Stevenson, 2018, p. 136).

2.5.1 Performance poetry Vs folklore

Ever since the world started embracing technology, people have slowly started diverting away from oral traditional folklore and adopted another form of doing oral performances called slam poetry. A Poetry Slam is a performance contest: judges are chosen from the audience and asked to rate each performer’s poem from one to ten. Every poet is given three minutes to read an original poem. For three minutes, these poets own the stage, they take the room. They step up to the microphone and let fly. (Glazner, 2000, p. 11) This is the same that is done at the Spoken Word Namibia in Windhoek. This platform attracts a lot of artists, of which females have now started to dominate the entertainers. Actually, their participation is what is dubbed as by Glazner (2000), as it gets them closer to the mere object of art and to encourage normal people, not necessarily lettered, to the literary and performative world (Glazner, 2000, p. 11). Besides, slam poetry “opens the door not only to the socio-political issue of who has access to poetry, but also to the critical question of what poetry is and how it should be evaluated”. (Willet, 2009: 2) This is also inclusive of poets talking about things that are close to their hearts, whether it is controversial and or praising something. Being part of a male dominated community, Namibian women who do recite their experiences through spoken word are brave and courageous as the platform provided to air these experiences is often dominated by males (the Spoken Word platform). By reciting their experiences, one is also introduced to the manners and instances that women have become victims of toxic masculinity. This then results into why a victim labels a man as trash.

Poetry Slam grew not only in the United States, from Chicago to New York, to San Francisco up to New Mexico. It is globally spread over in many countries like: England, Germany, Israel and Sweden (Glazner, 2000: 12). It is what is known in Namibia as Spoken Word.

2.5.2 Women performance poetry

This section is important because the focus of study is specific to women who are performers at Spoken Word Poetry platforms in Namibia.

Within the arena of poetry and or spoken word, the sphere has been dominated by female poets who have graced the stages with their written accounts of life journeys. In the past, stories that were told around the fire and or at gatherings, were only done by men, however, the situation has changed because now, women have been elevated to telling their own stories as well as experiences. Deviating away from the traditional sphere of story-telling and oral performances being done by men only, to the time where women are allowed to openly tell generational tales and recite their story, is a huge improvement within the area of patriarchy.

To account for it, female poets have started to embrace the freedom granted to them by gracing the performance poetry platforms and telling their stories. Tracie Morris and Jean 'Binta' Breeze are both black, both women and both artistically and socially involved to make a change through their art. One of the most prize-winning poet in spoken word competitions is Tracie Morris. Tracie Morris won the National Haiku Slam in San Francisco and the Nuyorican Poets Café Grand Slam in New York. (Anglesey, 2008: 79).

Another poet, who is African, is Ama Asantewa Diaka (Poetra Asantewa). Asantewa is a rising star of the Ghanaian music and spoken word scene. Based in Accra, her deft lyricism and pointed social critiques, often paired with silky neo-soul beats, has attracted an international following, with her work recently being presented by the Goethe-Institut Ghana and profiled by the BBC World Service.

After attending One Beat, a month-long U.S.-based residency and socially-engaged touring program, Ama was inspired to co-found Black Girls Glow (BBG), a feminist collective and platform "celebrating African women in the creative arts". BGG's first release, *Mothers of Heirs*, is a dense and empowering mix tape featuring some of Ghana's most exciting ascendant front-women and producers, along with standout contributions from Nigeria and Kenya.

Whether tackling intersectional issues like ageism ("Selfie") and racism ("Black is The Power"), or finding creative twists on the album's overarching manifesto, resilience and self-reliance of women through community ("Power to Power", "Mother of Heirs"), the album projects a confident and unified sonic

identity for the newly minted collective. These are the themes that Ama focuses on mostly. Her themes range from loving the black skin, loving yourself as a woman and women empowerment.

“Being selected for One Beat 2016 was an experience that honed my craft and increased my desire to do more with my art... Black Girl Glow aims to raise the profile of female artists locally, regionally and globally by highlighting the brilliant and talented young female artists making waves in the Ghanaian entertainment industry,” (Ama, 2016)

“This project has been successful because of the selfless contribution of countless talented young producers,” Ama (2016) added. “Additionally, visual artists, Bright Ackwerh, Papa Oppong and Isaac Opoku also donated original work which was auctioned off at a listening session to fund our first concert. [Black Girls Glow] started like a flicker, but it took an entire creative community to burn the torch.” (Ama, 2016)

With women given a platform to express their discomforts with men, their provided opportunity goes well in accordance with what Glazner (2000) says about oral poetry being about the freedom of expression. “The greatest thing about slam is its malleability, the way this impossible form can do so many things, all of them simultaneously draw a crowd, saturate the audience with power, and set the art of poetry free in a friendly atmosphere. (Glazner, 2000, p. 17)

2.6 #Men are trash

Women have faced discrimination from their male counterparts in the past, due to the male dominance of institutions that oppress women. According to Lerner (1975, as cited in, Bennett, 1989), women are oppressed through the degrading activities instituted by men in organized society, which denies them access to opportunities that would render them equal to their counterparts. Due to the historical lack of equality that women faced, the feminist movement began to challenge the misogynistic institutions and call for equal rights between men and women. Saying that patriarchy is a toxic way is something that is exhausted. Thus, in order to appeal to the men about their ill-treatments towards women, women have come up with the term *#Men Are Trash*. This term helps to ease into the conversation because saying that patriarchy is oppressive is a narrative that is exhausted yet to no avail. This is the 21st century woman’s way of talking about the advanced patriarchy and how it has cornered women into silence.

The movement began on social media, particularly Twitter, where a woman detailing her experiences with men and their ill-treatments started a thread. It blew up when more women started commenting on her thread with their own experiences. Not long after that, more women started coming forth regarding the way they were treated by men. The outlines and confessions of women coming forth regarding their experiences with men were accompanied by the *#Men Are Trash* hashtag and everyone that read an update by a woman with it knew that it was concerning a woman escaping patriarchy in any form. *#Men Are Trash* is not an indictment of men but rather of patriarchy. However, the case about women opening up about their experiences, men still came forth to say that not all men are trash, which is to defend the toxic masculinity that is projected towards women by men. To say that not all men are trash is to invalidate women's lived experiences and makes men feel less uncomfortable about their role in advancing and maintaining the dangers women face. Intellectualising or witnessing women's pain without making any tangible effort to destroy the status quo is a waste of time. Thus, the *#Men Are Trash* topic had very little to do with men's roles in relationships, and much with their role in society. The movement is then centered at pointing out structural oppression and the multiple ways in which patriarchy has backed up women into corners, to the extent where women feel unsafe around men (Thabi Myeni, 2016). One may argue that, making it a social media focus caters for the women who are not able to speak up for themselves as it also allows anonymous submissions from victims of patriarchy. This way, there are accounts to substantiate for the *Men Are Trash* movement. It is not a cry for sympathy and or needing to make men look like they are evil creatures; it is a notion that aims to highlight the ill-treatments that women face in the name of patriarchy.

2.7 Relations to other movements

In 2017, a new feminist movement became prominent on social media, the *#MeToo* movement. According to *#MeToo* the movement was started in 2006 by Tarana Burke, an African American feminist activist to help survivors of sexual violence and young women of colour, from impoverished communities to find the rightful means to heal. The movement has now flourished to include all survivors of all types of sexual violence to speak their truths and start a conversation regarding the impact of such atrocious acts. This is similar to the *#Men Are Trash* movement that caters for women to come forth about their experiences. Together with the *#MeeToo* movement, more women are being inspired to talk about their discomforts with men.

The MeToo movement (or #Me Too) is a movement against sexual harassment and assault. #MeToo spread on social media in October 2017, and then it revealed the prevalence and magnitude of problems with sexual harassment and assault, especially in the workplace, including academia and medicine. (Bun-Hee Lee, 2018). This is in line with the *#Men Are Trash* movement because, both these movements, cater for the abolishment of patriarchy. Apart from only focusing on sexual harassment, the campaign has also given tools to face the harassment and discrimination they face in work and to object these actions and discuss them in public. (Nauska, 2018)

As the #MeToo phenomenon is still so new, the existing research and causal effects are merely assumptions and long-term studies do not exist yet. Nonetheless, the #MeToo phenomenon can be compared with the theories of social change and other women's movements in history, such as the *#Men Are Trash* and the *#Slut Shame Walk*, to gain an understanding of how the #MeToo campaign is likely to develop.

2.7.1 #SlutShame Walk

SlutWalk is a transnational movement calling for an end to rape culture, including victim blaming and slut shaming of sexual assault victims. Specifically, participants protest against explaining or excusing rape by referring to any aspect of a woman's appearance. The rallies began on April 3, 2011, in Toronto, Ontario, Canada, after a Toronto Police officer suggested that "women should avoid dressing like sluts" as a precaution against sexual assault. Subsequent rallies have occurred globally.

The protest takes the form of a march, mainly by young women, where some dress as "sluts" in revealing, sexy attire such as short skirts, stockings and scanty tops. In the various SlutWalks around the world, there are usually speaker meetings and workshops, live music, sign-making sessions, leafleting, open microphones, chanting, dances, martial arts, and receptions or after-parties with refreshments. In many of the rallies and online, women speak publicly for the first time about their identity as rape survivors.

2.7.2 Origin

On January 24, 2011, a Toronto police officer giving a safety-information session to students at York University reportedly told the audience: "I've been told I'm not supposed to say this; however, women should avoid dressing as sluts in order not to be victimized" (Rush 2011). After his statement was published in the campus newspaper, anger spread throughout the community, upon which two women, Sonya Barnett and Heather Jarvis, posted their mutual outrage on Facebook and began to plan a response. When deciding on what to do, Barnett recalls saying in an offhand manner that perhaps they needed to organise a "SlutWalk." With that, the Toronto slut-walk protest was born (Lori 2011). Together with three other local women, SlutWalk Toronto (SWTO) was held on April 3, 2011 with an estimated crowd of 3,000–4,000 marching and more than fifty organizations and businesses represented (O'Reilly 2012). In their statement of purpose, the organizers proclaimed: "We are tired of being oppressed by slut-shaming; of being judged by our sexuality and feeling unsafe as a result. Being in charge of our sexual lives should not mean that we are opening ourselves to an expectation of violence, regardless if we participate in sex for pleasure or work. No one should equate enjoying sex with attracting sexual assault" (SWTO 2011). By focusing on reclaiming and owning their sexuality, identity as well as their freedom, often related to and slut shaming (that is, negatively labelling a person, primarily a woman, who is viewed as sexually active), and not simply on having an apology from the police, SWTO attracted considerable media attention, which quickly spread from the local campus newspaper to global coverage, including extensive coverage on the internet. "We want Police Services to truly get behind the idea that victim-blaming, slut-shaming, and sexual profiling are never acceptable. The idea that a slut is a lesser person and deserving of sexual assault isn't exclusive to the police." Sonya Barnett explained.

2.7.3 #Slut Shame Focus

The main focus of the *#Slut Shame* walk is to end the rape culture, which is inclusive of victim blaming and slut shaming of sexual assault victims. Rape culture is a sociological concept for a setting in which rape is pervasive and normalized due to societal attitudes about gender and sexuality. Behaviours commonly associated with rape culture include victim blaming, slut-shaming, sexual objectification, trivializing rape, denial of widespread rape, refusing to acknowledge the harm caused by sexual violence, or some combination of these. It has been used to describe and explain behaviour within social groups, including prison rape and in conflict areas where war rape is used as psychological warfare. Entire societies have been alleged to be rape cultures. These include telling women who are victims of rape that she deserved it because she was wearing a short skirt and or that she went looking for it because of letting a man buy her drinks. Because society has made it normal to accuse women of being the instigators of rape, society then uses it as an excuse to prey on victims who were raped to blame their dress code on why they were raped.

The notion of rape culture was developed by second-wave feminists, primarily in the United States, beginning in the 1970s. Critics of the concept dispute the existence or extent of rape culture, arguing that the concept is too narrow or that, although there are cultures where rape is pervasive, the idea of a rape culture can imply that the rapist is not at fault but rather the society that enables rape. This is brought out through victim blaming because of how a victim was dressed. Because society says that a woman ought to dress a certain way, long dresses and no cleavage, society deems women who wear provocative clothing as wanting to be raped and deserving. The term "rape culture" was first coined in the 1970s in the United States by second-wave feminists and then applied to contemporary American culture as a whole because it was during the second-wave feminist's era that women had begun to engage in consciousness-raising efforts that were designed to educate the public about the prevalence of rape. Previously, according to Canadian psychology professor Alexandra Rutherford, most Americans assumed that rape, incest, and wife-beating rarely happened, which meant that, the concept of rape culture posited that rape was common and normal in American culture, and that it was one extreme manifestation of pervasive societal misogyny and sexism. Rape was defined as a crime of violence rather than a crime of sex as it had been before and the focus of rape shifted from desire for sexual pleasure to one of male domination, intimidation and a sense of control over gender norms. Rape also started to be re-examined through the eyes of the victims rather than the perpetrators. This was essential because it meant that, both parties were allowed to give their version of the story. It also meant that, finally, for

women, they were given the platform to raise their voices and no longer deemed as inferior to men and society.

The first published use of the term appears to have been in 1974 in *Rape: The First Sourcebook for Women*, edited by Noreen Connell and Cassandra Wilson for the New York Radical Feminists. In the book, the group stated that their 'ultimate goal is to eliminate rape and that goal cannot be achieved without a revolutionary transformation of our society'. Along with Susan Brownmiller's 1975 *Against Our Will: Men, Women and Rape* was among the earliest to include first-person accounts of rape where they gave stories about the victims. The intention of the authors was to demonstrate that rape was a much more common crime than previously believed. In the book, Brownmiller (1975) comments upon the idea that women never spoke about rape because women would never want to be open about a "crime against their physical integrity" which explained the general public's ignorance over how often rape was occurring and to whom. Brownmiller (1975), a member of the New York Radical Feminists, argued that, both academia and the general public ignored the incidents of rape. She helped spark psychologists to begin observing and studying what sparked this "rape supportive culture". Her book, *Against Our Will*, is considered a landmark work on feminism and sexual violence, and it is one of the pillars of modern rape studies. So much so, that, in a 1992 Journal of Social Issues paper entitled "A Feminist Redefinition of Rape and Sexual Assault: Historical Foundations and Change", scholars such as Patricia Donat and John D'Emilio suggested that the term originated as "rape-supportive culture" in Brownmiller's *Against Our Will* (1975).

Examples of rape culture include rape, drugging, molestation, stealthing, contraceptive sabotage, victim blaming and shaming, coercion manipulation, threats. Revenge porn, safe word violation and groping, to mention but a few.

#SlutWalk has focused on being able to choose what to wear without being harassed, rather than the larger and broader discussion of consent concerning sexual assault. It has been accused of "[fixating] solely around liberal questions of individual choice – the palatable 'I can wear what I want' feminism that is intentionally devoid of an analysis of power dynamics. But Jessica Valenti says: "The idea that women's clothing has some bearing on whether they will be raped is a dangerous myth feminists have tried to debunk for decades. Despite all the activism and research, however, the cultural misconception prevails." Sophie Jones answered to Dines and Murphy that reclaiming a word does not mean celebrating that word in its current form. "Reclaiming "slut" should not be about celebrating the male-defined word as something 'positive', but celebrating the indeterminacy of the word when detached

from its meaning. We want this word in our court, but only so we can keep it in the air and over the heads of everyone who would use it against us.' (Jones, 2016)

As the idea of a slut walk went viral, the protest spread around the world. In Namibia, the slut shame walk took place in Windhoek, on the 6th of April 2019. The theme was embracing womanhood through sisterhood, while at the same time advocating for safety. Slut Shame Walk is a transnational movement calling for an end to rape culture, including blaming and slut shaming of sexual assault victims. The aim of the group is to raise awareness, on the fact that women are not safe in Namibia. The Slut Shame Walk also aim to create an opportunity for woman to share their experiences of sexual violence and stigma in Namibia.

"Don't tell me how to dress, tell them not to rape."

That is the message that was on one of the posters carried by the protestors who took part in the slut shame walk in Windhoek on the 6th of April, 2019.

That was the headlines and message across one of the posters carried by one of the protestors. These posters were carried by women wearing provocative clothing, ranging from short skirts, to bras as tops as well as shorts in order to bring forth the image and grand narrative that society has created around women who wear short clothing as whores and sluts. The provocative attire is meant to provoke. The word 'slut' written on a bare thigh, the shorts, skirts and crop tops are worn deliberately in the hope of stimulating conversation, interrogating respectability politics and sparking introspection regarding accountability and they do.

In a country where 438 cases of gender-based violence were reported between 1 January and 28 February with domestic violence and rape being the most common forms disproportionately affecting Namibian women, social media explodes. The fact that women and children are sexually assaulted, regardless of what they are wearing, is underscored. The insidious nature of rape culture is held up to the light and rape apologists reveal themselves amidst crucial conversation. Above all, we want women to be heard, stop remaining silent and know that there is a safe place to name and shame the abuser! Namibian women need to start embracing womanhood through sisterhood and fight for the change we want to see. Platforms such as Sister Namibia, Power Pad Girls, Break Free and the White Ribbon campaigns are here for us and its time we really engage in these platforms to bring a bigger change and impact to society."

This walk was done to shed light on how toxic rape culture is and how we need to de-normalise it. Rape culture refers to normalising & downplaying rape & sexual assault in society, media & by leaders. Rape culture includes victim blaming, trivialising sexual assault, laughing at & making rape jokes It is about how we think, talk about and react to rape. (Mukaiwa, 2019)

https://twitter.com/marth_vader/status/1116642066606563329

2.8 Conclusion

In conclusion, this chapter highlighted the literature that has largely contributed to my research topic, *Interrogating the narrative #Men Are Trash in Namibian female's poetry with a focus on Gender Based Violence*. Through the revised literature by other scholars, it is evident that, one cannot talk about the ill-treatments and misogynistic ways that men impose on women, without making reference to feminism and or patriarchy. In the chapter, focus on the origins of feminism are orchestrated and how it contributes to advocating for women rights. Arguments are also brought out on how, within the spectrum of patriarchy, there exists two types, which confine and corner women into silence; private and public patriarchy. The chapter also demonstrates how the performance poetry has assisted in giving a voice to female performers and how it is important in helping women air their discomforts with men. Furthermore, the literature reviewed show that, the performance poetry arena has evolved from stories being told around the fire by men, to stories on stages and in arenas being told by women, about women, for women. Throughout the many years that women have been fighting the oppressive ways of how men impose patriarchy on them, a lot has been done in the name of advocating for women rights. These are inclusive of movements such as the #MeToo by Tayana Burkert, where Namibia has started one for the Namibian women called #MeTooNamibia as well as the #Slut Shame Walk. These were started with the aim of helping battered women heal through the platform where women are given a chance to be themselves and speak about their experiences. The slut shame walk was done in order to call out rape culture, men subverting the cries of women and victim blaming of women.

CHAPTER 3

3.1 THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND RESEARCH DESIGN

This chapter will focus on the theoretical framework and research design that are applicable to this research. These are Black Feminism and Trauma and Resilience theory. These are the selected theories to be applied as the poets display trauma and resilience as a theme in their work. Feminism is also used because, through resilience, these female poets are fighting the status quo of patriarchy and emancipating women to give them a voice and an identity. Together with this, this section also highlights the history and tenets of these theories and how they are relevant to the research. This section also centers on the research design; qualitative research, and how to apply it to this research.

3.2 FEMINISM

This section highlights the theories that will be applied to this study: Black Feminism and Trauma theory, and the Resilience theory. The Black feminism theory is a school of thought, stating that sexism, class oppression, gender identity and racism are inextricably bound together. The way these concepts relate to each other is called intersectionality, which is a term first coined by legal scholar Kimberlé Crenshaw in 1989. The very existence of black feminism suggests that black women always have a choice and the power to act, no matter how bleak a situation may appear to be. As brought out through the Spoken Word platform, women use the notion *#Men Are Trash* to educate and create an awareness on the issues faced by women. Through the written literature and documenting their journeys through poetry, these poets are acting against the toxic masculinity they face every day. (Crenshaw, 1989)

In order to fully understand black feminism at large, one has to also understand intersectionality. It has become commonplace within the feminist theory to claim that women's lives are constructed by multiple, intersecting systems of oppression. This means that, instead of arguing that women are oppressed by patriarchy alone, one would also need to highlight the contributing reasons that assist with oppression. This insight – that oppression is not a singular process or a binary political relation, but is better understood as constituted by multiple, converging, or interwoven systems – originates in antiracist feminist critiques of the claim that women's oppression could be captured through an analysis

of gender alone. All in all, intersectionality is a theory of how different forms of oppression intersect and impact on people's lives. (Kimberlé Crenshaw, 1989)

Intersectionality is offered as a theoretical and political remedy to what is perhaps "the most pressing problem facing contemporary feminism – the long and painful legacy of its exclusions" (Davis, 1994:70). Intersectionality theory has been celebrated as the 'most important contribution that women's studies has made so far' (McCall, 1991).

My own use of the term 'intersectionality' was just a metaphor. [...] I was simply looking at the way all of these systems of oppression overlap. But more importantly, how in the process of that structural convergence rhetorical politics and identity politics – based on the idea that systems of subordination do not overlap – would abandon issues and causes and people who actually were affected by overlapping systems of subordination Crenshaw (as quoted in Guidroz & Berger, 1991).

One may choose to argue that, intersectionality is the overlapping of injustices that create multiple levels of social injustice. This would then mean that, certain injustices arise because of the intersection of other injustices and or oppressing issues. Together with black feminism, intersectionality focuses on the fact that, the oppression women face is not only restricted to one race and one set of oppression. It carries the thought that, every woman goes through different types of oppressions. Through analysing these poems, the researcher will look at how certain injustices have contributed to the final form of oppression that the poem is about.

With the intersectionality theory, although it has only been studied from the American perspective, with a focus on the pressing issues that American women face, the manner of application in this paper will be taken from a Namibian perspective. Through analysing the poems and how the *#Men Are Trash* movement is significant in assisting with advocacy, the researcher will highlight how the different poets' works differ, in terms of cultural background. Another focus will also be, how the poets and their different ethnic groups in Namibia relate to the *#MeToo* movement.

3.3 TENETS OF BLACK FEMINISM

According to Richie (2012), these are some of the tenets of black feminism.

3.3.1 Interlocking oppression

Uniquely disparaging images of Black women's sexuality reflects the combined effect of sexism and racism. Often enough, these are some of the arguments of women who feel that oppression does not only stop at women being subjected to giving birth and nurturing as in the olden ages, it also transcends to the images of how black women are presented through images.

"Intersectional arguments claim that Black women's bodies are simultaneously marked by racial, gender, sexual, colour, historical, class, and other stigmas; these stigmatized identities and the subsequent oppressions are not hierarchical or additive; they are intersectional" (Richie, 2012, p.18). Black women are oppressed in such a manner that it goes beyond just patriarchy. Intersectionality, together with black feminism, argues that black women's oppression is interlocked. It comprises of a lot of oppressive ways that women face, which in return, amount up to a bigger oppressed manner.

3.3.2 Everyday knowledge

"Synthesised meaning-making from an ever-shifting collective consciousness e.g., Interpretation of collective wisdom drawn from shared experiences , privileging an attempt to locate authority or expertise with those who experience a circumstance rather than generating it from other outsiders who lack access to authentic understanding of events, relationships, behaviours, values, or historical antecedents to current phenomena" (Richie, 2012, p.18). It seeks that women come together to share their stories as it is what makes up black feminism. That women of colour, who were oppressed in many different ways, come together and be able to share their stories. Black feminism feeds off new learned knowledge on an everyday basis. Women may come together and share experiences and teach each other.

3.3.3 Dialectical images

"...fluid image, almost always in conflict with dominant notions of hegemonic femininity that imagines women to be passive, nurturing, and relationship-oriented, and thus, 'innocent victims' when they experience male violence strong (therefore not at risk of violence) asexual or castrating (and therefore incapable of heteronormative intimacy) hypersexual (therefore ill-suited for long-term relationships or

parenting) criminal (therefore unworthy of protection or support)” (Richie, 2012, p.18). Women are seen as liars because of the notions that are attached to being a woman. These notions do not allow them to fully articulate and raise their voices about their grievances. For example, a woman who is fed and married, may not complain about rape because it is believed that she owes her husband sexual intercourse.

3.3.4 Social Justice Praxis

Engaged scholarship, action, and social justice “accomplished through challenging hierarchies of power, transforming academic institutions, advancing a new kind of organizational leadership, and reinvigorating grassroots mobilization efforts for social change. Insistence that research on Black women be linked to efforts at changing conditions that subordinate them and their communities” (Richie, 2012, p.18). This has to deal with how, every day, women are advocating for their rights and grievances to be acknowledged and done away with. This is done through challenging the status quo of masculinity, misogynistic ways that propagate violence towards women. For example, the *#Men Are Trash* movement, the *#Slut Shame Walk*, *#Me Too* movement Namibia and Spoken Word Namibia, which creates a safer place for women to air their discomforts with men; these are all platforms that aim to educate and spread awareness.

3.4 TRAUMA AND RESILIENCE

One of the first theories comes from Cathy Caruth, a professor of Comparative Literature and English and Chair of Comparative Literature at Emory University. According to Robert Jay Lifton, an M.D. in Psychiatry, she is “one of the most innovative scholars on what we call trauma, and on our ways of perceiving and conceptualizing that still mysterious phenomenon” (Robert, 1998). Cathy Caruth is the author of *Trauma: Explorations in Memory* (1995) and *Unclaimed Experience: Trauma, Narrative and History* (1996).

Richardson and his colleagues (1990) contended that resiliency is “the process of coping with disruptive, stressful, or challenging life events in a way that provides the individual with additional protective and coping skills than prior to the disruption that results from the event”. Similarly, Higgins (1994) described resiliency as the “process of self-righting or growth”, while Wolins (1993) defined resiliency as the “capacity to bounce back, to withstand hardship, and to repair yourself. Resiliency, or resilience, is commonly explained and studied in context of a two-dimensional construct concerning the exposure of

adversity and the positive adjustment outcomes of that adversity. This then, is one of the main aims of the research using trauma and resilience theory. Being able to move on from adversity and living a traumatic free life. These women have experienced oppression in different forms and thus, have been traumatised. However, writing about their experiences is a starting point to not let their trauma define them.

3.5 History of the Trauma Theory

Roger Luckhurst's *Mixing memory and desire: psychoanalysis, psychology and Trauma Theory*, describes trauma as 'something that enters the psyche that is so unprecedented or overwhelming that it cannot be processed or assimilated by usual mental processes. We have, as it were nowhere to put it, and so it falls out of our conscious memory, yet is still present in our mind like an intruder or a ghost' (Luckhurst, 2006, p. 499).

The word 'trauma' finds its etymological roots in the Greek word for wound. This connection to the physiological endures in the story of the development of trauma studies which, was first believed to be a physical malady. The movement from a physio-biological study of trauma to a psychological frame with influences is a result of the concerted efforts for socio-political forces as well as multi-disciplinary approaches. Judith Herman writes in the opening section of her treatise *Trauma and Recovery*, three times over the past century, a particular form of psychological trauma has surfaced into public consciousness. The first to emerge was hysteria, the archetypal psychological disorder of women. The second was shell shock or combat neurosis. Its study began in England and the United States after the First World War and reached its peak after the Vietnam War. The last and most recent trauma to come into public awareness is sexual and domestic violence. Which in this research, takes up most of the space as it is one of the main themes to be discussed. Together in this regard, it builds its foundation on how it was first used, particularly in the medical and psychiatric literature, and most centrally in Freud's text, as a wound inflicted not upon the body but upon the mind (Caruth, 1996, p. 16). Caruth further states what seems to be suggested by Freud in *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* is that, the wound of the mind—the breach in the mind's experience of time, self, and the world is not like the wound of the body, a simple and healable event, but rather an event that, like the infliction of a mortal wound and is experienced too soon, too unexpectedly, to be fully known and is therefore not available to consciousness until it imposes itself again, repeatedly, in the nightmares and repetitive actions of the survivor (Caruth, 1996, p. 17). This is evident in the poems where victims are survivors of rape and or

physical abuse. For example, the poem *Childhood Trauma* by Tangi Uushona exhibits this beautifully when the victim refuses to go to the north because it is the very place where her uncle raped her. In this case, the trauma only exhibits itself when the victim has to contemplate travelling to the north.

Sigmund Freud, who was one of the first to explore the realm of psychology and psychoanalysis has been dubbed one of the pioneering researchers of trauma theory. His research on trauma started at the end of the 19th century when he discovered that a psychological trauma was at the basis of women's so-called hysteria. In his *Project for a Scientific Psychology* (1895), he explains the hysteria by suggesting that the women were sexually abused when they were young. According to Freud, the actual trauma then "consists of two scenes - the earlier (in childhood) having sexual content but no meaning, the later (in puberty) having no sexual content but sexual meaning" (quoted in Caruth 1995, p. 9). To argue, a woman might have been molested while young, yet the trauma only manifests during her adulthood. Freud concludes that the actual trauma is caused by the dialectic relation between the two events and the moment of latency between the two moments, when you remain unaware of the trauma. Although this model is especially used to explain the trauma of child abuse, it does explain the importance of the temporal delay, which seems to be inherent to trauma and which Freud calls 'belatedness' (Codde, 2009). This is evident in some of the poems, because, as the written accounts, some of the poets did not even know they were sexually abused. They only come to realise it later in life, yet, they do not entirely deal with it, because it is slightly a foreign and sometimes faint memory.

The compromising of the mental processes is the key factor in determining the traumatic experience. In this case, most of these events only become traumatic, when the victims start to remember the traumatic things that happened to them. This happens only when the victim either is triggered by a memory and or something that resembles that traumatic experience happens. This is expressed in the poem *Daddy Can You Hear Me* (2019), by Jane Mungabwa. In this written account, the victim suppresses the traumatic memory so much, and is only reminded of it when he hears loud noises. It is also voiced in the poem *Childhood Trauma* (2019), by Tangi Uushona. In this predicament, the victim states that she is well, both emotionally and psychologically. However, as soon as she is reminded about travelling to the north, she becomes angry and defensive.

It entails a rent in the fabric of normalcy which cuts out the normal avenues of grief and mourning, simply because it defies understanding. Trauma is characterised by psychological excess which either

represses the memory of the event or superimposes it over the individual's present, manifesting in unpredictable moments. Not only is the individual stranded in a freshly alien universe, she or he also has to move on in a world that has not gone through the same paradigm shift. She has to 'carry on'; a telling phrase since she not only carries the burden of her knowledge but is also required to fall in with the accepted norms of society and propagate the same while suffering from intense alienation and dissociation. As Karyn. L. Freedman writes in her essay '*The Epistemological Significance of Psychic Trauma*' (2006).

In the wake of a traumatic event a victim's emotional state is volatile, to be sure, as she undergoes intense personal suffering, but this is only one side of the aftermath of psychic trauma-the shattered self. The other side is the shattered world view the consequence of trauma on the survivor's belief about the world". After a traumatic event, a survivor experiences a kind of cognitive dissonance as she is faced with a whole new set of beliefs that have cropped up, often very suddenly, which are inconsistent with previously held beliefs. (Freedman, 2006, p.105)

Often, after these traumatic events, the notion of repression presents itself. It is described as the cornerstone to interpretive psychology and it involves the subject burying the original event in favour of denial. In the case of psychological trauma, the repressed experience rattles its chains within the recesses of the unconscious, manifesting in the form of repetitive patterns and neurosis. The element of repetition is one of the key symptoms of psychological trauma, characterised by intense flashbacks, irrational emotional surfeits or emotional numbing and the inability to locate the source or triggering stimuli that began the loop. The individuals find themselves caught in an involuntary pattern of psychological repetition, distressed by an event in her past which they cannot locate. Their memory neither allows them the solace of recollection, nor does it allow her lethean peace.

Another interesting point is the fact that, if Freud turns to literature to describe traumatic experience, it is because literature, like psychoanalysis, is interested in the complex relation between knowing and not knowing. And it is, indeed at the specific point at which knowing and not knowing intersect that the language of literature and the psychoanalytic theory of traumatic experience precisely meet. The psychological problems experienced in the aftermath of trauma stem from an inability to integrate in a complete and/or healthy way the meaning of what happened before, during, and/or after the traumatic

event(s). This is the main point that this research aims to bring forth with the selected poems. The manner in which trauma is an unexplained phenomenon which sometimes rules and controls an individual's life if not healed and overcome. By carefully studying these poems, the theme and presence of trauma is fully exposed and how it has been manifested into the lives of the victims.

3.6 CAUSES OF TRAUMA

Trauma has a lot of causes, however, with regard to the proposed research, these are the ones that are highlighted throughout the poems.

Traumatic events can include experiencing and/or witnessing of:

- Physical Abuse
- Sexual Abuse or Sexual Assault
- Domestic Violence or a Community Violence
- Emotional Abuse
- Neglect (Emotional or Physical)
- Parental Mental Health Issues (chronic depression, suicides, institutionalised parent(s), incarcerated parent(s), addictions & Substance abuse).

With the focus being *#Men Are Trash*, the selected poems all have themes of traumatic events. The research is focused on studying how patriarchy has propagated and normalised women suffering at the hands of men. The themes in these poems range from rape, sexual and physical abuse, murder, domestic violence, emotional neglect and parental mental health, which, in the poems, are all propagated by men. Van der Kol (1989) argues that, traumatisation occurs when both internal and external resources are inadequate to cope with external threat. To substantiate, most of the poets use writing as an escape and coping mechanism. Because the conscious cannot cope with the trauma, the external factors suffer and the victims end up being depressed and or are unable to cope with life, thus, they find some form of escape through writing.

3.7 Trauma and Literary Studies

The field of trauma studies in literary criticism gained significant attention in 1996 with the publication of Cathy Caruth's *Unclaimed Experience: Trauma, Narrative, and History* and Kali Tal's *Worlds of Hurt*:

Reading the Literatures of Trauma. A theoretical trend was introduced by scholars like Caruth, who pioneered a psychoanalytic post structural approach that suggests trauma is an unsolvable problem of the unconscious that illuminates the inherent contradictions of experience and language. This Lacanian approach crafts a concept of trauma as a recurring sense of absence that sunders knowledge of the extreme experience, thus preventing linguistic value other than are referential expression. The evolution of trauma theory in literary criticism might best be understood in terms of the changing psychological definitions of trauma as well as the semiotic, rhetorical, and social concerns that are part of the study of trauma in literature and society. Many studies that focus on trauma in literature focus a great deal on repetitions that exist within the literary work because repetition is a common response to trauma and easily identifiable in text. Many survivors of trauma repeat aspects or the entirety of the event that was traumatic in their life in their mind and, sometimes, in their literature. The element of repetition is also brought out in some of the poems, such as *My Rape is no different from yours* by Lydia October and *Cadaver* by Faustina Namatshana. Literary trauma theorists make note of these elements of repetition in a literary work and discuss the correlation therein. Nandi (2016) makes note how literary trauma theory takes into account “what cannot be fully re-membered, the illegible, the unspeakable, with a something-repeated, be it an image, a phrase, a metaphor, even a syllable or sound”.

The present study does not wish to discount repetition or any of the other aspects that literary trauma theory examines in literature. Instead, this research seeks to expand beyond these facets and examine traumatic memory and the role of emotion, most specifically in poetry. The use of traumatic figurative language that is apparent in many poems which discuss or display elements of trauma is said to provide an individual with a way to discuss trauma by using a metaphor, simile, or metonym when discussing it.

Gabriele Schwab, in *“Writing against Memory and Forgetting,”* also discusses the dialectic of trauma that victims proposes where trauma both requires representation and also resists it. In her article, Schwab outlines a theoretical framework for understanding traumatic narratives that highlights the irresolvable paradox of narrating traumatic experiences that resist representation but at the same time call for “telling and witnessing” in order to heal the very same trauma (102). Schwab’s central claim is that, writing should be analysed beyond its superficial narrative by locating silences or “haunted” words that hint at but are unable to fully relay the complete horror or violence of the injury (104). Schwab argues that haunted language “uses a gap inside speech to point to silenced history. Haunted language refers to what is unspeakable through ellipsis, indirection and detour, or fragmentation and

deformation” (108). Her contention is that despite the fact that the language used does not reveal the trauma directly, it is a characteristic of traumatised people to leave clues of what has happened in their language. In this research, the language used by these women is a direct representation of their trauma and experiences. It is how they best know how to articulate their experiences.

Poems about trauma or that feature traumatic writing are different from poems about violence or exile in that, these poems are distanced from the moment of violence and meditative on the effect of trauma on memory and identity. These poems try to reconcile and work through the traumatic experience. They don’t serve as a protest; they merely try to work through the process of representing the unspeakable memories. And at the same time, they are educating people about the results of patriarchy and how dangerous it is for a woman to live in a male dominated society, one that teaches that men are entitled to women and are superior and women should be treated as objects.

3.8 RESILIENCE

This refers to positive adaptation, or the ability to maintain or regain mental health, despite experiencing adversity. It stems from the Latin phrase *resiliens* and was originally used to refer to the pliant or elastic quality of a substance (Joseph, 1994). The process of coping with disruptive, stressful, or challenging life events in a way that provides the individual with additional protective and coping skills than prior to the disruption that results from the event. (Richardson et al., 1990)

“Traumatised people by wars, torture and abuse have a surprising capacity of healing themselves, through telling their stories. In doing so, these stories teach us all how to deal with tragic events of every day”. In his book, Mollica 2008, reveals how in every society we have to move away from viewing trauma survivors as ‘broken people’ and ‘outcasts’ to seeing them as contagious people actively contributing to larger social goals. This is what the chosen poets have in common; they are all telling their stories. As a researcher, the decision to conclude that the poets have healed is not mine, however, the hope that they have healed by telling their story is what inspired this research, which is what resilience is about. Being able to tell one’s story without hurting and or breaking down.

The influence of resilience is evident by its reach across diverse disciplines. Although resilience remains a familiar word in everyday English language, the term resilience carries different meanings across different contexts. However, the essence of resilience is described as the ability to bounce back from

some form of disruption, stress, or change. The term resilience stems from Latin (*resiliens*) and was originally used to refer to the pliant or elastic quality of a substance (Joseph, 1994). Webster's New Twentieth Century Dictionary of English Language (1958) defined resilience as "the ability to bounce or spring back after being stretched or constrained or recovering strength or spirit," and the American Heritage dictionary defined resilience as "the ability to recover quickly from illness, change, or misfortune." These poems are testimonies of women who are resilient and agents of change. Women who no longer want to conform to societal norms that are dictated by patriarchy; women who own up to the word slut and whore and definitely women who are free enough to exist and take up space within a male dominated society.

3.9 TRAUMA AND RESILIENCE APPLICATION

Trauma has analogous effects on a community, resulting in cultural trauma that may be defined as what happens when 'members of a collectively feel they have been subjected to a horrendous event that leaves indelible marks upon their group consciousness, marking their memories forever and changing their future identity in fundamental and irrevocable ways' (Alexander 2013, 6; see also Alexander et al. 2004). With the above said, it is of paramount importance that the researcher focuses on the trauma that is brought out in the selected poems. The analysis will be done by carefully analysing the poems, with regard to the themes brought out, the Trauma theory will be applied to the poems where traumatic events are brought out. Together with this, the resilience theory will also be applied and will assist with how the victims and or poets have survived and managed to move on. Healing evidence may not have been recorded, however, the fact that they have written about their experiences means that it is a starting point.

3.10 Research Design

The research design is a qualitative design that will focus on the commonalities that classify men to be trash and how they are presented in the poems. The researcher will be paying close attention to the literary devices that are used by the poets which will help in deducing an understanding and meaning from each of the poems. Cassell and Symon (1994, p. 537) argue that data analysis in qualitative research is distinguished by, "merging of analysis and interpretation and often by the merging of data collection with data analysis." It allows the researcher to associate an analysis of the frequency of a theme with one of the whole content by providing an opportunity to understand the potential of any

issue more widely (Marks and Yardley 2004). By studying themes, one would expect a result on the issue that the poet as a victim has gone through, as all the poets whose poems are to be studied are victims. This then means that, it would allow an exploration of research poems, which are said to connote the use of poetry less for expressive and literary means, and are more for the purpose of generating or presenting data. The focus would then be on themes, keeping in mind, repetitive diction and or the mainly focused on idea.

Since the main idea and theme is toxic masculinity, by closely studying the sub-themes, a greater understanding is brought forth as to what form of toxic masculinity the victim has experienced. Together with other literary devices such as diction, imagery and or alliteration or assonance as a way of bringing forth emphasis on the message in the poem, the results of the manner in which *#Men Are Trash* notion will be achieved.

The sampling of these poems was done through announcing at Open Mic Night that the researcher is looking for Spoken Word female poets who have written on the matter of *#Men Are Trash* and or have written anything on the discomfort that men cause to women. Each poet that has written on that topic then submitted their poetry and after careful reading, suitable poems that had more themes and were closely related to the *#Men Are Trash movement* were picked.

This research will be divided into chapters according to how the notion of *#Men Are Trash* is brought out. The analysis of the poems will be done by careful study of what women have gone through that resulted with the *#Men Are Trash* movement. With considerations that each poet has a different experience from the other, the researcher will study each poem individually by paying close attention to issues such as rape, abandonment and gender-based violence, to mention but a few. This will be done through the lens of the Feminism and the Trauma and Resilience framework. This will be done by carefully paying attention to the use of language in each poem and how the poet has made use of her experience in order to fully carry her message across.

The basis of this research conducted is on the analysis of the poetry of Namibian female poets because it was with the hope to create a better understanding regarding the sort of experiences women go through, which are propagated by men.

The analysis of the works of traumatised Namibian female poets focuses on their poetry for a number of reasons. Firstly, it serves as the potential to be an unconventional tool for overcoming trauma and

secondly, it has a role in bringing about social change and has served as a means of resisting stereotypes and injustices. Namibian female poet's view of poetry serves as a potent vehicle of resistance and an agent of change. It also serves to educate and provide a clear understanding of the narrative, *#Men Are Trash*. As editor, Dan Veatch writes in the introduction to the anthology of Iraqi poetry *Flowers of Flame*, "poetry is not a luxury in Iraq, but a vital part of the struggle for the nation's future. In this case, it is not Iraq, however, the sentiments shared are the same; these poems aim to educate and create awareness on the pressing issues that women face on a daily.

This is poetry feared by men who are perpetrators and or friends to perpetrators. Although again, the relevance is not the same, in Namibia, the target audience is the men who are ignorant and or need the education. The men who refuse to admit that they have an advantage over women, because of their biological gender. In this case, poetry is not written with just the intention of healing or creating a cathartic experience; it is written to be a tool with an immediate and urgent social role. Although these poems can be analysed and appreciated for its aesthetic merit, it has a cultural function that is yet to be established in Namibia; educating.

CHAPTER FOUR

4.1 Introduction

The previous chapter, Theoretical framework and research design, highlighted the theories that are applicable to this study: black feminism, trauma and resilience theory. The thrust in the reviewed literature was to establish the causative factors of the narrative *#MenAreTrash* as brought out in the different poems.

This chapter will be analysed by focusing on different themes that are portrayed through the selected poems. By carefully studying how the themes are brought out, the researcher will pay attention to detail that sum up the poet's message and what they are trying to bring forth. This was done by applying the trauma and resilience theory as well as the feminist theory. It will be done in such a manner that, through the Trauma and Resilience theory, this chapter will provide understanding on why women are for the narrative that men are trash and how they are able to fully tell their stories. By bringing forth the ill-treatments that these women go through, it will shed light on why feminism is fighting for the emancipation of women from the hands of men who exercise patriarchy and the actions that propagate the sufferings of women.

This chapter argues that, the main reason why the notion has been brought forth is because men use their biological advantage to proliferate patriarchy and its effects on women. Thus, represented in the selected poems, we see, from the women's perspective, that, it is deeply rooted in a gendered notion that disempowers and marginalises women and that writing about it is their way of putting up resistance to be agents of change. It will also convey scholarly findings that broaden the spectrum of the *#MenAreTrash* movement, as well as provide arguments to prove that patriarchy is the pushing factor towards the actions of these women because they are marginalised and powerless. Lastly, the chapter will show how the poets use their experiences as stepping-stones to challenge the status quo and survive in a society that demeans and subjugates them. This chapter will be divided into three sections, which will have sub-headings/topics. These sections and sub-sections are as follows:

Abuse: where the researcher will discuss the different types of abuse and how they are portrayed in the poems.

- ✓ Sexual
- ✓ Physical
- ✓ Mental/Emotional

Abandonment and carrying the baggage: where the researcher will provide insight on how abandonment and baggage carrying is presented in the poems.

Daddy Issues vs Electra complex: where the researcher will provide an understanding of the two concepts and how they are integrated into the poems analysed.

The characters in these poems have all experienced ordeal, misfortune and abuse. The poems all express one theme in common; patriarchy, which is defined as “a system of social structures and practices in which men dominate, oppress and exploit women.” (Walby, 1990).

Before the full analysis of the poems into their divided themes, a synopsis is given. The poems are as follows: *Cadaver* by Namatshana (2018), *You Broke Me, Daddy* by Mungabwa (2018), *Trauma* by Mungabwa (2017) *This is to you men by the side of the road* by Vilho (2018), *Your Rape is not different from mine* (2017) and *Daddy Issues* (2018) by October, *The Absence of a Man* (2019) and *Childhood Trauma* (2016) by Uushona.

4.2 Synopsis of poems

4.2.1 Cadaver by Faustina M Namatshana (2018)

This is a poem about a corpse narrating her journey of abuse to a male doctor. In the *Cadaver* poem, we experience second hand narration from the corpse. It is a poem about the unfortunate ones who did not survive at the hands of men. It is about a woman, dead, yet narrating how her death came about through the autopsy being done by a male doctor. As a result, like many men, they walk away in shame but with no promise to change within. As we are introduced to the story of the corpse and how the corpse narrates how she has suffered at the hands of her lover and someone who was supposed to have protected her, we are as well introduced to the effects of suppression on women and their mental health which often drives them in committing to a relationship with the abuser in order to please the male counterpart. The narrator, a woman, who unfortunately, did not survive to tell her story

triumphantly, has hung on for so long and survived the bruises and when one day she decided to leave him, he murdered her. Often, many women end up victims because their voices are muffled by cultural expectations and society's deceptions. These are many times complemented by parents who tell the women to never leave their partner because it is against their culture. Azaliah Mapombere (2011) argues that, few women have voices, and even fewer can be heard as the silence is deafening and so are the sorrowful sobs. This then probes the question as to why do these men rape and murder women they ought to protect? Lindow, M (2010) did a study that revealed a deeply rooted culture of violence against women, in which men rape in order to feel powerful, and do so with impunity and the belief that their superiority entitles them to vent their frustrations on women and children. The theme that *Cadaver* is centred around is abuse, in many forms, which leads to murder.

4.2.2 *You Broke Me, Daddy* by Jane "LuNa" Mungabwa (2018)

This poem is about how witnessing domestic violence negatively affects the kind of relationships women choose to have as adults. Most women, who have witnessed their mothers/fathers get abused, tend to find broken men and women and try to fix them because they couldn't fix their mother or father's abuser. Sometimes these women think that physical and verbal abuse is a normal part of their relationships. Thus, they hold on to these toxic relationships as they don't see the toxicity. Women who were abused or have witnessed abuse also tend to have low self-esteem which may result in promiscuity. This poem is about the negative effects domestic violence has on the type of relationships the witnesses choose to get involved in. It highlights the process a female, who has witnessed abuse first hand, goes through, in order to find a relationship. This includes thinking that her abusive partner is doing the right thing by abusing her and how leaving an abusive relationship becomes something she doubts. In this case, the victim then seeks a relationship with someone who is cold like her father used to be. One may then choose to argue that there is an Electra complex expressed in the poem. Electra complex is defined as, "girls seeing 'the absence of a penis as a lack and may be angry with her mother for having created her incomplete and inferior' (Rosenhan, Seligman, 1995, p. 74), which leads to 'penis envy' in girls, and can lead to increased desire for the father, possibly even wishing to have a child by him." In this instance, as much as the victim wanted to eagerly get close to the father, there was always an obstacle, which was not the mother but the father's lack of affection and abuse towards her and the mother. Because of this, the victim has made it her mission to want to please the father and win back his affection, however, futile. As a result, the victim then struggles to find a meaningful relationship, thus, she tries to find someone who displays the character of her father, in order to please him. In the

end, this might be the reason why women who suffer from the Electra Complex tend to stay in abusive relationship, because they are still trying to please their father, which in this case is the replica they found that displays a character such as that of the absent father. Furthermore, one might argue that, she displays a maladaptive behaviour. Maladaptive behaviour refers to the type of behaviour that inhibits a person's ability to adjust to certain situations. We inevitably face challenges and conflicts in daily life and must adapt our behaviour to face them. Sometimes, however, people can develop a tendency to escape these challenges rather than deal with them. This occurs because of a lack of affection during the childhood stages, which in return caused the development of a fixation. A fixation is a persistent focus on an earlier psychosexual stage. Such fixations, Freud believed, often led to anxiety and played a role in neurosis and maladaptive behaviours in adulthood. The victim goes through her life wanting to please the father by getting involved with someone that has the cold and abusive qualities of her father. Not seeing how the abuse of the father to the mother has moulded her, she goes on to seek refuge and comfort from people who abuse her. This way, she feels a connection towards her father and feels like she is making him happy.

4.2.3 Trauma by Jane S. Mungabwa (2017)

In this poem, record of the *Men Are Trash* narrative is conveyed through the account of a narration by a boy who hates noise because of what it did to him as a child. His mother suffered abuse at the hands of his father and because he was young, he could not help his mother. So, instead, what he would do is wait for everything to go silent so that he is able to hear if his mother is being abused. This notion that everything ought to be quiet has transcended with him into adulthood because even though his mother left the abusive relationship, he still hates noise because he feels he cannot hear the abused crying out for help.

In this poem, the concept of traumatic memory and ordinary memory is emphasised. Ordinary memories fade and belong to the past. They are eventually confused and conflated with other ordinary memories and assimilated into webs of remembrance. When they penetrate into the present, it is as nostalgia, regret, and a desire for things now gone. In each of these respects, the traumatic memory is different, as it often does not bring forth unwanted and triggering memories. Years after its creation, it remains unassimilated, a self-renewing presence, perpetually reliving the moment of its origin (Horowitz, 1976). According to Van der Kolk, McFarlane and Weisaeth (1996), the post-traumatic syndrome is the result of a failure of time to heal all wounds. The memory of the trauma is not

integrated and accepted as a part of one's personal past (history); instead it comes to exist independently of previous schemata (i.e. it is dissociated). This may be because it is unwanted by the individual. The traumatic memory is dominated by imagery and bodily sensation, and is in these respects similar to the memories of young children (Herman, 1992). In this poem, to substantiate, the victim's memory is dominated by the image of his father abusing his mother. Whenever he hears noise, his anxiety, which in this case may be argued to be dominating bodily sensation, he is triggered and he tries as much to block out the triggering memory.

Immediately after a traumatic event, almost all people suffer from intrusive thoughts about what has happened (McFarlane, 1992). These intrusions help them either to learn from the experience and plan for restorative actions (accommodation), or to gradually accept what has happened and readjust their expectations (assimilation) (Horowitz & Kaltreider, 1980). One way to do this would be therapy, if the damage done was too extensive. However, one way or another, the passage of time modifies the ways in which the brain processes the trauma-related information. Either it is integrated in memory and stored as an unfortunate event belonging to the past, which in this case, the victim has not healed and the memory of his father abusing his mother is still unfortunate or the sensations and emotions belonging to the event start leading a life of their own (Van der Kolk, McFarlane & Weisaeth, 1996). When people develop post-traumatic stress disorder, the replaying of the trauma leads to sensitisation; with each replay of the trauma, there is an increasing level of distress. This is evident in the poem when noise distresses the victim. In those individuals, the traumatic event, which started out as a social and interpersonal process, comes to have secondary biological consequences that are hard to reverse once they become entrenched. This is patent in the poem as he still has a problem with noise and being around it. This then means that, his life has adjusted to his anxiety being triggered by noise, which then makes him feel like he is re-living his childhood memory of his mother being abused by the father.

4.2.4 *This is to you men by the side of the road* by Emma Vilho (2008)

The history of oppression and with diverse advancement, oppression took new shape and become more powerful (International Journal of Asian Social Science, 2015). Men used to be respectful within the community and outside their homes. That has however changed over time because women are now being raped while walking home. Women are being subjected to degradation because of refusing to talk to a male counterpart. To give an example, a student at a University in Illinois Chicago was strangled to death and raped because she refused to respond to a man who cat-called her. The 26-year-old man

allegedly became angry and put her into a chokehold when she refused to talk to him or acknowledge his catcalls as she walked back to her car. These are the realities that women live with on a daily basis. In Namibia, it has become unsafe for a woman to even walk alone at night without the fear of being attacked by a man, who will either rape her, if not kill her. Because men feel entitled to women and their bodies, it does not come as a shock nor something difficult to do. These men, some, because of their cultural upbringing, enforce their patriarchal ways on women through raping and abusing them because they were taught that it is right and or because they grew up in an environment that brewed and applauded patriarchy. Because of this, they tend to feel entitled to women and being neglected and or rejected by them, infuriates them and bruises their ego. Thus, these men practice rehearsed patriarchy and their entitlement on women. This is evident in the poem by Emma Vilho, which is about how women are unsafe even on the streets or in the shopping mall. The character in the poem is walking and minding her business, while the men that see her, cat call her, yet degrade her to a whore when she does not respond. Again, this is because of entitlement and toxic masculinity. Because men are used to getting their way and subjecting women to fear and entitlement, being rejected becomes a bruise to their ego. Thus, their only way of retaliating is by calling a woman a whore and or slut. Men are not used to being rejected because society teaches that men are superior and that women ought to submit to men. When this does not happen, men feel humiliated. Because of this, women now walk in fear of being killed as a result of saying no to an advance made by a man and or leaving a relationship. To substantiate, a University of Namibia learner was murdered by her boyfriend for terminating the relationship.

4.2.5 *Your Rape is not different from mine (2017)*

This is an open letter from a victim to another victim. In this poem, the poet stipulates that there is no difference in rape. It does not have a criterion; rape is rape. What this means is that, whether you were raped by a relative and or someone you know, versus another victim being raped by a stranger, it is still rape and there is no difference. There is no degree to which rape becomes more important and or bigger than the other. This is important because to some victims, they do not regard sexual harassment by a relative such as a father figure, as rape, because it is someone who is closer to them. In this case, it is of paramount importance to highlight and convey forth the message that, whether it was incest, one finger forced into a victim's vagina and or drunk unconsented sexual intercourse, it is rape and victims should not be afraid to report it. In this poem, the poet argues that, whether the act was committed by boyfriend, friend, uncle and or father, it is still rape. The poem also highlights the after effects of rape on

a victim. The poet writes about how after the rape, the victim feels dirty and will constantly try to wash the abuser off. This means that, at some point, the victim becomes one with their abuser, by force. The poet also writes about how society judges the victims. This then not only becomes another burden to carry, and it becomes double oppression too. In some instances, the victim has to live with their abuser because the family had decided to not report him. In the end, the victim seeing their perpetrator every day would be equivalent to re-living their ordeal. To the victim, they become double oppressed as not only are they oppressed by their affliction, but they are now oppressed by their family who makes them live with their offender.

4.2.6 *Daddy Issues* by Lydia October, (2018)

This poem is about the kind of men, girls who had absent fathers would foster relationships with. In the poem, the female takes up a relationship with a man who is never there unless he wants to have sexual intercourse with her. This man however, infects her with HIV/AIDS. The poem is also about the missing father figure, which is the main reason why the female fosters a relationship with a man that resembles the personality of her absent father. Again, one might argue that it is a portrayal of the Electra Complex.

4.2.7 *The Absence of a Man* by Jacobina Tangi Uushona, (2019)

This poem is about the consequences of an absent father figure. In this instance, the husband kicked the wife and children out of their home and as a result, the mother was left to take care of the victim and her siblings. It highlights the struggles that a child without a father figure in her life experiences. In this case, the victim was very inquisitive and often asked a lot of questions and the mother would then tell the victim the truth about her father. This is important because as hard as it may be, the children needed to know. The victim writes how the mother never made up stories about how he just went away for a while or that he just went on vacation. The victim uses the phrase the '*child in me died*' in order to emphasise that, as a child, when abandoned by a father, one feels that they are not good enough and this is evident in some of the lines when she says that she never knew what to say when asked about him. The victim also expresses how, victims of abandonment often want the parents to come back home and it never is too late. The sense of a family in this case is what is mostly highlighted.

In the end, the victim displays the characteristics of someone who has slightly healed because she says that, she has started talking to him through phone calls and coming to terms with knowing that he will not be back.

4.2.8 Childhood Trauma by Jacobina Tangi Uushona, (2016).

In this poem, the poet narrates her childhood and how her innocence was taken away from her by the very same man, her uncle, that was to protect her. She also writes about her upbringing, which involves how society conditions women to not say anything about what men do to them. This poem highlights just how much patriarchy has always been something that was sheltered and not spoken about, especially in African homes. The poet also writes about how she would rather not travel to the north, because this is a trigger of her past. For an Oshiwambo individual, going to the north every year is regarded as a mandatory activity. Whether it is for Christmas and or a wedding, it is regarded a taboo when one does not visit the north often, which later gets one deemed an *ombwiti*, a term used to describe one that has strayed away from home and made the city his permanent home. The Aawambo people come from the northern part of Namibia and going back home is regarded a necessity. So, for the victim to not want to go back, this is then questionable. In this instance, it is because her rapist stays at the same house in the north and seeing her rapist would be like being raped for the second time, because it would be like re-living the ordeal as well as the shame of being subjected to a liar by the family members. It is also triggering for the victim because it is where she was raped. This lets the reader in on the traumatic experiences and how environment and space can be like re-living the incident again.

4.3 Themes

This section will concentrate on different themes and how they are highlighted in the chosen poems. The umbrella for the first section is Abuse, which has sub-topics; sexual violence, mental and physical abuse, as well as emotional abuse. The analysis will concentrate on one theme at a time, and study all the poems that have the selected theme and how it is presented and connected to the *#MenAreTrash* movement.

4.3.1 Abuse

Abuse is defined as physical injury inflicted on a person by other than accidental means. The statutes define physical injury as anything from severe or frequent bruising to more serious injuries. In this

segment however, the focus will be placed on sexual violence, which is defined as any sexual act, attempt to obtain a sexual act, unwanted sexual comments or advances, or acts to traffic, or otherwise directed, against a person's sexuality using coercion, by any person regardless of their relationship to the victim, in any setting, including but not limited to home and work (World Health Organisation, 2018), mental and emotional abuse, which is defined as "an injury to the intellectual or psychological capacity of a child as evidenced by an observable and substantial impairment in his ability to function within his normal range of performance and behaviour, with due regard to his culture" (Lauer (1978), p. 1), and physical abuse, which is defined as any intentional act causing injury or trauma to another person or animal by way of bodily contact. (Wikipedia)

4.3.2 Sexual Violence

With regards to this theme and topic, poems that included the theme are; *There is no difference between your rape and mine*, *Daddy issues* by Lydia October (2018) and *Cadaver* (2018) by Faustina Namatshana. These are all accounts that contain sexual abuse as a form of power assertion from men, upon women.

Sexuality using coercion, by any person regardless of their relationship to the victim, in any setting, including but not limited to home and work. Coercion can cover a whole spectrum of degrees of dynamism. Apart from physical force, it may involve psychological intimidation, blackmail or other threats – for instance, the threat of physical harm, of being dismissed from a job. It may also occur when the person the aggression is committed unto is unable to give consent – for instance, while drunk, drugged, asleep or mentally incapable of understanding the situation. Sexual violence includes rape, defined as physically forced or otherwise coerced penetration – even if slight – using a penis, other body parts or an object. The attempt to do so is known as attempted rape. Rape of a person by two or more perpetrators is known as gang rape. Sexual violence can include other forms of assault involving a sexual organ, including coerced contact.

The assumed norm in society is for women to be in charge of domestic labour and childrearing while men engage in public concerns and patriarchy attracts men as the owner of authority to oppress women. The oppression to women is a phenomenon in women's life and in literature. Women are oppressed by men in many aspects of their life. It happens in their education, economy, family, etc., as well as how men determine women to be good wife and to be domestic labour. Men become physical and often use verbal violence. In the context of sexual pleasures, women are objects to satisfy men, as

sexual satisfaction, while the satisfaction of a woman is ignored. Through *Cadaver* by Namatshana, we come to experience first-hand abuse from the same person that was supposed to be protecting her.

The poem starts off with the corpse telling the reader about how beautiful and a naturalist she was.

"Before me lays a naturalist

Draped in a cascade of dark kinky coils.

The epitome of melanin beauty

Clear skin yet cold.

Life.

Before me stands a male doctor

With eyes burning to know me.

So I tell him." (Namatshana, 2018)

Through these lines, one is able to deduce that the victim possessed beauty that surpassed kinky coils. Her beauty was one that was of beautiful melanin. Yet, at the end of the day, that dark pigmentation is nowhere to be found. It is clear and cold. The poet goes on to further narrate that she lays before a male doctor. This makes one argue that, as a woman, one never really escapes patriarchy. Through her life, she was subjected to patriarchy by being with a man who said he loved her. In her final days of the autopsy, she is still being openly exposed to patriarchy, through being examined by a male doctor. One may also choose to argue that women will always be submissive to patriarchy, whether we know it or not. Tyson (1999) explains that "patriarchy continually exerts forces that undermine women's self-confidence and assertiveness, then points to the absence of these qualities as proof that women are naturally, and therefore correctly, self-effacing and submissive" (p. 85). It is often because, 'some men believe that they are participating in a socially approved 'project' to constrain women within certain boundaries and categories by resorting to sexual violence' (Maffelt, H. Chapter 6). In the end, these are the constraints that feminism fights to abolish when it has to do with women emancipation. From a feminist point of view, the poets are demonstrating how a woman's life is forever endangered because of the presence of a man in her life. By using black feminism with the help of intersectionality, this is an account to conform that, it does not matter what form of subjection patriarchy takes upon a woman,

the sufferings of a woman are always experienced at a meeting point that was instigated by patriarchy, and this is what the poet is addressing.

"I'll be 23 in a week's time,

Celebrating my dreams and freedom.

For last week I had courage to leave him.

Boldly voicing the unhappiness of our relationship,

The burden of bruises covered with makeup,

The suffocations of being ridiculed, manipulated,

And maimed by the reek of beer and cheatings on his breath.

I spat out the hurt that accompanied his control over me

Whenever his stealth seared and projected within my delicateness." (Faustina Namatshana, 2018)

In these few lines, we are exposed to the reality of the 21st century woman. These are the very same misfortunes she suffers at the hands of a man. She begins by saying she will be 23 in a week's time to celebrate her dreams and freedom because she finally had the courage to leave him. This is one of the difficult things that women experience within the 21st century. In Namibia, being in a relationship means that you, as a woman, are not allowed to leave a man. This, in most cases, results in being killed by your lover and or being manipulated into staying and suffering abuse throughout the whole abusive relationship. In the olden days, patriarchy subjected women to a marriage that was futile, consisting of abuse, infidelity and oppression. Women did not have a voice to leave because they were confined to their marriage. A good example is that of Mee Kauna in *The Purple Violet of Oshaantu*. *The Purple Violet of Oshaantu*, is about patriarchy within the Oshiwambo culture and how a man who is deeply rooted within patriarchy confines his wife, Mee Kauna, to being a wife, bearing him children, suffering abuse from him and shrunk her voice into silence and not being able to speak up and or leave him because being married meant she had to endure everything. When she wanted to leave her husband because she was being abused, her mom said she could not.

She further voices how happy she was for having the courage to finally get a voice and speak about the ill-treatment of her lover. Writing about the bruises she has had to cover up with make up so people do not notice as well as how suffocated she felt when he manipulated her to stay in that abusive relationship. In this regard, the extent of how traumatic her experience within this relationship has been is highlighted. Being abused for a long time and finally being able to gather the courage to work away means she has long been suffering and knew that she deserved better. Together with her courage, she again displays the bravery and courage to be resilient as that of Mee Kauna in the *Purple Violet of Oshaantu* when she decided to leave Oshaantu after the funeral of Tate Shange. This means that, the victim in the poem fought so hard to emancipate herself from the abusive relationship and became courageous to leave and pursue her dreams. The 21st century woman stays in an abusive marriage because the man promises that he will change and stop beating her. However, it is never the case.

“Honestly, I stayed because he promised that it won’t happen again,

Promises after promises,

Cycle after cycle,

And screaming in silence.

It became too complicated to leave

Until I finally had it in me to stop being a victim. “(Faustina Namatshana, 2018)

Some women after being beaten several times and no help is offered, succumb to their reality of being a punching bag in the marriage. They become numb because the society that is supposed to support and encourage them, does not aid help nor does it give them the voice to speak up for themselves. The society that agrees with the cultural practices and patriarchy oppresses women when they are taught that men are the superior counterpart and they have to know that being a subordinate is what humanity assigns them to; with the outrageous treatment, they go through double oppressions. These women become a veritable manifestation what Chapman (2001, pg. 85) calls “internal oppression”. In this case, the corpse believed that staying meant love as well as commitment. In the end, the victim believed that her traumatic experience is her fault and that staying was the best option. This is often something that the abuser’s do; manipulating the victim into believing that it is their fault and they deserve it (Garbarino, 1990).

The narrator portrays her reactions towards her being oppressed. This narrator suffered the effects of isolation due to oppression and they turned into a submissive lover who experienced the brutality from a man. However, she gained a voice and decided to liberate herself by leaving. For a poet to write about the courage of leaving an abusive and oppressive relationship, literature becomes an opportunity for her to become an agent of change and become resilient. It becomes an act of encouragement. Different writers in literature raised their voices against women oppression such as Wollstonecraft (1792), who defended the rights of women and encouraged women to free themselves from men and society oppression. As she said "I do not wish them (women) to have power over men; but over themselves" (p.68). In this instance, this type of literature then becomes a moving force to liberate women to leave toxic and abusive relationships. Felman's (1985) observation that "the madness silenced by society is given voice by literature." This then becomes a fight from feminism that is for the resiliency of a woman and gaining back her voice and identity. Abuse, patriarchy, and traditional practices that do not break this silence and subjugate women are often swept under the carpet by the society. The image of the African woman painted in the works of pioneer African writers, according to the literary critic, Julie Agbasiere (2006, p.72): "Is that of the subordinate, subservient and decorative, second rate character dominated by society's patriarchy. Feminist writers are now giving women a voice and a locus standi to challenge the societal norms and values obnoxious to them." So, writing against this is then important as it creates a ripple effect of the fact that women do indeed have the courage to walk away, they just need support.

The victim's victory over her courage was however short lived because she bruised the man's ego and he retaliated.

"It became too complicated to leave

Until I finally had it in me to stop being a victim

How I regret it.

And for the last time, that day,

I was bruised, strangled and raped

Until my final breath.

All in my moment of courage.

But now 23 will be celebrate in death.” (Faustina Namatshana, 2018)

The corpse ends her narration by saying how she regrets telling him that she is leaving the relationship. As that was the last time she used her voice to speak up regarding her life, she was bruised, strangled and raped until the very last breath she took in her final moment of courage. For now, the dream of being a free 23-year-old will be celebrated in death. In the end, this piece validated the form of trauma that comes with being in an abusive relationship and how much writing about it means creating a voice for the next woman in line. It means that for feminism, the fight for liberation is not over and recreating the identity of a woman from the abused to the resilient is what is of paramount importance.

4.3.3 Mental and emotional abuse

With the notion that *#MenAreTrash*, it has been argued that it doesn’t only stop at physical abuse, rape and or murder. It transcends to emotional and mental abuse. Emotional abuse is defined as any kind of non-physical abuse imposed from one person to another (Paul Moglia, 2015). Paul Moglia (2015) continues to argue that, abuse is about power and control, and the abuser uses tactics to exert power and control over his or her victims.

Some of these tactics involve neglectful and deliberate tactics. Neglectful tactics involve the withholding of normal human interaction or refusing to validate the victim’s feelings (Garbarino, 1990). These tactics may be hard to detect because the person using them may have normalized the behaviours and may not regard them as abusive (Champagne 1999; Hamarman and Bernet 2000, 928-930). Deliberate tactics, on the other hand, are more aggressive forms of control (Evans 1999; Sackett and Saunders 1999, 113). Nevertheless, both forms involve the wilful infliction of mental or emotional harm. Abusers may adapt their tactics depending on the victim’s gender, age, health and ability status,

Victims of emotional abuse are subjected to repeated threats, manipulation, intimidation, and isolation that cause them to feel anxiety, fear, self-blame, and worthlessness. They can become convinced that no one else cares or wants them. Frequently, they stay in abusive situations because they believe they have nowhere else to go. In contrast to physical violence, emotional violence is not easily identified because it is not readily evident. Emotional abuse can sometimes predict physical violence. As this is one of the themes that the *#MenAreTrash* movement is centred around, it is well brought out in the poem, *Cadaver* by Namatshana (2018).

Cadaver

This is a poem centred on the 21st century spaces that women are confined into by patriarchy and the way the spaces have become dangerous for women, to the point where men feel entitled to knowing of and about women, be it a forced interaction or one where the woman has no idea. In this poem, the corpse, a female, uses figurative language, in order to emphasise that, even in death, women are not fully safe. One may choose to argue that, she used a male doctor in order to make the point of how far patriarchy is embedded into society. In this regard, one may also argue that, men are always last to see the woman, being it because he killed her or he is burying her, if not inspecting her body.

To substantiate, the poet writes that,

"Before me stands a male doctor,

...With eyes burning to know me. " (Line5-6)

The poet uses literary language such as the metaphor *"...eyes burning."* in order to reinstate that, even in death, men still feel entitled to knowing about women. In Namibia, women are murdered on a daily because men feel entitled towards them. They are harassed because they refuse to give their phone numbers to men and or refuse to remain in a toxic relationship, as the case of the corpse in *Cadaver*.

"I'll be 23 in a week's time."

"Celebrating my dreams and freedom."

"...for last week I had the courage to leave him.

Boldly voicing the unhappiness of our relationship.

The burden of bruises covered with make-up, the suffocations of being ridiculed, manipulated..."
(line 9-14)

This is a rendition of an independent woman and how she lost her life at the hands of a man she once trusted. The corpse narrates how she was excited that she was to turn 23 in a few weeks. She uses simple and affirmative words when she says, *celebrating my dreams and freedom*. The poet also lets us in on how much a woman's dreams and freedom depends on a man, when she writes that for last week she had the courage to leave him. This means that in order for her to achieve her dreams and celebrate her birthday depended on how he would feel if she left him. This also means that the abuser instilled fear within the deceased. Recent research on psychological abuse suggests that an underlying

motivation for psychological abuse is the desire of perpetrators to exert control over other individuals and destroy their sense of self-esteem (Evans 1999; Johnson and Ferrero 2000; Schwartz 2000). This is an example of how psychological trauma is represented in a victim and abuser. The victim is made to believe that staying with her abuser will make him change his ways, which is not true.

In this instance, the abuser psychologically abuses the victim through ridicule and manipulation. These are the very same sentiments women air when using the narrative that *#MenAreTrash*. The narrative refers to men who are manipulative with their words and actions. These are the men who psychologically abuse women to the point where they feel the need to harness courage in order to leave him. These are inclusive of silencing the victim to the point where, should they want to communicate something; it is the most courageous act. To substantiate, Namasthana uses the metaphor, which is defined as a figure of speech in which a word or phrase is applied or action to which it is not literally applicable (English Oxford Dictionary), when she writes that "...boldly voicing the unhappiness of our relationship." Firstly, one may argue that, through simple diction such as the word "boldly", the victim was using the last of her strength to speak up and leave the mental prison she was in. An act of bravery and being resilient, that both resilience and feminism encourages. Being able to create a different voice for oneself as a victim by leaving the abusive relationship. It may also mean that, she has been silenced for too long and this was her break to leave and start her new freedom at 23. The poet uses visual imagery to bring forth how manipulative the abuser has been to the victim. "*the suffocations of being ridiculed, manipulated*" Here, the victim is drowning in the everyday life of being ridiculed, which weighs down on her mental state because she ends up believing what her abuser says about her and thus, she regards that behaviour as normal. These are what are called 'neglectful tactics' as it involves the withholding of normal human interaction or refusing to validate the victim's feelings (Garbarino, 1990:03). These tactics may be hard to detect because the person using them may have normalised the behaviours and may not regard them as abusive (Champagne 1999; Hamarman and Bernet 2000, 928-930). Deliberate tactics, on the other hand, are more aggressive forms of control (Evans 1999; Sackett and Saunders 1999, 113). Nevertheless, both forms involve the wilful infliction of mental or emotional harm. Abusers may adapt their tactics depending on the victim's gender, age, health and ability status, ethnicity or place of residence (e.g., whether the abuse happens at home, in a residential facility or in an urban or rural setting).

The poet also uses the oxymoron, "*...and screaming in silence*" in order to emphasise that, men have cornered women to the point where their voices are subjugated by patriarchy. It is also to bring forth

the message that, the burdens women have to carry, a literal meaning. The fact that this woman had to scream in silence is evidence enough that, men are mentally manipulative.

To conclude, emotional and psychological abuse is just as dangerous for a victim. Mental manipulation is traumatic because the victim ends up, for a long time, believing that, what the abuser told them is true. This destroys the victim's self-esteem and narrows the chances of a victim leaving that relationship.

There is no difference between your rape and mine

In this poem, it is an open letter to another victim, who might have been blaming herself because of what sexually happened to her. However, the main message is that, no rape is different. Often, sexually violated victims tend to blame themselves for what happened, mostly because of rape culture and victim blaming. Rape culture argues that, a woman is the guilty party, either because of the way she was dressed or because of what she did to provoke the man. Rape culture is a sociological concept for a setting in which rape is pervasive and normalised due to societal attitudes about gender and sexuality. Behaviours commonly associated with rape culture include victim blaming, slut-shaming, sexual objectification, trivializing rape, denial of widespread rape, refusing to acknowledge the harm caused by sexual violence, or some combination of these. Because of this, women who are victims tend to blame themselves because of what happened. One may argue that, the poet is trying to bring forth the idea that, because of rape culture, women feel that, being raped because a man's argument and reason for rape is because her skirt was too short or she was provoking him, is her fault. Thus, her main point is to make it clear that, whether you, as a woman, were raped because you were wearing a short skirt or because you were drunk, it is still rape and it is not your fault. Entire societies have been alleged to propagate rape. These include telling women who are victims of rape that they deserved it because they were wearing a short skirt and or that they went looking for it because of letting a man buy them drinks. Because society has made it normal to accuse women of being the instigators of rape, society has then used it as an excuse to prey on victims who were raped to blame their dress code on why they were raped.

To substantiate, in the first three lines, the poet makes it clear when she says,

""There is no difference between your rape and mine.""

"Whether yours was done once and mine more times."

Whether your rapist was a stranger and I still have to live with mine."

One may argue that, rape is still not the victim's fault, whether it happened once or it happened many times. Often, victims are asked as to why they only come out after years of being repeatedly raped by their parents and or relatives. This then makes the victim seem like she enjoyed it and or also wanted it. However, in this case, the poet uses equivocation in order to make it clear that, whether it happened with someone you live with, it is still rape, just as the one who was a stranger. It is however, still not the victim's fault. In this instance, feminism fights to dismantle victim blaming and slut shaming through addressing the fact that, whether a victim was wearing a short skirt and or was drunk, it is still rape and the victim deserves that justice that comes with the crime committed upon her.

In this poem, the poet carefully brings to light the after effects of sexual violence from a victim's point of view.

This is to you men by the side of the road

The history of oppression is going on from many ages and with diverse advancement oppression took new shape and become more powerful. (International Journal of Asian Social Science, 2015,). Men used to be respectful within the community and outside their homes. That has however changed over time because women are now being raped while walking home. Women are being subjected to degradation because of refusing to talk to a male counterpart. This is evident in the poem by Vilho.

"The men who whistle at me as if I were some dog.

The men who insult me when I don't respond.

The men who make my blood boil and my head run with all sorts of insults.

The men who never cease to remind me that I need my body caressed and that my boobs are perfect for fondling." (Vilho, 2018)

From these few lines, one is able to deduce that men have become disrespectful. Their way of proliferating patriarchy has now become cat calling and whistling at a woman instead of calling her by her name.

According to Brittan, masculinity is the masculine ideology that justifies and naturalises male domination. As such, it is the ideology of patriarchy. Masculinity takes it for granted that there is a fundamental difference between men and women, it assumes that heterosexuality is normal, it accepts without question the sexual division of labour, and it sanctions the political and dominant role of men in

the public and private spheres. In analysing masculinity as an essence, we examine things characteristics of the male sex. Another critic argued that:

“It is not so much the specific kinds of work men and women do – they have always varied from time to time and place to place – but the simple fact that the sexes do different kinds of work, whatever it is, which is in and of itself important. The division of labour by sex means that the work group becomes also a sex group. The very nature of maleness and femaleness becomes embedded in the sexual division of labour. One’s sex and one’s work are part of one another. One’s work defines one’s gender” (Bernard 1981:3).

This is what feminism aims to abolish; the fact that women are disadvantaged because of their biological gender and sex. To say that women are to be paid less because of the belief that a woman’s place is in the kitchen is wrong and should be done away with. Feminism aims to emancipate women to go for their dream careers and disassemble toxic masculinity and what it stands for that subjects women to the child bearing and kitchen sphere.

These men who sit by the side road and shame women who refuse to entertain them use their masculinity as a form of oppression. This is brought out in the poem when Vilho writes that these men comment about her body as well as her breasts.

“The men who never cease to remind me that I need my body caressed and that my boobs are perfect for fondling.” (Vilho, 2018)

They are indeed subjecting women to being their sexual objects and nothing more. In a world that has accomplished so much, we still fail to acknowledge the toxic mindsets that men have and how degrading it is to women. Instead of men degrading women and calling them bitches and whores, men were to be providing for their families (Bernard 1981; Aweda 1984; Carrigan et al, 1987; Stock 1995; Silberschmidt, 1999 etc.) This is the reason behind the movement *#MenAreTrash*. Women want to raise awareness towards the acts of men. This is because women want men to realise their toxic ways and change. “Acknowledging the implications of *#MenAreTrash* would mean men would have to admit that they are the kinds of people who ignore, participate and benefit from the subjugation of women and do nothing to eradicate the oppression of fellow human beings, simply because they are women.” (Kiri Rupiah, 2017:5)

Apart from the physical damage patriarchy has on women, they also suffer mental oppression from the acts of men. The word “Oppression”, means, related with both physical and mental distress. Oppression is present in the form of armed struggle, economic disparity, slavery, caste, religious intolerance, racism, lynching and other societal reservations, including gender bias. (International Journal of Asian Social Science, 2015). In this poem, it is brought out when Vilho mentions that she has to silence her insults in her mind. This is evident that the acts of men have affected her mentally and she is on the verge of a breakdown.

“The men who make my blood boil and my head run with all sorts of insults.” (Vilho, 2018)

“Our variants of socio-biology, genetic makeup, evolutionary psychology, genes that determine our sexual behaviour, oppression against women, seem to justify systems of exploitation, oppression, domination, class hatred and the like as something inescapable, unchangeable, and inevitable.” (Brewer, 1984:56). Cat calling and demeaning a woman when she refuses to talk to you or give you her number is a form of oppression because it is a manner of inflicting masculinity on the female counterpart. Because society says that women are to abide to all the requests of men, the 21st century male counterpart feels insulted if a woman says no to him. A study by The Social Sciences and Reproductive Health Research Network, (1999) in Nigeria have found that masculinity and manhood are constructed through a gradual, timely, and orderly process, of socially prescribed, family centered and community related roles and responsibilities. The extent of these (male) focused roles is, to a large extent, undertaken by women at the household level, where primary socialisation takes place. Boys are taught by their mothers and shown by their fathers how to be a man and they are excused from performing ‘female’ tasks around the house. The manner in which they were brought up in their households then manifests itself through their actions when dealing with women. It might be that, even though a boy was not brought up with the notion that he should call a woman a whore, he was brought up with the belief of patriarchy that states that men are superior to women and that women should abide by all that a man asks of her. One may choose to argue that because the woman retaliates, the man’s ego becomes bruised and he reacts by either calling her useless, a bitch and or a whore.

Olaussen (1992) explains in her work *Three Types of Feminist Criticism* how woman, through cultural constructions, has been considered as “the other” in relation to man. The focus on ideology as the main reason behind women’s oppression leads to a distinction between sex as a biological category and gender, which is a social construction. If a man catcalls you, as a woman, in the 21st century, you are

supposed to respond to him because of the 'otherness' that is associated with you. You are not allowed to be your own self except be inclined to respond to whatever the man asks of you.

4.3.4 Physical abuse

This section of the research will provide an insight on what physical abuse is and how the different poets give account of it in their poems. It will also give scholarly information on toxic masculinity and how it is a contributing factor towards physical abuse and the *#MenAreTrash* narrative.

Toxic masculinity

The term "masculinity" refers to the roles, behaviours and attributes that are associated with maleness and considered appropriate for men. Toxic masculinity is by adherence to traditional male gender roles that restrict the kinds of emotions allowable for boys and men to express, including social expectations that men seek to be dominant (the "alpha male") and limit their emotional range primarily to expressions of anger. These often happen through body shaming women, degrading their self-worth and esteem.

Childhood burden

The first account of the narrative that *#MenAreTrash* is delivered when the victim experienced physical abuse from her uncle touching her as soon as she started growing breasts and he took notice of her. This was someone she stayed with and was to protect her.

"He'd always talk about how my skin seemed so soft.

"And once I was old enough to start wearing a bra, my uncle tried taking it off."

This indicates that, for rape victims whose perpetrator is a relative, the perpetrator often starts with sexual comments about the physical changes of their targeted victim. This is noticeable when the victim's rapist made comments about her skin. This means that he has taken notice of her and has made her his target of abuse. The victim further writes that, after she has started wearing a bra, he has tried taking it off. This designates that, he has seen an opportunity to strike and commit his crime because he has seen how vulnerable she is. To substantiate her vulnerability, not only as a child, but as a woman too, the victim gives account of how men have always been excused for their wrongdoings. This means that, whether she was to speak up or not, she would not be believed because society teaches that men are never wrong and their dongs are often excused with, 'they are boys and that is their nature.'

Patriarchy does not hold men accountable for what they do to harm women in any way, especially with committing sexual violence. To make matters worse, patriarchy is further propagated by the silence of women, and it's not willing silence, it is rather because women know that, society 'respects' an obedient woman; one who respects men and does not question their actions.

'But because "boys will be boys" that turn into psychopaths who get to be excused from persecution because they're men,

'And my mom raised a good girl and we don't cause a scene,

'I never said anything.'

In the end, the victim remained silent because she was taught to never say anything implicating towards a man. With respect of rape to the girl child, it is common for most children to keep silent and not disclose the incident immediately, sometimes, not at all. (Azaliah Mapombere, 2011:68)

Mapombere (2011) continues to argue that, it is undeniable that the traumatising effects and haunting memory lasts longer with the victim/survivor than the rapist, the effect a 'culture of rape has on the society is long lasting and undeniable. This means that, for the victim, she carries the trauma for a very long time and this is evident in *Childhood Burden* when the victim documents that, she does not like going to the north because that is the same place that her uncle molested her.

'...I don't like going to the village and it makes me a mbwiti,

'But I'm not about to spend 8 hours on a bus just to visit the place where my uncle molested me.'

This is an indication that the victim has not healed from her past traumatic experience and would rather stay away from the environment where her affliction happened.

As the Tangi Uushona continues to write about the influence an environment has on a victim, she also writes about how she had to suppress her emotions.

'...I am free, mentally and emotionally.'

This gives the chance to argue that, the victim has suppressed her traumatic experience as a memory and tried to bury it. This would be because, as much as she argues that she is free, the illusion of freedom does not allow her to freely visit the place where she was sexually abused by her uncle.

Again, the narrative that *#MenAreTrash* is reinstated because, the victim's uncle felt entitled to her body and took advantage of her. This is a reminder that, the narrative is about how men use patriarchy as pedestal to impose their entitled toxic masculinity on women. The very fact that the uncle had made comments about her physical change in a manner that insinuates sexual arousal is evidence enough that men do not respect women as an entity on their own. It is evidence that, men, will always feel the need to want to use their toxic masculinity and get their way with women. This is also because society applauds patriarchy and has not in any way given women the voice to speak up about their ill-treatments with men. The *#MenAreTrash* movement has been birthed for the very reason that, women have been silenced for too long and have been told and made believe that, patriarchy is superior and that speaking up means disrespect, not only towards men, but also towards tradition and society.

To substantiate, the victim wrote that,

‘while other kids learnt to play hop scotch,

I was playing hide-and-don't-speak with my emotions.

...I was too young to claim to feel the way I did. They said this to me as if I had a choice.’

When the elders refused her the voice and right to feel emotionally, the victim then personifies the image of the African women as subdued and victimised without a voice of their own. By restraining her voice and emotions, they are stripping away her identity as a woman, one who should exist on her own, and one who has a voice of her own. In this case, she was young, thus, the elders indoctrinating her into believing that she did not know what she was saying was the beginning of patriarchal influence over her. The aim of the *#MenAreTrash* movement is to raise the awareness that abuse, patriarchy, and traditional practices that do not break this silence and subjugate women and are often swept under the carpet by the society, should be done away with because they imprison women.

4.4 Abandonment and carrying the baggage

This section will provide insight on how, whether one has left an abusive relationship, the baggage still surfaces once triggered. It will also place focus on how, survivors of abuse tend to suppress their trauma and not deal with it, and how it later in life, affects their day-to-day life.

4.4.1 Childhood trauma

Abandonment is a frequently used topic in literature, especially that of children. It often takes many forms. Which include death of a natural parent, running away, sublimation of the natural parent's authority to a step-parent, negligent parent and or the one form that is evident in the poem *Childhood Trauma* (2019) by Tangi Uushona, literal abandonment.

In the beginning of the poem, Uushona writes about how she wanted to become Catholic even though she did not understand what it meant. This was simply because to her, that was the only way she could be closer to someone she could call her father.

“... it wasn't because I understood the culture,

Its cause, that way, every once a week on Sundays,

I'd get to see my father.”

Uushona uses biblical allusion to illustrate and fully explain the absence of her father. To her, this meant that, even though her father has abandoned their family, she still had someone to be a father figure to her. One may argue that, this is similar to the verse in ... that says, bring all the children to me, for the Kingdom of God belongs to them. To Uushona, being in church meant that, she had spiritual refuge from her church leader.

The poet continues to write about the consequences of being without a father figure in her life when she writes about the way her mother had to step in and become the breadwinner of their family, with the little she could afford.

“my mom had a garage to her name before she did anything else cause that's all she could afford us to live in.’

“...and so I skipped a few meals, that doesn't mean I was happy.’

This is evidence that when men abandon their children, women have to step in and fill both roles of parents.

4.4.2 Daddy Issues

In this poem, Lydia October explains how she does have a father, yet he does nothing to support her upbringing nor perform the little gestures that an ordinary father would for his daughter. She starts with

acknowledging that she does have a biological father, yet, he does not take up the role of him being a father.

‘I have a father, an actual biological father,

I have never had him send me airtime out of the blue.”

”...and ask how my day was,

”Many times, he left, months, gone and almost a memory.”

In the above lines, the poet provides account of how her father is there but he is hardly at home, sometimes he would even go for months and she would almost forget about him and his existence. Through the course of his absence, the victim is still carrying the baggage of his absence and lack of role from her life. In the end, as a result, the victim would date someone who is like her father. A man that is available only when it suits him. This man displays the absence and re-appearance of her father. This means that the victim is displaying the Electra Complex.

4.4.3 Carrying the baggage

The poet further continues to portray the victim’s life of trauma and abuse when she further wrote about the victims first relationship.

‘my first relationship was my longest and most abusive. His name was make up.’

‘Homeboy only felt good about himself when he had my face-beat.’

‘And for the longest time he made me feel like the only place that I’d ever find a reason to call myself beautiful was on the inside of a mirror.’

‘...could never handle my baggage.’

‘...and carried all my bags under my eyes.’

Toxic masculinity and entitlement has given men the power to abuse women into silence and suffering. In this recollection of traumatic memories, the victim narrates her first abusive relationship and how she used make-up to hide the abuse because she could not speak up. In this narration, the poet makes use

of personification when she gives the make up the characteristic of beating her. In order for the people not notice the abuse, the victim used make up. However, make up as a personified being, only felt and looked good on her when he had her face beat, which is a metaphor for how her boyfriend only felt good when he beat her. This then brings in the aspect of emotional abuse because the victim further recounts how this man made her feel like the only place she can feel beautiful is in front of the mirror, which one might argue that it could be him. For an abuser, emotionally, he would make his victim feel like he is the only one who notices her beauty, which in return creates the dependable syndrome where the victim only believes the abuser and not what anyone says about her.

The victim further uses another metaphor when she admits that, after that, no man has been able to handle her baggage, which in this case is her trauma. Thus, she carries it all under her eyes, which might be that, the only way she has managed to carry her burdens and trauma is by crying.

4.4.4 Trauma by Jane Mungabwa (2018)

In this poem, the poet uses memory in order to show how human beings can be affected by their trauma even if they have suppressed it. In the poem, the boy hates loud noises because it reminds him of how his father used to abuse his mother. Even though many years have passed, he still hates loud noises because his brain has registered that, should there be a loud noise, he cannot hear his mother screaming for help, thus, he cannot help her. This is brought out in the first lines of the poem.

Turn the music down, love songs, sad songs,

Turn the music down! I hear her cry!

Radio off, silence, no cry, she's fine now,

But I still hear her cry,

Replay...

On my cheek,

I catch another, escaped, salty tear

Through these lines, the victim in the poem is triggered by any noise. Because of the trauma that he has suffered, he is unable to stay at a place that has noise. This even transcends into his everyday

relationships. To him, his mother becomes the first priority away from his father who is abusive. This is traumatic for him because, even after his mother has left the abusive relationship, his childhood traumatic experience is still with him.

One may choose to argue that, even though he has repressed the memory of his mother being abused, loud noises still trigger him into his past. Repression is defined as “the cornerstone on which the whole structure of psychoanalysis resets” (Freud 1914: 16). Repression theory, thus, is of importance, and it is not only set to elucidate a defense mechanism. It is an attempt to inhibit one’s own undesirable impulses, especially those desired by the id. Freud considers repression central to clinical treatment, and to reach the unconsciousness.

Stop time,

It’s been a high climb,

But I still hear her screams,

Poor me, her I see, her I hear, she’s fine now; I see

“Bang bang!” blows and gunshots I hear,

Noises in my head, loud n clear.

In the above lines, the centre of attention still remains his mother and how every noise makes him think she is unsafe. He using auditory imagery when he speaks about how he can hear her scream. This is evidence of the abuse his mother endured from his father. In the next line, the victim illustrates how he pities her. In this instance, he feels helpless because of what his father is doing to his mother. Him being a child, limits the efforts he is unable to do in order to help the mother, thus, the only way he finds is to block all sounds out so he listens to her. This fully illustrates and brings forth the narrative that men are trash because of how abusive relationships have been normalised. This is especially traumatic because the abuse happens in the same home where their son is, which in return damages the person the son turns out to be.

According, to Cohen (1983), Freud has studied the unconsciousness to uncover the nature of the repressed, because all id desires are stored deeply in the unconsciousness via repression. It is this sense of depth that requires Freud to question patient’s secrets. He strives to clarify the conception of the unconsciousness to make it seem reasonable; consequently, he develops the notion of repression.

Pilling (1999) stresses that Freud rectifies cognitive psychology which conceives the human mind as no more than information processor. He assumes that the mind is indeed an extraordinary machine as cognitive psychologists proclaim; it processes, stores, and collects information, besides he adds other elements as shame which makes the mind more than paralleled programs. Repression theory is brought about to question one's own secrets and unresolved desires. In this instance, the unresolved desire is the trauma that the victim has experienced. Because it still triggers him, it means that he is still not over it. Generally, the theory investigates the patients past life to help him recall past memories. Memory thus, is the Royal Road which is located in the preconscious and permits for retrieving some unconscious desires (ibid), which is the case in this poem. The main theme here then is carrying the baggage, however, through repression. The character believes that, because the years have passed, he is free of what he has witnessed as a child, however, he is still triggered by the noises he hears. Through suppression, one is able to discover the many secrets that people who suffered traumatic experiences, have buried. Which in this poem, are fear of noises and fear of thinking that his mother is still unsafe.

In this poem, the character in the poem has repressed his past because of the heartache it brought him. Suppressing emotions consciously/unconsciously in times of trauma such as death of a family member, loss of a job, a bad grade, anxiety for a test, etc. can lead to severe effects on the mind and body "A consciously repressed person knows that he has a desire, but fails appreciate its reason-giving force" (Jaeger, 2012: 31). In this case, it is brought out by the way his anxiety gets triggered by noises. He thinks that he has forgotten, only to be reminded. Repression is essentially a blockage of emotions, a coping strategy that many people utilize mistakenly believing it is a healthy way to manage pain. Yet, ego defense mechanisms become pathological when overused because over repressing emotions create other insidious conflicts such as increasing fear and hesitation. In this case, one may argue to say that, by blocking out instances where there is noise, it is his way of coping with the trauma.

4.5 Traditional setup of Aawambo women of Namibia

The taboo around the Aawambo people and its culture that a woman is not to leave her husband despite being abused, and ill-treated by men not only have a physical change on the protagonist but it also affects them psychologically. Some of these women after being beaten several times and no help is offered, succumb to their reality of being a punching bag in the marriage. They become numb because the society that is supposed to support and encourage them, does not aid help nor does it give them the voice to speak up for themselves. The society that agrees with the cultural practices and patriarchy

oppresses them when they are taught that men are the superior counterpart and they have to know that being a subordinate is what humanity assigns them to; with the outrageous treatment, they go through double oppressions. These women become a veritable manifestation of what Chapman (2001) calls “internal oppression”. This treatment of women is beautifully and realistically expressed in Neshani Andreas’ novel *The Purple Violet of Oshaantu* (2001), through the fiction character of Mee Kauna, who, in the novel has suffered abuse through the hands of her husband, Tate Shange. However, during his funeral, she refuses to mourn the death of her husband and give the mandatory speech of the widow at the funeral. This is then what the community uses against her and label her as a mad person. Because of the manner in which she refuses to abide to what culture expects of her, she becomes a mad person. Mee Kauna not only becomes oppressed by patriarchy and culture physically by being beaten and expected to remain in the marriage, she is also oppressed internally. She loses touch with herself and she refuses to eat or change clothes and cry for her deceased husband.

This is the mental manipulation by patriarchy that women go through. The fact that society dictates the extent of a woman’s freedom makes it difficult for her to leave an abusive relationship. Because of this, women experience trauma until they either die and or their perpetrator does.

4.6 Trauma

Spiegel (2008) describes the essence of traumatic stress as helplessness, which he defines as “a loss of control over one's body”. He continues to clarify this in the following words (Spiegel, 2008): “[t]he mental imprint of such frightening experiences sometimes takes the form of loss of control over parts of one’s mind – identity, memory, and consciousness – just as physical control is regained.” Peichl (2007b:23) describes trauma as a toxic condition, a mixture of intense anxiety, absolute helplessness and a loss of control. According to Levine (1997:128-9), the factor that determines whether an event could be classified as traumatic to the person is whether its impact remains unresolved. This means that, in most cases, the trauma that happens to the victims is unresolved in a manner that, either the victim does not have an idea that it happened, or, the victim has suppressed the traumatic event. The importance of the perception of the real nature of an event by an individual is tantamount to ascertaining whether an experience was traumatic to a person. The term ‘perceived life-threatening experiences’ or ‘perceived overwhelming experiences’ features repeatedly in the literature (e.g. Levine 2005:7, Van der Kolk & McFarlane 1996:6). It is also the perception of the event that will determine the extent and nature of the impact it has on the person

In order to make get an understanding of trauma as a phenomenon, one needs to make a clear distinction between trauma and traumatic experience. This will help in creating an understanding of how the *#Men Are Trash* movement affects women from a traumatic standpoint.

This distinction is made clear in Corsini's (2002:1019) *Description of Trauma*, where he describes it as the result of a painful event, while the 'traumatic event or experience' constitutes the injurious event itself. Corsini's definitions of the former are quoted below, followed by his definition of the latter Corsini (2002:1019):

"The result of a painful event, physical or mental, causing immediate damage to the body or shock to the mind. Psychological traumas include emotional shocks that have an enduring effect on the personality, such as rejection, divorce, combat experiences, civilian catastrophes, and racial or religious discrimination."

Traumatic event or experience is the continuing result of such an event to the body or mind or both. Plural is traumata, traumas. Physical or psychic injury stressful or shocking (sic), that may be the original cause of some emotional or mental disorder. This is evident in *Trauma* by Mungabwa, where the victim's trauma causes psychological damage to the extent where, even in his childhood, his brain is always shutting out noises, in an attempt to try and listen to whether his mother is being abused. Some such events early in life may be the foundations for adult neuroses or psychoses. Scaer (2005:58) describes the effects of trauma on the brain as follows: In the brain of the trauma victim, the synapses, neurons, and neurochemicals have been substantially and indefinitely altered by the effects of a unique life experience. Not surprisingly, the perceptual experience that constitutes the mind has been equally altered. Trauma thus represents a time-based corruption of learning. The brain in trauma has lost its ability to distinguish past from present, and as a result it cannot adapt to the future. This confusion of time further immobilizes the trauma victim, who still remains immobilized by a thwarted freeze discharge. Procedural memory is bombarded by environmental and internal cues that represent old, unresolved threat.

The extent of the influence of a traumatic event on a particular individual depends on the dynamics, duration, and severity of the particular trauma, as well as the subjective experience of the individual victim. In the case of *Trauma* by Mungabwa, one may choose to argue that, the extent of the abuse the mother of the victim has gone through, has left a terrible psychological effect on him. He is unable to cope within surroundings that are noisy because he still has the fear that his mother is being abused and

he is unable to hear her. Sikorski continues to further state that the past experience of the individual plays a role in shaping the persons' perception of the extent of the threat and the capacity to respond adequately and defend themselves. Factors that Sikorski (n.d.:2) identifies to be of subjective nature are the degree of intensity, the experience of the stress and helplessness, the cognitive, affective and behavioural reactions to both recollections of and external events that may serve as reminders of the traumatic experience. In this poem, the individual is often reminded by his traumatic past through noise. Because, through his past, silence was what soothed and calmed him down, in his adulthood, he takes this trauma over and the noise acts as triggers. As stated by Freud, (1965:14) trauma and suffering inflicted upon us by other humans leave the most powerful and painful traumatic imprint. This is evident in the poem by Mungabwa as we notice that the victim battles the trauma caused by the abuse of his dad. It is passive trauma yet it is deeply inflicted.

An individual that has suffered a traumatic experience is likely to suffer from one of the following: smoking, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, hepatitis, heart disease, fractures, diabetes, obesity, alcoholism, intravenous drug use, depression and attempted suicide, teen pregnancy, sexually transmitted diseases, poor occupational health, and poor job performance (Middlebrooks & Audage, 2008). Worse yet, the higher the ACE score, the more likely people were to have a number of these conditions interacting with each other. In other words, the higher the ACE score, the greater the impact on a person's physical, emotional, and social health. This is evident in the poems *Trauma* and *Daddy Can You Hear Me* by Mungabwa, where in the form, the victim suffers from concentration disorder, while in the latter, the other victim struggles to forge healthier intimate relationships with men. Because of the damage they faced as children, it has had a huge impact on their lives into adulthood.

4.7 Daddy Issues VS Electra complex

This part of the study will dwell into what 'Daddy Issues' and how the Electra Complex is linked to Daddy Issues. It will also provide reference to how both concepts are highlighted in selected poems.

Traumatism is a theory that studies a psychological injury resulting from a Trauma. Freud developed the concept in his studies of hysteria (1895) to refer to the affect and aftermath of a stressful event. "Traumatism was what above all characterised the patient's personal experience: that external event, identifiable and dateable, becomes subjectively fundamental because of the distressing affects that it stirs up. Its dating can be pushed further back in time as the work of exploration." (Lewkowicz and Bokanowski, 2009: 98) Freud theorized in his examination of hysteria and obsession that a patient's

traumatized memories are stored in the unconsciousness as undesirable memories which are self-withdrawn to protect one's psyche, but the patient remains fixed upon those memories around which his fears revolve. He also noticed in a number of his patients that most repressed memories are produced by sexual experiences (Masson, 1985: 141-144).

As a matter of fact, Traumatism, initially, thought to be sexual; it is directly linked to seduction theory (ibid). Childhood trauma leaves in an individual's mind profound traces which work on in a repetitive sense, the fact that prevents his healing thereof. Hickey (2010) in his model of traumatism affirms that "childhood trauma for serial murderers may serve as a triggering mechanism resulting in an individual's inability to cope with the stress of certain events." This is evident in the poem *The Absence of a Man* by Uushona.

"The importance of a father in the lives of children is often underestimated, yet studies consistently show that fathers play a central role in many aspects of a child's development, including emotional well-being, educational achievement and social interactions. At the same time as fathers are assuming a more active role in child rearing, however, many children find themselves without a father present in their lives. This paper will study the importance of the father's role in a child's upbringing and the effects his absence has on them. Through semi-structured interviews with four psychotherapists and one counseling psychologist, all of whom work in the field of child and adolescent psychotherapy, the study will explore the effects of father-absence on children, the different ways both genders experience father absence, the differing impacts of father absence through death, divorce and work commitments, and the place of the father in contemporary society." (Dave O'Dwyer, 2017, p. 18)

In the poem, the character has not healed from the absence of her father. Thus, the poet makes use of references where she writes about the things she longed to do with her father. In the beginning of the poem, the poet uses an angry tone where she asks the father,

"...how you leave a child behind, to this day, drives me mad. Cause I hadn't been alive long enough to have done something so bad as to be deserted by a man, who I later learnt was my dad." (line, 1-6)

In the opening line, the poet portrays the idea of someone who has been looking for answers for a long time. Wanting to know why her father chose to abandon her without a warning and or reason. One may also choose to argue that, the poet displays the character as someone who has unresolved *daddy issues* because she is blaming herself. This is evident when she writes that, '*...I hadn't been alive long enough*

to have done something so bad... That statement thereof implies that the character feels she contributed to the father leaving her. Self-blame is part of the trauma and because the father has never been there to rectify his mistakes, the daughter remains with doubts about his absence.

To reinstate the narrative that men are trash, this is one of the reasons why it has existed. Men abandon their children and in the end, these children are brought up by single mothers and never experience the father daughter relationship. In the last line of the first stanza, the poet writes that,

'...I'm well over 18...how his back is the most vivid memory of him I still have.'

Here, the poet makes use of visual imagery in order to emphasise the absence of the father. One may argue to say that; it could mean that the only memory she has of the father is him leaving. One may also argue that, it could be that, this is then a metaphor for his absence.

In the second stanza, the poet expresses signs of fear and how much the absence of the father has left her with. She is afraid of saying goodnight because she feels it might be forever. Thus, here the poet fully portrays the after effects of trauma the father has caused. One may argue that, the daughter feels emotional because of the absence of her father. "...he made me cry." This is evidence that "with girls it's more emotional, it's all about the feelings and they do link rejection and abandonment and those things that they feel with the dad having left..." (O'Dwyer, 2017:25)

4.8 You Broke Me Daddy

This poem is about how witnessing domestic violence negatively affects the kind of relationships women choose to have as adults. Most women who have witnessed their mothers/fathers abused, tend to find broken men and women and try to fix them because they couldn't fix their mother or father's abuser. Sometimes these women just think that physical and verbal abuse is a normal part of their relationships. Thus, they hold on to these toxic relationships as they don't see the toxicity. Women who were abused or have witnessed abuse also tend to have low self-esteem which may result in promiscuity. This poem is about the negative effects domestic violence has on the type of the witnesses choose to get involved in. it highlights the process of the female counterpart has to go through with regards to finding a relationship. In this case, the victim then seeks a relationship with someone that is cold like the father used to be. One may then choose to argue that there is an Electra complex within the poem. The victim goes through her life wanting to please the father by getting involved with someone that has the cold and abusive qualities of her father. Not seeing how the abuse of the father to the mother has molded

her, she goes on to seek refuge and comfort from people who abuse her. This way, she feels a connection towards her father and feels like she is making him happy.

“Come and see daddy, come and see the monster that you with your cold demeanour mold.

Couldn’t you see that instead of hard blows, mama cries and booze all I needed was a daddy to hold?

I sought your affection in the beds and arms of men and women who are cold just like you,

And no matter how much pain they caused me, I stayed; I had to be brave because I felt that by trying to save them in a way I was saving you, daddy.

You never even noticed how much I cried, but then again, maybe you noticed daddy but you just never cared to be my dad, you never even tried.” (Mungabwa, 2018)

4.9 Conclusion

This chapter has clearly demonstrated the narrative that *#MenAreTrash* by careful analysis of the poems and the different themes they consist of that assist in creating an understanding of the movement and narrative. It focused on topics such as rape and given the argument that men rape because of entitlement over the body of a women as well as the act of rape being a gamble for power (Paul Moglia, 2015). It also concentrated on how much abandonment of the father in a daughter’s life creates emotional baggage which leads women into being associated with the Electra Complex because of the decisions they make when getting into romantic relationships. In this regard, the study concludes that, women who suffer from abandonment and daddy issues tend to seek romantic affiliations with men who have a character and personality that resembles that of their father. The chapter argued that the motif of the *#MenAreTrash* narrative in the poems is to show that Africana women’s literature bespeaks a need for re-invention and re-membling of identities that have been fragmented due to the multiple systems in society that oppress women. It is also aimed at dismantling patriarchy, which in these instances propagates the acts that men commit upon women. Furthermore, it has demonstrated how much trauma the victims in the poems carry with them every day, however, as agents of change, these women have opted to use literature as an empowering tool for women to be free about expressing their experiences. Through the feminist theory, it assures women that standing together to fight for the emancipation from patriarchy has to be done as a collective. In the end, the study also examined how

much overcoming trauma is an important factor in becoming resilient. In the end, the *#MenAreTrash* narrative acts as a social metaphor for the actual traumas experienced by women.

CHAPTER 5

5.1 CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Females are often relegated to the margins of the culture and confined to the domestic sphere and are represented as the happy, 'primitive', state of pre-colonial Africa within the fast pace changing economic and social change in Africa. In the colonial literature on psychology and psychopathology, the African woman was expected to remain silent and be submissive to the oppressor and patriarchal figure. This is based on the study done by Megan Vaughan on Colonial Power and African Illness (1994). This research was aimed at Interrogating the narrative "*#MenAreTrash*" in Namibian women's spoken poetry with a focus on Gender Based Violence, by looking at the following objectives and questions.

- a) To assess, based on the chosen poems, the commonalities that classify men to be trash.
- b) To examine the role of Spoken Word Namibia with regards to the *#Men Are Trash* movement and its growth.
- c) To analyse whether the *#Men Are Trash* movement has been significant to women.
- d) To evaluate whether the Spoken Word platform is an effective means for women to articulate their experiences.

5.2 To assess, based on the chosen poems, the commonalities that classify men to be trash

Firstly, patriarchy is the biggest commonality that all the poems share as a major theme. With the *#MenAreTrash* narrative, one cannot discuss it in full context without including patriarchy. Walby (1990) defines patriarchy as a 'system of social structures and practices in which men dominate women. This goes as far as in all aspects of the woman's life; homestead, work environment and her sexuality. Which in return, as much as the Namibian women want emancipation and are demanding change within the patriarchal institution and changes that will end male domination, their problems are made worse because of the patriarchy social institution which functions on the principle that "male shall dominate female" Millet (1994: 25).

In this research, through the poems, patriarchy is highlighted as the biggest denominator. In the poems, it has been manifested through toxic masculinity, which is defined as, as well as entitlement over

women, their lives and bodies. It has also manifested itself into different umbrellas which are rape, physical abuse, emotional abuse and sexual abuse.

With toxic masculinity, it has resulted mostly in emotional abuse, whereby the men use reverse psychology on women who want to leave relationships. This is evident in the poem *Cadaver* by Faustina Namatshana, where the man ended up murdering her because she ended the relationship. The victim did not have a voice throughout the abusive relationship, and when she eventually got the courage to walk away, a man that felt entitled to her and her body as well as life, decided to murder her. From a young age, men are taught that they are superior than women, and this teaching places men on a higher pedestal that does not value a woman as a human being that is worthy of anything. Because of this, women are constantly beaten, harassed in work places, in the streets and at home, by men.

The theme of sexual abuse is also dominant. It is brought out and highlighted in almost all the poems. Throughout the analysis of the poetry, it was noticeable that men have been said to rape because they retain power over women and this gives them their title of entitlement back to them. Being able to overpower a woman, to a man, means that he is man enough. Through the analysis, it is also evident that in most cases, the victims were silenced and did not have a chance to speak about their experiences with men. This then means that, the movement is fighting to dismantle the societal norm that women are superior to men and that, because of this, men are entitled to women and abuse them. Because of this superiority, women have been placed at the bottom of the food chain and this means that, they do not have the chance to speak up. However, through literature, these women have created a voice for themselves and are able to tell their experiences without being judged and or stigmatised by men and the society that helps to propagate patriarchy and what it stands for.

5.3 To examine the role of Spoken Word Namibia with regards to the *#Men Are Trash* movement and its growth.

Apart from being a safe space for women to tell their stories and experience without judgement and stigma, it plays a role in educating people on what the *#MenAreTrash* movement is about. It stands to give full account and support for the affected women. One may argue that when it hosts the only women show, it becomes a safe haven for the victims. It is a space where women who are affected feel at home. The movement has now flourished to include all survivors of all types of sexual violence to speak their truths and start a conversation regarding the impact of such atrocious acts. This is similar to

the *#Men Are Trash* movement that caters for women to come forth about their experiences. Together with the *#MeeToo* movement, more women are being inspired to talk about their discomforts with men.

5.4 To analyse whether the *#Men Are Trash* movement has been significant to women.

Yes, it has been significant. Through the movement, more women have spoken up about their experiences and this has had a huge influence on educating and creating awareness on what the movement really is about. To substantiate, a Namibian lady named Kasigh Akawa exposed her rapist on Twitter, which in return made it possible for more Namibian women to come out about their perpetrators. This then further created the hashtag, *#NameYourRapist*. It has also been a great engaging initiative on social media as it is currently the most effective means of articulating and engaging on different issues that are affecting women. With the movement, women have had the platform to gain a voice and have had immense support from fellow women who either share the same experiences and or are just being supportive. It has also given a voice to other women who are committed to fighting for women rights and related issues, and one of them is Olga Namutewa, who shares the sentiment that, 'with or without evidence, the truth is the truth. Supporting men who might be rapists is the mistake some of you are willing to make. Supporting women who might be liars is the mistake I am willing to make. That's that.' (Olga Namutewa, 2019) This is proof that, because of the movement, the hashtag has created a ripple effect of females who gained a voice and ones who stand by each other. It has also birthed women who are becoming agents of change. This means that the voices of women are no longer silenced nor stigmatised as to say they are not believed or questioned about what they were wearing and or why they were out drinking. Gaining a voice and a support system that believes in women is the greatest achievement of the movement, and Olga Namutewa is definitely an agent of change and a voice for women.

In collaboration with the *#MeToo* movement, more rape cases have been reported, which shows that the awareness to dismantle the patriarchal ways in which women are oppressed and confined into a box of silence has definitely been effective. It has also assisted in educating people who do not understand what the movement is about. Through this movement, there have been talks that were aimed at creating awareness and educating people. Some of these talks include radio interviews with the *#MeToo* movement Namibia activists such as Lebbeus Hashikutuva, who shares the sentiment that, it is important to protect women who share their stories, especially those of sexual harassment. Hashikutuva continues to argue that, 'rape culture and sexual violence thrives in an environment where survivors are

silenced.’ (2019). This supports the argument that rape culture encourages silence and in the end, no one is held accountable because rape culture not only slut shames the victims when they speak out, but also blames them. Through the *#MenAreTrash*, women have gained the confidence and the voice to strive beyond the barriers of being slut shamed by men and have taken up space in creating an identity for themselves, one that takes and makes own sexual decisions, and one that is not afraid to speak up against patriarchy. With support of the *#MeToo* movement, the *#MenAreTrash* movement has gained momentum and the women that are now able to speak up are supported and are not blamed, slut shamed nor asked why they are only reporting years later. When women speak up, this movement gives them the opportunity to express and articulate their experiences without being thought of as seeking attention. The movement has given women the chance to hold their perpetrators accountable because the people who support them listen with empathy and understanding. In the end, women no longer live in fear and or silence.

Change is brought out through the literature that women have brought forth through being agents of change. It has been said that, most of the writings that were written on women and about women were mostly written from a men’s perspective. However, through the years, more change has come forth with how women have opted to speak up and retell their accounts and experiences with society and patriarchy. From the accounts documented by African female writers, and now female poets and advocates of equality and better and fair treatment of and for women.

In Namibia, this is seen through both literature and prose. For example, the novel *The Purple Violet of Oshaantu* by Neshani Andreas is a great account of how one women stood up to both, tradition and her then people as well as society, to change and get equal and better treatment for her. Mee Kauna is regarded as an agent of change because she opted to retaliate against tradition and do what is better for her. Through prose, these poems that are analysed through this research are accounts of women finally gaining their voices and courage to air their opinions and ill-treatments they experience through men. It is definitely not something one can actually ignore because, the themes, rape and murder, as well as abuse of women are a plight within the Namibian community. To substantiate, for a poet to write about the courage of leaving an abusive and oppressive relationship, as brought out in the poem *Cadaver* by Namashana (2018), this literature becomes an agent of change. It becomes an act of encouragement. Different writers in literature raised their voice against women oppression such as Wollstonecraft (1792), who defended the rights of women and encouraged women to free themselves from men and society oppression. As she said “I do not wish them (women) to have power over men;

but over themselves" (p.68). In this instance, this type of literature then becomes a moving force to liberate women to leave toxic and abusive relationships, just as Felman's (1985) observation that, "the madness silenced by society is given voice by literature." Abuse, patriarchy, and traditional practices that do not break this silence and subjugate women are often swept under the carpet by the society. The image of the African woman painted in the works of pioneer African writers, according to the literary critic, Julie Agbasiere (2006, p.72): Is that of the subordinate, subservient and decorative, second rate character dominated by society's patriarchy. Feminist writers are now giving women a voice and a locus standi to challenge the societal norms and values obnoxious to them. So, writing against this is then important as it creates a ripple effect of the fact that women do indeed have the courage to walk away, they just need support. This is very relevant because it promotes the independence for women, their rights and freedom from patriarchy. To substantiate, it is said that the black women's literary tradition began in a conscious effort to create a space for black women's writing and to illustrate a distinction between black women's reality and the realities of others. One may choose to argue that this is relevant because it liberates the African woman by giving her a voice to speak of and about her experiences as a woman. Objective of women writing and talking about women is that "it should describe reality from a woman's perspective." (Molara Onugundipe –Leslie 1987, 5)

5.5 To evaluate whether the Spoken Word platform is an effective means for women to articulate their experiences.

The Spoken Word Namibia initiative has created a safe space and platform for women to tell their stories. Together with the *#MeToo* movement Namibia, it has given women the voice to speak up about their sufferings at the hands of men, through creating an all women show at least once a month. This platform allows women to engage with each other and talk openly about their experiences and how to best to cope and be resilient towards their past.

It is also of paramount importance to note that creative expression is always a profound way for women to fully express and articulate their experiences because, particularly, oral traditions like storytelling, which in today's time has become spoken word, has been passed down. This is great for our different cultures and women story tellers because it is ever present and has always been a form of conveying what is happening in the lives of women, educating each other and those that are listening.

Sharing and healing from trauma has been the main objective of Spoken Word as an initiative for women, especially the Only Women shows. This is important because poetry is used to help navigate and assist with healing and talking about certain things that are not necessarily easy and or are stigmatised to talk about. Through poetry, women can convey their experiences because it is a profound medium for expressing their experiences. Spoken Word Namibia provides this space and opportunity for women, because in a society that applauds patriarchy and marginalises women, women are silenced and not heard and this space has given them the opportunity to radicalise their experiences by storytelling, creating and taking up space. This initiative allows women to be themselves and teach others to be brave and take up space. 'We should be teaching young girls to take up space. Nothing is as important as taking up space in society and cementing yourself' (Zozibini Tunzi, 2019).

To conclude, according to psychodynamic theory, traumatised individuals are faced with the task of integrating the traumatic event into their understanding of the meaning of life, self-concept, and world image (Gerrity & Solomon, 1996). The emotional reactions of traumatised individuals are viewed as the result of discrepancies between internal and external information (Horowitz, 1986; Horowitz & Kaltreider, 1980; Schwartz, 1990; Widom, 1989). Thus, the journey to heal is tough, yet necessary and therapeutic. It is an essential part of one's whole being. Being able to wake up and not feel the need to sleep in more, without having an ache about your past, it is indeed beautiful.

5.6 RECOMMENDATIONS

This is poetry feared by men who are perpetrators and or friends to perpetrators. Although, again, the relevance is not the same, in Namibia, the target audience is the men who are ignorant and or need the education. The men who refuse to admit that they have an advantage over women, because of their biological gender. In this case, poetry is not written with just the intention of healing or creating a cathartic experience; it is written to be a tool with an immediate and urgent social role. Although these poems can be analysed and appreciated for its aesthetic merit, it has a cultural function that is yet to be established in Namibia; educating.

With the establishment of the *#MenAreTrash* movement, a good fight has been put up, yet, the battle is not over. Re-educating the boy child on toxic gender roles would be a great start in abolishing the patriarchal way men continue to be raised in. It is rather sad that the girl child is told to be careful and not get raped and or murdered, while in fact, the boy child should be taught to not assert their

masculinity towards a woman and rape her. In this regard, the main focus should be redirected towards educating the boy children on how to be better men: an uncle that does not molest their niece, a father that does not rape his daughter, a brother that protects his sister and his female friends from abusive men, a boyfriend that understands that relationships end and more importantly, a man that knows consent. We also need to encourage women who are survivors and or victims of sexual abuse that, being raped does not become your identity. Being raped is something one can heal from. The word raped does not define them. We need to sensitise and educate people, especially the ones from the black community about reporting rape and not making it a family issue that is swept under the mat. It is also of paramount importance to allow women who are abused in marriages and or relationships to come back home, because at the end of the day, it is better to help your daughter heal, than to see her in a coffin, murdered.

Another important recommendation would be that, for police stations to have victim friendly staff that are trained on how to deal with women and men who have been abused, assaulted and or raped. Together with this, it would be beneficial if there was a unit specifically for that, with officers trained specifically to deal with victims of such. This would mean that, women would not live in fear of reporting their perpetrators. It would also mean that, maybe the cases would be dealt with at a faster pace and the people assisting would not victim blame nor slut shame.

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FACULTY RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE (F-REC)

DECISION: ETHICS APPROVAL

Ref: S031/2019
Student no.: 214050505

Issue Date: 13 September 2019

RESEARCH TOPIC

Title: Interrogating the narrative "*#Men Are Trash*" in Namibian women's spoken poetry with a focus on Gender Based Violence.

Researcher: Ms Frieda Ndeutala Mukufa
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Dear Ms Mukufa,

The Faculty of Human Sciences Research Ethics Committee (F-REC) of the Namibia University of Science and Technology reviewed your application for the above-mentioned research. The research as set out in the application has been approved.

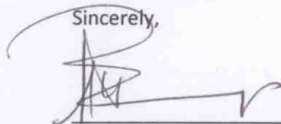
We would like to point out that you, as principal investigator, are obliged to:

- maintain the ethical integrity of your research,
- adhere to the Research policy and ethical guidelines of NUST, and
- remain within the scope of your research proposal and supporting evidence as submitted to the F-REC.

Should any aspect of your research change from the information as presented to the F-REC, which could have an effect on the possibility of harm to any research subject, you are under the obligation to report it immediately to your supervisor or F-REC as applicable in writing. Should there be any uncertainty in this regard, you have to consult with the F-REC.

We wish you success with your research, and trust that it will make a positive contribution to the quest for knowledge at NUST.

Sincerely,



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