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EMPOWERING AFRICAN WOMEN: AN ANALYSIS OF SELECTED BLACK FEMALE AUTHORED
BIOGRAPHICAL TEXTS IN POST-APARTHEID SOUTH AFRICA

BY

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10 April 2022

DECLARATION

I, Catherine Hamann, hereby declare that the work contained in the thesis, entitled **“Empowering African women: An analysis of selected black female authored biographical texts in post-apartheid South Africa”**, 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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DEDICATION

I dedicate this thesis to my beloved husband, Patrick Hamann. Thank you for your never - ending support and your unconditional love.

ABSTRACT

This study examined the empowering of African women in selected black female authored biographical texts written in post-apartheid South Africa. Women in South Africa have been disadvantaged largely because of the criminal behaviour of the patriarchal male dominated society. The two texts studied were *Khwezi – The Remarkable Story of Fezekile Ntsukela Kuzwayo* (Tlhabi, 2017) and *No Longer Whispering to Power: The Story of Thuli Madonsela* (Gqubule, 2017). The texts were selected because both were written by African female authors and they address contemporary themes that affect the daily livelihoods of women. The texts also represent a true reflection of the difficult challenges encountered by most women in Africa and other parts of the world. The theories of radical feminism as well as trauma and resilience were used in the analysis of the two texts. The study concluded that it is not a waste of resources to educate the girl-child because education is the best method of empowering women. This study has also revealed that a male dominated society can go to any length to disempower women as long as they have the means.

Furthermore, the study concluded that the most dehumanising manner of disempowering a woman through rape. Lastly, the study revealed that biographical writing plays a great role to empower women. The impact of literary texts written by women to represent other women serves as an inspiration because it presents real- life stories. Many women are ashamed to speak out, as a result, they suffer in silence. The stories of both Kuzwayo and Madonsela inspired many women to rise above their circumstances. Hence, women should be encouraged to speak out and report cases of rape or any case of injustices committed against them, despite criticism by society. The study recommends that the patriarchal male society should be educated on the rights of women. In addition, the girl child must be accorded the resources and given the necessary support to acquire an education. It is only when a woman is educated that a society can thrive. It is also imperative to encourage more women to write autobiographies even if someone write it on their behalf. This recommendation is an awareness strategy that can help women to share their various experiences.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

ANC:	African National Congress
ANCWL:	African National Congress Women's League
APA:	American Psychological Association
CDC:	Centres for Disease Control and Prevention
CEDAW:	Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women
Covid-19:	Coronavirus disease
CSW:	Commission on the Status of Women
DTA:	Democratic Turnhalle Alliance
EFF:	Economic Freedom Fighters
MDGs:	Millennium Development Goals
MK:	uMkhonto we Sizwe
NUST:	Namibia University of Science and Technology
NWLA:	Namibian Women's Lawyers Association
OAU:	Organisation of African Unity
OSM:	Open Street Map
PAWLO:	Pan African Women's Liberation
PAWO:	Pan African Women's Organisation
PLAN:	People's Liberation Army of Namibia
SA:	South Africa
SADF:	South African Defence Forces
SDGs:	Sustainable Development Goals
SWAPO:	South West Africa People's Organization

UDF: United Democratic Front

UN: United Nations

USA: United States of America

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

This purpose of this chapter is to introduce the study. It presents the background to the study, statement of the problem, research objects, significance of the study. It also considers the limitations and delimitation of the study, as well as the definitions of technical terminology.

1.1. Background to the study

The selected post-apartheid biographies Khwezi – *The Remarkable Story of Fezekile Ntsukela Kuzwayo* by Redi Tlhabi as well as *No Longer Whispering to Power: The Story of Thuli Madonsela* by Thandeka Gqubule reflects on current power relations that impede women's development, especially after colonisation.

The empowerment of women has been a subject of scholarly reflections in literature studies in the postcolonial era. It is a concept that can be traced back to Paulo Freire's text, *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* (1974). Freire contends that any society is divided into two forces, the oppressor and the oppressed. This binary view perceives men as the former, and women as the latter. However, Freire (1996) also contends that women are not passively oppressed, but they engage liberatory strategies to challenge dominant oppressive systems and the culture of silence. As such, raging scholarly debates have focused on women empowerment to create enabling environments in which "women are given the opportunity to participate fully in social, political and economic spheres of life" (Sushama cited in Maunere & Phiri, 2018, p. 58). However, not much attention has been given to African women's biographies as instruments that give voice to the silenced and disempowered black women. Women are vulnerable, disempowered and have been treated unequally for centuries, in all spheres of life. According to Phiri (2004) African women experience differences in "race, culture, politics, economy and religion" (p. 16). The two texts emphasise how women empowerment after colonisation in political, social, and economic spheres have been thwarted and significantly neglected. As such, the problematic nature of gender imbalances as represented in the two biographies calls for a change in the status of women to enhance their decision-making capacity, challenge the injustices and inequality they face and call for immediate changes.

Given the socio-economic problems faced by women in different societies, it is imperative that women contest the existing unpleasant circumstances which would eliminate the dominant systems which disempower them. Using the two biographical texts, from a trauma and radical feminist perspective, this study argues that there is a need to adopt appropriate measures to eliminate violence and discriminatory practices, which would align it with the United Nations 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). This study thus calls for the empowerment of women, and their autonomy, with regards to issues such as political, and social economic factors for sustainable development. The selected post-apartheid biographies reflect on current power relations that impede women's empowerment development, especially after colonisation. The two texts continue to mirror the enduring concern regarding the empowerment of African women in the postcolonial era. As such, this study explores how the texts provide insights which can be used to better understand the literary representation of women's disempowerment, and the empowerment strategies that women can adopt to liberate themselves.

1.2. Statement of the problem

Most women in many African contexts are oppressed and disempowered in different domains of life. As such, the continued vulnerability of women is reflected in the two biographies, namely, Khwezi – *The Remarkable Story of Fezekile Ntsukela Kuzwayo* by Redi Tlhabi as well as *No Longer Whispering to Power: The Story of Thuli Madonsela* by Thandeka Gqubule. The two texts emphasise how women empowerment after colonisation in the political, social, and economic spheres have been thwarted and significantly neglected by the patriarchal African male. The problematic nature of gender imbalances as represented in the two biographies calls for a change in the status of women in the purpose of enhancing their decision-making capacity, especially in the areas of sexuality.

The problem to be investigated in this study is the disempowerment of women in post-apartheid South Africa as represented in two biographical texts. Building up on Freire's (1996) views on empowerment, the study argues that women are still fighting the manacles of male superiority which are holding them captive. Thus, despite the significant interventions by organisations such as the United Nations, women are still discriminated and harassed daily, rendering them powerless and defenceless. Because of its fluid and multidimensional nature,

the interconnection of the black woman's empowerment to biographical texts remains unexplored (Sharp et.al., 2003 and Leder 2016). Hence, the problematic nature of women empowerment and gender imbalances as represented in the two biographies calls for resilience and transformation in the status of women with the intention of enhancing their decision-making capacity, especially in the political, economic, and social spheres.

1.3. Objectives of the study

The main objective of this study is to evaluate the extent to which women have been disempowered and the empowerment strategies in the two female biographical writings. The study considers the following sub-objectives:

- To investigate how women are disempowered as depicted in selected biographies.
- To examine the strategies women use to empower themselves as depicted in two biographies; and
- To determine the impact and inspiration of female authored biographies.

1.4. Significance of the study

This study hopes to contribute to an analysis of the selected texts in terms of trauma and radical feminist theories as depicted in the creative texts by black women. Readers of this study are conscientised on issues leading to black women's disempowerment and how these can be addressed. In addition, this study contributes to the growing knowledge base of biographical writing by black women.

1.5. Delimitations of the study

The study considers only two biographical texts by female authors. In addition, only those with a feminism orientation written by black female writers have been used. This is in conformity to the scope of the study of trauma and radical feminism to analyse how women have been disempowered.

1.6. Limitations of the study

This study is limited to the narratives which are set within the narratives which are set within a specified time frame; colonial, as well as the post-colonial era.

1.7. Definitions of technical terms

- **Disenfranchised:** being deprived of rights or privileges
- **Disempowerment:** The forcible denial or deprivation by one or more persons in a position of power over the rights and choices of another person or group.
- **Class:** is defined as a system of ordering society whereby people are divided into sets based on perceived social or economic quality (Cottrell, 2019).
- **Feminism:** the advocacy of women's rights on the ground of the equality of the sexes. (Friedman, Meterkamp & Posel, 1987)
- **Female Disempowerment:** is the modus operandi through which women are socially excluded, deprived and or denied of the ability to make decisions (or choices) strategic for themselves (Mishra, 2014).
- **Gender-based Violence** refers to violence that is directed at an individual based on his/her biological sex OR gender identity (Matthews & von Hase, 2013).
- **Male supremacy:** is a hateful social system advocating for the subjugation of women (Hartsock, 2017).
- **Patriarchy:** is a social system in which men hold primary power and predominant roles of political leadership, moral authority, social privilege, and control of property (Friedman, Meterkamp & Posel, 1987, p. 8).
- **Race:** refers to grouping of humans based on shared physical or social qualities into categories generally viewed as distinct by society (Bell, 2018)
- **Radical Feminism:** is a perspective within feminism that calls for a radical reordering of society in which male supremacy is eliminated in all social and economic contexts (Meterkamp & Posel, 1987, p. 8).
- **Rape:** is defined as forced penetration of the vagina by a penis (Dosekun, 2007, p. 90).
- **Resilience:** is defined as the activity of rebounding or springing back; to rebound; to recoil (Oxford English Dictionary, 1924).
- **Sexual abuse:** is unwanted sexual activity, with perpetrators using force, making threats, or taking advantage of victims not able to give consent (Colman, 2018).
- **Subjugation:** is the action of bringing someone or something under domination or control (Barlas, 2019).

- **Trauma:** refers to the state of mind which results from an injury. It is a fantasy which can be read as an articulation of trauma. It is a devastating and damaging experience (Menzies, 2019).

1.8. Chapter Summary

This chapter presented the introduction and the background of the study. The introduction is intended to provide the reader with critical information about the manner in which gender imbalances affect women. It also emphasises that women engage in liberatory strategies in order to defy oppressive dominant systems. The next chapter discusses literature related to the study following the research objectives.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

2.1. Introduction

Where the previous chapter focussed on the power relationship between women and men in the post-colonial setting, this chapter examines literature which addresses the ways in which African women are disempowered. These reviewed related literatures are useful in determining which empowerment strategies women and specifically African women have used to their advantage.

This literature review scrutinises all the different facets through which women are disempowered, as well as empowerment strategies they have employed. As such, the purpose of the literature review is to illustrate what has already been identified about disempowerment and empowerment strategies as well as to identify disparities in literature which may have been overlooked in prior studies. It ends with a summarising conclusion.

2.2. Interpreting the concept of disempowerment

According to the Merriam-Webster Dictionary (n.d.), 'disempowerment' is defined as 'to deprive of power, authority, or influence: make weak, ineffectual, or unimportant **'and'** to cause (a person or a group of people) to be less likely than others to succeed **'as well as'** to prevent (a person or group) from having power, authority, or influence'

The above definition of disempowerment bears reference to the fact that women have been deprived of power and had no right to make decisions in the society and in the household, which has thus rendered them invisible and insignificant. Kabeer (1999) cited by Mishra (2020) states that 'disempowerment is the deprivation of choice' (p. 1395). This is evidenced in the fact that women have been denied access to ownership of land and houses, such as outlined in the autobiography of Libertine Amathila (2012, p.145). Emphasis should be placed on women to act and to be empowered, yet in the current day and age many women still do not have the right to decide on fertility, finances, household, and personal issues whether it affects them directly or indirectly. The main aim of this study is thus to look at how black women have been disempowered and what measures women have taken thus far to empower themselves. The study also examined the two texts to

determine the strategies used by African women to empower themselves and whether female authored biographies can inspire women's empowerment.

Edlunk (2006) defines empowerment 'as the ability or self-confidence for making choices or changes in one's life' (p. 3). It can thus be argued that it is imperative that women are empowered as this is one of the most effective methods through which gender equality can be reached. Other definitions of empowerment as cited by Kaur (2010, p. 334) are:

The process and the outcome of the process by which women gain greater control over material and intellectual resources and challenge the ideology of patriarchy and the gender-based discrimination against women in all the institutions and structures of society (Batliwala, 1995, p. 368)

and

Kabeer (1999) defines women's empowerment as the process by which those who have been denied the ability to make strategic life choices acquire such an ability (p. 435).

Another scholar, Mayoux (2000) has examined the concept of women's empowerment from a different angle. Abovementioned author defines empowerment as a multidimensional and interlinked process of change in power relations consisting of:

Power within: enabling women to articulate their own aspirations and strategies for change

Power to: enabling women to develop the necessary skills and access the necessary resources to achieve their aspirations

Power with: enabling women to examine and articulate their collective interests, to organize, to achieve them and to link with other women and men's organizations for change; and

Power over: changing the underlying inequalities in power and resources which constrain women's aspirations and their ability to achieve them (pp. 5-8).

Other scholars such as Keet (2013) have argued that the disempowerment of the African woman is an inevitable outcome of colonialism. Africans and specifically women have been deprived of vital power, knowledge, resources, access to information and finances which

would enhance women's empowerment. As such, the importance of empowering women cannot be understated. Colonisation is defined as 'control by one power over a dependent area of people' (James*Guerrero, 2003, p. 60). James*Guerrero (2003) maintains that:

Starting with the suffragettes, women among the upper and middle classes demanded the vote for "white" women within this historical legacy of the women's movement, but they were not concerned with other "women of colour" in this democratic pursuit. Therefore, Native American women perceived this early feminism as a reaction to an existing patriarchal socio-political system not concerned with the racialized oppression-as a result of Euromerican racism-of other marginalized women and subcultural groups of "ethnic minorities," such as Native Americans as tribal peoples, or with the impact of U. S. colonialism on their traditional ways of life. Feminists of these earlier and more exclusive times were focused on challenging sexism and the chauvinistic behaviour of men, in general, toward women in mainstream populations. These feminists were generally more educated in Euromerican hegemony, married, and of the middle class, in contrast to their "women of colour" counterparts (p. 59).

From the above excerpt, it can be discerned that colonialist ideologies were also used as a weapon to disempower women. Women in such situations were not only colonised by white people, but they suffered threefold; under the white man, white woman, and the black man.

Supporting the above view, Ibrahim and Alkire (2007) provide a useful definition in stating that 'disempowerment is the lack of agency, that is, the incapacity to make life choices' as cited by Mishra (2014, p. 1395). This study thus proposes that women be regarded as equal partners in cultural, educational, academic, political, and personal spheres of life so that they can be empowered.

2.3. African perspectives of disempowerment

2.3.1. Disempowerment through culture

Even before the colonisers set foot on African soil, patriarchy had been used as a tool to disempower women. Even so, culture was used as a weapon especially by the authoritarian male figure to subjugate and marginalise the girl-child. Several African writers have pursued this conversation in their works and highlighted the cultural methods used in traditional African settings to silence the girl child. One of the most acclaimed African writers, Chinua

Achebe highlights how culture was a means of subjugating the girl-child. In his novel *Things Fall Apart*, the supreme male character, Okonkwo, treats his daughter Ezinma in a different manner from the way he treats his son, Nwoye. Although, Okonkwo was exceptionally fond of Ezinma, she was not allowed to perform certain duties that were classified as masculine. For example, when Ezinma asked Okonkwo whether she could carry his chair to the wrestling match, he replied “No, that is a boy’s job” (Achebe, 1958, p. 32). Okonkwo is also pleased at the fact that his son, Nwoye appears to be manly and spends more time in his *obi*. Okonkwo had high hopes for Nwoye as seen in the following excerpt:

He wanted him to grow into a tough young man capable of ruling his father’s household when he was dead and gone to join the ancestors. He wanted him to be a prosperous man, having enough in his barn to feed the ancestors with regular sacrifices. And so, he was always happy when he heard him grumbling about women. That showed that in time he would be able to control his womenfolk. No matter how prosperous a man was, if he was unable to rule his women and his children (and especially his women) he was not really a man (Achebe, 1958, p. 37).

By and large, the above excerpt accentuates the different gender roles expected of the boy-child and the girl-child. The boy-child was expected to ‘rule’ his household, to be ‘in control’ of his wives and children, whereas the girl-child was reared to fetch water and assist her mother with cooking, because these are the domestic tasks expected of a good wife, and mother. These kinds of gender roles have proven to be extremely disadvantageous and disempowering to African women during the colonial and post-colonial era. Women are thus urged to engage in empowerment strategies in order to liberate themselves.

Similarly, because of the cultural practices imposed on Tambudzai (Tambu) and all the other women in Dangarembga’s novel, *Nervous Conditions*, almost all the female characters are rendered powerless. When Tambudzai requests to go to school, her father, Jeremiah tells her that it was not possible because she is a girl, and she cannot cook books to feed her husband. While her brother, Nhamu is allowed to go to school, she is forced to do domestic chores, namely, grow vegetables, cook, and clean the house. This practice has become culturally acceptable. It is therefore important to note that patriarchy under the auspices of ‘culture’

has been detrimental to women's empowerment. Also, because men have culturally been seen as the authoritative figure in the household and in society, women have increasingly taken the role of the disempowered. This means that the woman and girl-child image is constructed by the society, hence they had no voice to enable them to articulate the problems which they were experiencing.

Not only have women been culturally disempowered, as has been delineated in Dangarembga's novel, *Nervous Conditions*, however, they were also denied access to education. In the novel Tambu does not feel any remorse after her brother died, as he was permitted to go to school, but she was trapped on the farm and forced into domesticity. Essentially, if African women are denied access to education, they are indeed denied decision-making and conflict resolution skills. As a result, they would never be appointed in or fill positions where they are the decisions makers. Lack of education is a powerful weapon that is used in patriarchal communities to disempower women and the girl-child, which thus lead to lack of self-worth.

Comparatively, in her epistolary novel, *So Long a Letter*, Mariama Bâ narrates the trauma she experiences of being married to a bigamist endorsed by Islam. Ramatoulaye's emotional account to her friend, Aissatou, emphasises the agony, trauma, and rejection she has felt when she becomes aware of her husband's infidelity (Bâ, 1980). In this narrative the Islam religion is used to demote women which leaves them financially vulnerable. In this short novel, Ramatoulaye states that she and her friend, Aissatou, "suffered the social constraints and heavy burden of custom" (Bâ, 1980, p. 19). Thus, within the Islam religion, similar to any other religion, there are cultural rituals which women are obliged to adhere to. Ramatoulaye accounts how her husband's brother, "according to custom can inherit the wife" (Bâ, 1980, p. 58). This, in turn has disempowered women and this disempowerment has led to the detriment of women. According to James*Guerrero (2003) "tribalism is often connoted with conformity and the subservience of the individual to the group, because each individual group member must follow group culture and rules, with little or no independent thinking" (p. 59). Since these customs (rules) have been in place for many, many years, women have not dared question it. This study thus calls for women to become more aware of harmful cultural

practices for the purpose of enhancing communication. Improved communication amongst both sexes must be used as a tool with the purpose of enhancing dignity for women.

In line with the above, Isaacs-Martin (2012) in the journal titled *Cultural idiosyncrasies and religion: Why it is difficult to implement the third Millennium Development Goal* explains the “importance of cultural and religious ideologies in communities in Africa and the developing world” (p. 81). Musuwah, cited by Isaacs-Martin (2012) contends that because of dual laws in many African and Islamic countries, women cannot obtain “equal rights and the same access to resources as men” (pp. 81-90). She highlights the three main reasons why many countries have not accorded women equal rights. The first dispute put forward is that some states have argued that Shari’a only concerns family matters and is thus “not a priority in terms of political and economic development”. The second reason is that states use “internal political instability or stability, as justification for resisting legal amendments regarding women and implementing the articles as stipulated by CEDAW as well as MDGs”. The third reason is that some states contend that even though there are “existing laws that discourage practices such as child marriages, polygamy and dowry, traditional practices still hold favour with the population” (p. 82). It is thus clear that much more is required to protect the vulnerable women and children which would armour them against harmful practices such as child-marriages. It has become important to place women in positions of authority where they are also decision makers on equal terms with men.

Similarly, an African cultural type of incestuous sexual arrangement known as the *otjiramue*, whereby close relatives justify raping a minor family member as an acceptable cultural practice. ‘Otjiramue: Sugar-coated incest’ suggests that the practice is a form of incest. Unlike in South Africa, in Namibia, the *tjiramue* is an OvaHerero cultural practice in which a brother may allow his son to marry his sister's daughter, herein referred to as '*tjiramue*' (Ngatjiheue, 2013). In other words, *Ouramue* is an Otjiherero practice where cross-cousins in a family set-up are allowed to engage in sexual activities with each other. The OvaHerero people argue that ouramue is not incest because incest involves a relationship between two children born from sisters. This means that, in the Otjiherero culture, *Tjiramue* practice may allow for cousins to have sexual relations based on the fact that they are not from the same maternal lineage (Kefas, 2019). In the context of the present study, it is comparable to what happened

to Fezekile in that an uncle, (Malume) engages in forced sexual intercourse with her. In the context of this study, it is identified as an incestuous paedophilic rape incidence. Thus, people from the OvaHerero cultural practice argue that marrying their sister's children is not an act of incest because incest involves a relationship between two people of maternal descent, meaning, it is a relationship between two people born from different fathers. It is however in disagreement with the present study in that a relative remains a person sharing bloodlines.

2.3.2. Disempowerment through patriarchy

Women have for centuries been at the receiving end of patriarchy. Fox (1989) cited by Bahlieda, defines patriarchy as a "system of practices, arrangements and social relations that ensure biological reproduction, child rearing and the reproduction of gendered subjectivity, as well as gender ideology, or the sense of gender identity, itself" (2015, p. 16). Bahlieda further states that patriarchy is also responsible for the same tension between all our societal institutions: religion, politics, economics, education, and culture. Since many patriarchal societies are patrilineal, which means that property and titles are inherited by lineage, this had a negative effect on women, as women had been denigrated from positions of leadership, education, and economics (2015, p. 16).

Likewise, patriarchy has accorded men a higher or a better social status, "economic reward and political power" which causes men to have a superior status. Because of patriarchal masculinities, men have disproportionately benefitted in many ways (Deligiorgis, et al., 2021, p. 13). Indeed, Gqola (2015) maintains that patriarchy can be blamed for the rape culture in South Africa (p. 6).

Moreover, male dominance in societies has denied women the respect that they deserve. Guerrero (2003) in his study "*Patriarchal Colonialism*" and *Indigenism: Implications for Native Feminist Spirituality and Native Womanism* states that 'because of U. S. colonialism and patriarchal structure, the traditional authority of Native American women has been systematically disempowered up to the present time. Correspondingly, a recent article published in *The Namibian*, titled *Elderly black woman in SA wins property rights in landmark ruling* uncovers the plight of women in South Africa. According to this article married couple own all their assets jointly and both must consent to major transactions, under the South

African law. “But for black women married prior to 1988, the husband owned all matrimonial assets and could sell them without the consent of the wife – until Sithole’s landmark high court win that overturned the discriminatory law” (“Elderly black woman” 2020). This proves that the patriarchal and colonial laws were detrimental for women. The article continues to state that “Sithole’s legal victory in the eastern city of Durban could help an estimated 400 000 by giving them more economic freedom” (“Elderly black women” 2020). Yet, it is through cases such as these that women empower, not only themselves, but the countless other women in rural areas who are deprived of their property rights. This study thus wishes to call on women to empower themselves and hope that their empowerment would have a positive ripple effect on other women’s empowerment.

Similarly, a newspaper article which appeared in The Sunday Times titled, “A right royal divorce – S A-style” contends the problem of customary law. The newspaper article reports on a divorce case, between a high-profile member of a royal family in the Eastern Cape and his wife. One of the reasons why the plaintiff is filing for divorce is that his wife had agreed (according to customary law) that she would not stand in his way, should he wish to take a second wife, however, after their marriage, she “retracted her consent” (2020, January 26). Above case shows that women have no rights on issues of matrimony. Even though it is accepted culturally that a man may marry a second wife, the first wife has no say in such issues. Clearly, the man (plaintiff) in above case is playing the victim. While the wife is in fact the victim. It is through cases such as these that this study wishes to bring forth empowerment for African women in household, matrimonial as well as personal issues.

2.3.3. Disempowerment through lack of education and colonialism

African women have for many, many years been disadvantaged through a lack of education or provision of inferior education in the colonial era. In her autobiography, *Making a Difference*, retired minister Libertine Amathila writes about the education (or the lack thereof) during the apartheid era in Namibia. She recounts that there were no secondary schools in Namibia, as a result, she had to attend school in South Africa. The former Prime Minister of Namibia reveals how she was affected during the apartheid regime when blacks were denied access to education:

I encountered lots of problems at the school. Firstly, I had to pretend to be coloured and we had to stay with families because there was no hostel for boarders. Most importantly, however, no science subjects were taught that would guarantee my entry to any medical school. I decided not to go back the following year to complete Standard 10 because I felt it would be a waste of time and a drain on my mother who was paying for my education (Amathila, 2012, p. 19).

Libertina Amathila's autobiography is informative as it highlights the ways in which black people were treated in the apartheid years. The lack of proper education for black people and specifically for the African woman, in the apartheid era, had devastating consequences for African women. As such the inequalities of the past can still be seen in many African families to this day.

Hence, Trevor Noah, in his memoir alludes to the fact the black children were deprived of a good education and that black children were placed in one class and all the coloured and Indian children in different classes (Noah, 2017, p. 72.) He provides insight into how patriarchy affected him negatively:

The difference between British racism and Afrikaner racism was that at least the British gave the natives something to aspire to. If they could learn to speak correct English and dress in proper clothes, if they could Anglicise and civilise themselves, one day they might be welcome in society. The Afrikaners never gave us that option. British racism said, 'If the monkey can walk like a man and talk like a man, then perhaps he is a man.' Afrikaner racism said, 'Why give a book to a monkey?' (Noah, 2017, p. 74).

Correspondingly, former Miss South Africa, Basetsana Kumalo in her memoir reiterates this notion of the inferior education which black children received as opposed to that which the white children received. She states that "the segregated education system was not designed to help them expand their horizons in any way, and the Bantu Education Act of 1953 directly affected their children" (Kumalo, 2019, p. 12). This situation has been voiced by many people. Indeed, Kumalo (2019) maintains that this education system brainwashed black children to dream for jobs like nurses and teachers. Thus, they never dreamt of becoming doctors,

engineers, accountants, or journalist. They could not speak English, well as they were not exposed to English. According to Kumalo (2019, p. 12) “it was exactly what the state wanted: an entire racial group that sought nothing more than to do as they were told”. Looking at above excerpt, black people and especially black women were denied the opportunity to think for themselves, to dream of better opportunities, as the opportunities possible to them were limited. However, this study calls on women to be less content with what they have and demand for more.

Comparatively, Madonsela (2017) also mentions how devastating the education system in South Africa was for black people. She maintains that white children did not have to pay school fees, while black children paid R57 per year – ‘almost half a month’s pay for the average Sowetan, due for each child’ (p. 15). When black people resisted the fact that they had to be taught in Afrikaans, they were brutally gunned down by the police (Gqubule, 2017, p. 16). The lack of education has had more profound problems than are visible on the surface. If women received an inferior education, they would not be able to do a job which required a higher order of thinking and as such would receive a meagre salary, one on which would not be able to sustain a family daily.

Indeed, Madonsela states that her mother was a domestic worker for “white middle-class immigrants” (p. 18). Gqubule cites Jacklyn Cock who states that by law black women were not allowed to perform skilled labour (2017, p. 18). Noah concurs with this notion when he states that “under apartheid, if you were a black man, you worked on a farm or in a factory or in a mine. If you were a black woman, you worked in a factory or as a maid” (2017, p. 27). Confirming this lack of access to education is Amathila who states that her mother ‘was a Standard 4 graduate’ (2012, p. 14). This researcher would thus look at ways in which women can become entrepreneurs and job creators instead of waiting for work to come their way.

From the four biographers in abovementioned paragraphs, the process through which black people, but most specifically black women have been disadvantaged, has spilled over the post-colonial (apartheid) era. A recent article titled *Visible women – feminist mappers bridge data gap in urban design* highlighted the fact that only a few women ‘are adding information to Open Street Map (OSM), known as “the Wikipedia of maps”’ (“Visible women – feminist mappers”, 2020). The article alludes to the fact that women are unrepresented in the

technology industry, with a mere 37% representation and only one woman out of four is on management level. The questions here are why there are so few women in the technology industry and could the lack of women in the technology industry be because of a lack of education for women in the technology industry?

Assuredly, a similar article which appeared in a Namibian daily indicates that although women are enrolled at journalism schools, the newsrooms are dominated by males. (“Women in media – Empowered”, 2020). According to this article only 36% of women are in top management level, this means that there is not a 50-50 representation of women on management level. This is problematic in the sense that males may not find it necessary to write or report on issues affecting women. For this reason, women should be employed in positions where they can decide which contents to cover in their reporting. However, the article also accentuates that women are not ‘supported in their traditional roles of primary caregivers once they start a family’ (“Women in media – Empowered”, 2020). Consequently, women are finding it difficult to be a wife, raise children and make their mark in the industry or profession they are finding themselves. That why so many women resign, stay at home, and raise their children until they can go back to work. This is also the reason why there are so few females in top management positions. However, when women do get back to work, they have missed out on new developments in the industry, and on opportunities for promotion into a decision-making capacity. The lack of proper education for women, ultimately has a ripple effect as women cannot assist other women to climb the ladder of success.

2.3.4. Disempowerment and of lack of reproductive rights

If governments and ministries of health does not take care of women’s reproductive health, it can have dire consequence on the economy of such a country. Do and Kurimoto (2012) “suggest that different strategies could be employed to promote family planning” in various African countries (p. 31). They maintain that women's attitudes and self-efficacy with regards to sexual activity should be improved. Do and Kurimoto found that “in Namibia, the findings that women's empowerment regarding household finances and fertility preferences were associated with female methods and not couple methods may suggest that many Namibians still perceive family planning practice as a woman's responsibility” (2012, p. 31). This suggests

that the use of contraceptives was left to women as men felt that it was the woman's 'job' to take care of family planning. Unfortunately, many teenagers are falling pregnant, although contraceptives are freely available (Haihambo, 2021, p. 1). In most cases the father of the baby vanishes into thin air, leaving the girl – child to fend for her baby alone. In most cases the mother is forced through these unfortunate circumstances to drop out of school to find a work which would enable her to take care of her baby. This disempowers the girl-child as she may not be able to continue her education and may not be able to study. This means the girl - child may be severely disadvantaged.

In the light of the above Finlay and Lee's research titled *Identifying Causal Effects of Reproductive Health Improvements on Women's Economic Empowerment Through the Population Poverty Research Initiative* argue that if women have access to contraceptives, it could increase their decision-making with regards to the number of children, 'education attainment' and whether women would be assured of well -paid jobs (2018, p. p. 304). They claim that when women have children when they are older, they would have (hopefully) completed their school career. This would allow them to enter the labour market. Additionally, if they have fewer children, they could have better chances of promotion (Finlay and Lee, 2018, p. 304). Miller (2010, p. 120) cited by Finlay and Lee (2018) claims "the delay of the first birth" has enabled "girls and women to extend their education" (p. 309). This means that if the African girl-child can complete her education and not fall pregnant before she has at least completed her high school career, that could be seen as a technique of empowerment. It is imperative that African women become more determined with the intention to overcome obstacles such as teenage pregnancies, which would enable them to alleviate poverty and enhance their own and their families' livelihoods. Indeed, if African women have the means and knowledge, they will alleviate poverty and in so doing improve the well-being of themselves, their children, and their households.

On the other hand, when women want to have babies, and cannot fall pregnant there is an option of in vitro fertilisation, which can be quite an expensive procedure. Obama (2018) was referred to an invitro fertilisation facility when they were struggling to conceive. She states that they were fortunate that her medical insurance would cover most of the costs of the

procedure. In other countries, women are not that fortunate as medical aids do not cover in vitro fertilisation procedure. This could render women powerless.

2.3.5. Disempowerment through rape (sexual violence) and gender-based violence

The prevalence of rape in recent years has not only become a course of concern but has also contributed to the disempowerment of African women. Du Toit (2005, p. 261) cited by Dosekun (2007) that the frequency of rape “translates for ordinary South African women into pervasive fear, systemic (contagious) humiliation and incapacitation” (p. 90). Indeed, women are living in foreboding fear of being raped. As such, Gqola (2015) asserts that “girls are reared to fear” (p. 87). Since they fear walking alone at night, this means they are not free to do what they want to do and when they want to do it. Even though there are laws to deal with rape, one cannot undo the act of rape and for that reason, it could be argued, that women are not free. Likewise, this researcher concurs with Dosekun (2007) who argues that because women fear rape, this fear ‘infringes upon their full rights as South African citizens’ (p. 91). By its very nature, women cannot move freely, cannot walk alone, especially at night, and cannot wear what they want to wear. Women’s clothing (too short or too tight), that women did not fight the rapist or did not endure critical injuries or trauma, was involved with the rapist or was a prostitute, has been cited in courts as to the reason why the men had raped them (Rumney and Van der Bijl, 2010, p. 832). However, the question of why men rape babies still need to be answered, as their clothing cannot be ‘too short’ or too tight’, etcetera. Posel (2006, p. 247) cited by Dosekun claims that the “average of high-profile rape cases, including ‘baby rape’, has served to bring the issue to public consciousness” (2007, p. 89). Consequently, African women who work shifts and who are not in possession of private transport and where public transport is not readily available or inaccessible, live in constant fear of either being murdered or raped. Rumney (2010) accentuates that “sexual violence in South Africa has been described as “one manifestation of a very violent society” in which there is a “general climate of tolerance towards rape.” (p. 827). Women thus have no rights, and their bodies are used by men as if they (women) have no say over their bodies.

Moreover, Ellis (2019) shuns men for being overtly critical of women. In his blog ‘Discipline and “Hoeism”’, he states how men can easily call a woman a hoe when she shows a little bit of skin yet enjoy it “when women on MTV like Beyoncé and Rihanna are showing quite a bit

of skin". Indeed, women are confused as to how they should behave as they receive conflicting messages from men. Ellis cites Foucault who states that "discipline, and thus oppression, in society is always enacted upon the body" (2019, para. 9). As such corporal punishment in the colonial era enacted on the black people in jails and in schools is evident of how black people had been abused. As such, this treatment of black people spilled over in the identical approach as men treat women.

Furthermore, Rumney and Van der Bijl, (2010) cites Jewkes (2005) who highlights two features of the way South Africans "tolerate or encourage sexual offending". He contends that society does not dissuade boys or men from committing crimes such as rape and that "the onus of preventing rape is placed on the women, and they are usually blamed for provoking the incident". The second feature is "that the use of coercion, including violence by males, is tolerated unless it breaks certain cultural norms, for example, where the victim 'has higher social standing'" (p. 828). This basically means that if a woman is raped, it is her fault – that she is to be blamed and if a woman does not come from a 'higher social standing' she may be raped. Moreover, Rumney and Van der Bijl (2010) states that the Human Rights Watch report also detailed judicial decisions that reflected "sexist assumptions about women" and argued that judges, magistrates and prosecutors all bring their own stereotypes to determine whether a woman has in fact been raped (Human Rights Watch, 1995, p. 91).

The report proposes "that judges and prosecutors expected genuine rape victims to be physically injured. Further, some judges have suggested that the trauma suffered by a woman raped by man known to her would be "ordinarily less" than in other cases" (Ellison & Munroe, 2009, p. 202). It appears that these judges have never heard of the term 'flight (fight) or freeze'. Where some victims may be physically strong, alert or just plain fast to either get away or fight the rapist, other women may freeze in the shocked condition that they may find themselves. There is no evidence that a woman would endure less trauma if she has been raped by a man known to her. Indeed, the traumatic event could haunt the woman even more so when she has been raped by someone known to her, someone whom she has trusted, especially if she encounters the perpetrator often. By the same token "South African police officers actively seek out evidence regarding the reputation of rape complainants, and rape allegations involving people in relationships sometimes will not even be investigated" (Smyth

& Waterhouse, 2008, 2010). This means that a boyfriend, ex-boyfriend, husband, ex-husband, or friend may rape a woman and that it would be seen as 'normal' according to the police. In the light of the above, it thus means that women have no rights over their own bodies if police refuse to investigate such cases. In some cases, victims who have reported the rape case at the police station, claim that police officers would not believe them, and they had been coerced to drop the case (Id. At 211). These are all the methods in which women have been and in some cases are still being disempowered. The bottom line is men have no right to rape women and the trauma that rape and gender-based violence has on women, leads to major disempowerment.

The question of why rape has become so rampant in our societies should be looked at as a matter of urgency. Many writers have linked gender-based violence to colonialism and patriarchy. Britton and Shook (2014) maintains that "women are akin to property" (p. 154). This means that because women are seen as property of men, men feel that they have the right to violate the rights of women. Britton and Shook look at another view widely held in the country that gender violence is fuelled by a backlash against women, related to the progress some women have made in elected office, the public sector, and business. Violence becomes symbolic: while not targeting any specific group of women, men who feel threatened and disenfranchised in the new dispensation are lashing out against the women in their own lives – violently putting women back in their place. Many of these perceptions suggest that persistent patriarchal views normalize gender-based violence (2014, pp. 154-155). Indeed, Gqola asserts that patriarchy "makes it acceptable for millions to get raped on a regular basis" (2015, p. 6).

Above quote confirms that men and women should have access to equal opportunities so that men do not feel left behind and feel the need to threaten women once they seize opportunities which were traditionally reserved for men. Also, men need to be counselled and taught how to deal with their emotions; with trauma and bounce back instead of taking it out on women. Men should also employ a resilient attitude and look for other means in which they can uplift themselves instead of using gender-based violence and rape which ultimately demoralizes and disempowers women.

2.3.6. Strategies that African women used to empower themselves

Edlunk (2006) defines empowerment 'as the ability or self-confidence for making choices or changes in one's life' (p. 3). It can thus be argued that it is important that women are empowered in conformity to reach gender equality. Other definitions of empowerment as cited by Kaur (2010, p. 334) are:

The process and the outcome of the process by which women gain greater control over material and intellectual resources and challenge the ideology of patriarchy and the gender-based discrimination against women in all the institutions and structures of society (Srilatha Batliwala, 1995, p. 368). Kabeer (1999) defines women's empowerment as the process by which those who have been denied the ability to make strategic life choices acquire such an ability (p. 435).

Similarly, Mayoux (2000) has examined the concept of women's empowerment from a different angle. She defines empowerment as a multidimensional and interlinked process of change in power relations. It consists of:

Power within: enabling women to articulate their own aspirations and strategies for change;

Power to: enabling women to develop the necessary skills and access the necessary resources to achieve their aspirations;

Power with: enabling women to examine and articulate their collective interests, to organize, to achieve them and to link with other women and men's organizations for change; and

Power over changing the underlying inequalities in power and resources which constrain women's aspirations and their ability to achieve them (pp. 5-8).

2.3.7. Resilience strategies of empowerment

Ungar (2013) argues that "rather than defining resilience as the individual's capacity to succeed under stress, and the capacity of both individuals and their environments to interact in ways that optimize developmental processes" (p. 256). This means that, resilience is comparable with how the individual copes or adapts to trauma. It has nothing to do with the

personality trait of the victim, but rather facing the trauma and adopting a zestful approach to it (Wingo, Wrenn, Pelletier, Gutman, Bradly 36 & Ressler, 2010).

Also, resilience is explained as a dynamic process wherein individuals display positive adaptation despite experiences of significant adversity or trauma. According to Mlambo (2014, p. 39) “resilience, therefore, emphasises the strengths that the people have, rather than their vulnerability, through exploring the coping strategies that they exhibit.” Resilience is thus a human beings’ ability to bounce back after a period of extreme trauma has been experienced.

In his memoir, *Born a Crime – And Other Stories*, Noah (2017) states that, “people love to say, ‘Give a man a fish, and he’ll eat for a day. Teach a man to fish, and he’ll eat for a lifetime.’ What they don’t say is, ‘And it would be nice if you gave him a fishing rod.’ That’s the part of the analogy that’s missing” (p. 222). Nothing can be further from the reality for the marginalised African woman, than what Noah states. If the dispossessed and disenfranchised African is to be empowered, they need a push from behind. They need support. As such, it is important that African woman obtain, access to education and resources which would empower and permit them to make changes in their own lives.

Indeed, Noah narrates how his mother, Patricia Noah adopted a resilient attitude and defied the apartheid laws more than once, first by enrolling herself at an institution where she could do a secretarial course (Noah, 2017, p. 27). Noah concedes “at the time, a black woman learning how to type was like a blind person learning how to drive” (2017, p. 27). Thus, it was virtually impossible for her to be accepted into an institution with the aim of acquiring of a qualification, and secondly, if she did complete and pass the course, chances are she would not be able to find a suitable job that matches her qualifications. Undeniably, Noah admits that “by law white-collar jobs and skilled-labour jobs were reserved for whites. Black people didn’t live in offices. My mom, however, was a rebel and, fortunately for her, her rebellion came along at the right moment” (2017. p. 27). In the time and era, what Trevor Noah’s mother did was unthinkable and unheard of, yet she wanted to carve out a better life for herself. She wanted to have a better life than the dreary life which African women were exposed to under the harsh oppressive, racist government. As such, women must defy all

obstacles that come in their way. Patricia Noah has done the unthinkable in a society where black people had no rights to education, to a well-paid job, to live in an area where they wanted to live, and the list goes on. As outlined above, she has been resilient in defied the rules and regulations stipulated by the white apartheid government.

In line with what Noah's mother has achieved, it is necessary that women start taking opportunities that are available to them. The "Pan African Women's Organisation (PAWO) is an arm of the Organisation of African Unity, (OAU) which essentially embraces wives of heads of state, ministers and other women with high-ranking associations" (Roy-Campbell 1996, p. 50). Not many women are aware of such organisations which are geared at empowering women; however, it is also only an organisation for the wives of African heads, as such it empowers only a select few. Women can empower themselves when they get involved in societies such as Pan African Women's Liberation (PAWLO). According to Roy-Campbell, 1996, (PAWLO) "seeks to reach out to those women whose voices are not usually heard" (1996, p. 51). It is vital that women scrutinize "oppressive and repressive cultural practices and laws as legitimate, for example, widow inheritance, female genitalia mutilation, damaging food taboos which engender nutritional problems among women" (Roy-Campbell, 1996, 53). Many of above-mentioned brutal laws have been part and parcel of the African social order. This has indoctrinated African women to settle for the injustices that they are exposed to.

In addition, another organisation, notably, The Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) of the United Nations (UN) established a forum "to examine improvements of women's rights and gender equality" (Jones, 2011, p. 149). Their investigation also considered whether girls and women are adequately empowered in science and technology industries and whether girls are encouraged to take science subjects which would allow them to become engineers which had previously been male dominated industries. It is hoped that if girls and women enter fields which were previously male dominated, they would be the forerunners in battling starvation, the spread of diseases, and they would advocate for more girls to have access to education (Jones, 2011, p. 149). Above forums are essential in encouraging a social order where females and males can participate on equal grounds. This would also permit women to be adjudicated on an identical platform where they will not be disenfranchised.

Basetsana Kumalo in *Bassie- My Journey of Hope* postulates that black women were not allowed to enter the 'Miss South Africa' contest prior to the year 1999 as only white women were allowed to enter this competition (2019, p. 39). Competitions such as 'Miss South Africa', 'Miss World' and 'Miss Universe' are widely regarded through a negative lens, yet it is exactly through winning this contest that Kumalo and several other Black women were able to not only empower themselves, but countless other African women. According to Kumalo "when the lovely Jacqui Mofokeng walked away with the crown in 1993, it was a historic moment, wondrous and a true turning point for us black people" as she was the first Black Miss South Africa. (2019, 39). This researcher would like to extend this quote and states that the black girls who won these competitions could use these contests as empowerment tools. Besides the fact that they themselves were empowered, financially and their families uplifted, other black girls could start dreaming of a better world and future and make use of opportunities that were available, and which would allow them to stand out and not blend in.

2.3.8. Empowerment through #Me Too Movement

In the year 2006 the *#Me Too Movement* or campaign saw the light. The aim of the movement is to name and shame perpetrators of gender-based violence and rape. This researcher is of the opinion that this movement has been used as a tool of empowerment. Through the #Me Too Movement. Many men and especially men in powerful positions have been named and shamed. According to an online magazine 'Talking Nibs'

The "Me Too" phrase was created by a social activist and community organizer *Tarana Burke* in 2006. It was introduced to promote "*empowerment through empathy*" among women who experienced sexual abuse, particularly those who were of color and belonged to the underprivileged communities. Her inspiration to create this phrase emerged when a 13-year-old girl confided in her to tell she was sexually assaulted. Having been unable to respond then, but only later, did she wish that she had simply told the girl, "Me too". Later in October 2017, actress *Alyssa Milano* popularized the term. She encouraged women to tweet #MeToo on social media to "*give people a sense of the magnitude of the problem*" (March 4, 2018).

The good thing that stems from this type of movement is that where women were blamed and ashamed for being raped and had to keep quiet, there are now platforms which they can use to expose the perpetrators. So many of the victims stepped forward to speak out against rape; even though some of the incidents transpired as far back as twenty years ago. Yet, these men (perpetrators) have grown - up children who were embarrassed to know that their fathers are indeed rapist. Thus, this online platform can bring about monumental freedom for women. In addition, the journal article *#MeToo Meets Global Health* reiterates that it is every person's job to stop gender-based violence. It states that:

Gender bias shapes our norms and expectations for success and who will achieve it in global health, even as we fight collectively for equity in access to health care and other human rights issues around the globe. Further, as the #MeToo Movement has begun to lay bare across employment sectors in the US and beyond, women in global health also experience sexual harassment, sexual assault, and other forms of gender-based violence, about which they are encouraged by institutional structures and processes to remain silent. For this culture of silence, we—the men, the women, the people, of global health—are all responsible. Gender-based violence in global health is not a women's issue. It is an issue for all of us (Participants of the Global Health Fieldwork Ethics Workshop, 2019, p. 133).

The abovementioned journal calls on improved consideration to sexual pestering, sexual battering, and gender-based violence of all forms worldwide, from our training programmes to research institutions as well as other establishments. Women should be afforded the right to safe offices and have the right to be recognised without judgement when their safety has been compromised (Participants of the Global Health Fieldwork Ethics Workshop, 2019, p. 133). Thus, the *#Me Too Movement* has achieved, in a very short time, something which many governments and law enforcement agencies were unable to accomplish. It has compelled agencies and businesses to permit women to work without the fear of sexual harassment, rape, or gender-based violence.

Greenberg (2019) argues that #MeToo Movement encourages people to voice their apprehensions regarding sexual nuisance and assault (p. 3). It is indeed so that many rape

victims have remained silent for many years. Since the onus was on women to make sure that they are not raped and when they are raped, they are the problem, or they have allowed it to happen to them – it is their fault. This movement now brings insight into the extent to which men had disempowered women for centuries. Another thing which the *#MeToo Movement* has achieved is that it has united “millions of women in speaking out against sexual abuse, discrimination against women, and unequal power relations” (Puymbroeck, 2018, p. 1). Indeed, women now have a platform where they can lash out and be heard and as a result, many companies have sexual harassment policies in place geared toward protecting the females in their companies. This gives women more control and authority which empowers them and gives them a voice instead of silencing them into submission. Indeed, social media platforms have become a great empowerment tool which women are making use of.

Although the ‘*#MeToo Movement*’ was ignited in Namibia two years after it started abroad, it has given rape victims the opportunity to be survivors instead of remaining victims. It is sad to note that in a relatively small country such as Namibia with a mere two million inhabitants the number of rape cases, “more than 200 cases of sexual violence have been reported to the Namibian Women's Lawyers Association (NWLA), which is providing free legal advice to victims” (Lazareva, 2019, para 2). Furthermore, the fact that the Namibian Women's Lawyers Association (NWLA) is prepared to provide pro bono legal advice should be applauded. Since so many people are living under the bread line in Namibia, many women would not be able to afford a lawyer to make a rape or sexual harassment case against a perpetrator. Female victims of rape, sexual harassment, or gender-based violence, may have to face the perpetrator, if it is an immediate neighbour, friend colleague or boss. This may cause immense trauma; especially if they have to be away from their duty stations or for trauma counselling and or be present for the court case. Aforesaid are issues which are seriously disempowering and can have detrimental effects on the victim, financially and otherwise. Thus, the Namibian Women's Lawyers Association (NWLA) should be commended for providing empowerment strategies to female victims.

In line with the *#MeToo Movement* Peru hosted their Miss Peru contest and coined it with social protest. In her journal *On Beauty and Protest* Pérez-Rosario states “on October 29, 2017, the contestants of the Miss Peru beauty pageant stunned the audience when rather

than giving their measurements as is customary in many beauty pageants, they shared alarming statistics of violence against women in Peru” (2018, p. 279). Instead of providing the viewer with their measurements which is expected in some pageants, they provided shocking statistics about gender-based violence, such as the following:

My name is Camila Canicoba and I represent Lima, my measurements are 2,202 cases of feminicide reported in the last nine years in my country; My name is Samantha Batallanos, I represent Lima, and my measurements are a girl dies every ten minutes as a result of sexual exploitation; My name is Juana Acevedo and my measurements are more than 70 percent of women in our country are victims of street harassment). The hashtag #mismedidasson (#mymeasurementsare) trended on social media and the story made news around the world (Pérez-Rosario, 2018, p. 279).

This campaign has highlighted the abuse that women endure at the hands of men. This kind of hashtag movements have done great strides in putting the limelight on the immoral manner in which men treat women. Pérez-Rosario states that while the thirteen finalists were parading in their gold bikini swimsuits newspaper headlines were shown as a backdrop at this event. This included “photos of women who were so badly beaten that their eyes were swollen shut and their faces unrecognizable. Some of the headlines read: Tailor Strangles Wife; Assailant Stabs Pregnant Woman and Flees; Sixty-Three Women Raped Daily; Drunk Man Beats His Wife to Death” (2018, p. 280). With this hashtag competition, the organisers were hoping that the desired outcomes would be reached so that women, would not be violated any longer and the women’s bodies would be regarded as sacred. As such, these kinds of hashtag movements are crucial and creates a free world in which women would not be disempowered by fear of violence.

2.3.9. Female authored biographies and women’s empowerment

Auto/biographies have been sources of information for many years; however, these genres have mostly been employed by men. In recent years, African women have begun to write their stories and as such the reader could now be enlightened as to the part that women have played in the history. Indeed, Geesey, (1997) maintains that ‘the deeper understanding of women's subjectivity brought forth by feminist scholars of autobiography now influences

virtually all readings of women's self-writing projects. In essence, many African female writers have in the meantime begun writing biographies of African females. This highlights the fact that there is a definite need for African female writers to write about the lives, struggles and life lessons learned. These life lessons can inspire female African readers to persevere through trying times.

As she hails from a previously advantaged society, Zelda le Grange's autobiography *Good Morning, Mr Mandela* opens one's eyes as to the racist attitudes white children were raised. In her autobiography, she states that "ours was a typical privileged white family, benefiting from apartheid through good education, access to basic services and a sense of entitlement to the land and its resources. Apartheid was our regime's political solution to enforce segregation and the separation of races, classes and cultures" (le Grange 2014, p. 5). Advancing from a critical racist society, she becomes the first black president's personal assistant. Having been raised in a comfortable and secure (although racist) household, she eventually realises that "no person is born a racist", in fact, she states that "you become a racist by influences around you" (le Grange, 2014, p. 11). It is through her journey working as Nelson Mandela's secretary, accompanying him to various functions and meetings that she begins to understand the racist machinery which her tribe has set in motion to disadvantage and disempower black people.

le Grange (2015) particularises a court case in which Mandela was charged for establishing a Commission of Inquiry into the affairs of South African rugby. She states that when Mr Mandela walked into the court "he walked to the applicant's lawyers first and shook hands with each and every one of them" (p. 57). On her question of why he had done so, Mr Mandela replied, "remember, the way you approach a person will determine how that person reacts to you. If you start off by disarming your enemy the battle is halfway won" (p. 57). le Grange details how the South African rugby's lawyers had tried to ridicule Mr Mandela and how she felt animosity towards Dr Luyt and his team. Her changed attitude is seen in her statement: "how times had changed! Dr Luyt was a pure Afrikaner. Now I was siding with the President. Not because I was working for him but because I believed in what he stood for and his right as President to ask for this inquiry to be established" (p. 57). le Grange mentions that Nelson Mandela had sat down with then Cricket captain Hansie Cronje after he had admitted to

match-fixing and was banned from cricket for life (p. 176). She states that Mr Mandela scheduled a meeting with Hansie Cronje and told him: “Boy, you made a big mistake. Now you have to man-up and face the consequences. It doesn’t mean we won’t forgive you. You have admitted to your mistake, now move on” (p. 177). It must have been an eye-opener for le Grange to see how a black man empathizes with a young white man, tries to console him, and also encourages him to stand up from the dust.

Two important factors should be drawn from the above excerpts of le Grange’s autobiography. The first one is the life lessons not only le Grange learned from Mr Mandela, but also, because she writes about it in her autobiography, the reader learns these life lesson as well. The second thing is the fact that her views changes about black people. While she at first did not really comprehend how the apartheid government had treated the black people (p. 10) and how those feelings changed into empathy after Mr Mandela told them what life was like on Robben Island (p.33). In the case of Zelda le Grange’s autobiography, white people who still uphold racist ideologies could be converted and every reader; male or female can learn valuable life lessons. In gaining recognition in a ‘man’s world’ women can learn a few life lessons in empowering themselves. In dealing with other human beings, it is important to defeat your enemy with your head up and not degrade yourself to the level of your enemy. Also, when you make a mistake, admit that you have made a mistake and continue with your life or ‘move on’ as Mr Mandela said. Thus, the value of female authored autobiographies and biographies can never be underestimated.

In her memoir *491 Days Prisoner Number 1323/69* a grim picture is painted about the life of Winnie-Madikizela-Mandela (former wife of Nelson Mandela) who was arrested and subsequently detained on 12 May 1969. She was arrested on a cold winter’s day “some hours before dawn” and her two children Zenani (10) and Zindzi (9) “had been left in the small hours on their own” (Mandela 2017, p. 5). African women can read about the hardships which Winnie Mandela had to endure under the apartheid government and the atrocious way in she was detained. Not only did she endure immense trauma, but she had to apply resilient strategies, such as can be seen in the following quote: “On each occasion when the Security Branch visited me in the cells (which was every week prior to my admission to hospital) they wanted to know how I felt, whether I didn’t want to make special representations to be

released. My reply was if I had committed no crime and if their own court had found me not guilty there was no reason why I was in Central Prison at all, and under solitary confinement for that matter” (Mandela, 2017, p. 55). African females who read Mandela’s autobiography will understand the major trauma which she had to endure. Firstly, for being arrested in the small hours of the day and then also having to leave her two under aged daughters unattended, having to fend for themselves. Secondly for being detained without having committed any crime. Also, African females who read this autobiography could argue that if one person was able to endure so much trauma and still be resilient, they as women can overcome the bad hand that life deals them.

Winnie- Madikizela Mandela’s autobiography include various letters between her and the prison authorities in which she requests necessities which they as prisoners lacked. One such letter brings to light the horrific circumstances under which they had been detained:

We, the detainees occupy a block of cells originally designed for punishment. It has been explained to us that this is the best accommodation available for us now. We quite appreciate this problem. Due to the size of these cells, movement is highly restricted. We are locked up in one of these during the day, we almost sit on top of each other. As awaiting-trial prisoners we request that cell doors be left open to allow us free movement like the other awaiting-trial prisoners who move freely within a specific yard. We understand that the gate would be kept locked to separate us from other prisoners. For hygiene reasons it is necessary in any case to keep the cells opened during the day, especially in view of their size and the fact that we are confined to them day and night (Mandela 2017, p. 90).

It is easy to look at the negative things which Mandela and other women have experienced in jail. From the above excerpt from her autobiography, it should be noted that she has used empowerment strategies such as writing to the authorities and requesting for better treatment. As such, one is made to understand that she had written to the prison authorities on previous occasions such as when she states, “last year we made special representation to Brig Aucamp to allow us” and that these requests were then adhered to (Mandela 2017, pp. 90, 91). The fact that their requests had been adhered to, shows that women should make

use of various means in order achieve empowerment for themselves instead of waiting for other people to do it. Many women do not know what their rights are. Many women do not know that they can change their destinies very easily by applying their rights. Autobiographies such as the one written by Winnie- Madikizela Mandela can be used as an empowerment tool to break away from the shackles which society imposes on women.

Mandela's autobiography consists of various letters which she and her husband (at the time) and the first black president of South Africa, had sent to each other. In one of the letters which Nelson Mandela had written to her (dated 23.6.69), he writes, "disasters will always come and go, leaving their victims either completely broken or steeled and seasoned and better able to face the next crop of challenges that may occur" (Mandela, 2017, p. 104). This quote could be used in women's empowerment strategies. So many women face a multitude of challenges daily. They can learn from above quote, that it is within their power to disallow challenges which could break them. Indeed, many women have applied resilient strategies, as such, lessons learnt from autobiographies and biographies can affirm that challenges will come and go. These are what African women should read and use to empower not only themselves, but all the women of our continent, most specifically, African women.

Indeed, the autobiography of Basetsana Kumalo, can only lead to empowerment for women. Although many people have negative perceptions of beauty pageants, Kumalo's autobiography consists of so many life lessons which could lead to empowerment strategies for women. Being the first black presenter came with many challenges. She maintains that the Bantu education system that she was forced to attend because of the apartheid, showed how disadvantageous it can be in the fact that she did not have what she termed a "model- C accent". She explains that the "model- C schools are government schools that are administered and largely funded by a governing body of parents and alumni. In the early 1990's, when it became legal for black children to attend schools with their white counterparts, many of them ended up attending former model- C schools because they were more affordable than private schools" (Kumalo 2019, p. 95). Hence, she had someone who had assisted her to pronounce English words properly and project her voice perfectly. (Kumalo, 2017, p. 96). She states that her first day of work shooting the *Top Billing* show ended up being a ten-hour shift. She remembers having had to walk down a flight of stair, but

instead she tripped down the stairs. “I couldn’t even get my words right. It was a complete mess. But I stuck with it and learnt as I went along” (Kumalo, 2019, p. 96.) Above – mentioned shows that people learn to crawl first before they can walk. Many young African women do not want to climb the ladder of success; they want to leap to the top which usually leaves them tumbling down in no time. Many people make mistakes, but you learn through your mistakes and that is how you mature.

Indeed, Kumalo has had to work her way up. She mentions how she had to assist carrying lights and gear, and still do research on questions she wanted to ask the people she was to interview. In addition, she had to do her own make-up and make sure that her microphone was correctly pinned (Kumalo, 2019, pp. 96, 97). At the same time, she also took hold of opportunities which would be advantageous and sustain her after her reign as Miss South Africa had ended. She states that “one thing I was able to recognise was the gravitas of my title and that is if Miss South Africa leaves a message, it’s very likely that the call will be returned” (Kumalo, 2017, p. 93). One such phone call which was returned, resulted in Kumalo and Patience Stevens starting their own production company and becoming the producers of *Top Billing* which, she hosted during her reign as Miss South Africa. Indeed, she mentions that during her presentation, she stated that they were a “fifty-fifty women-owned business, an empowered company” on which the then CEO of the SABC, Mr Sisulu replied, “My child the future of this country looks bright if young people can do what you’ve just done” (Kumalo, 2017, p. 93). However, when they did get the contract, she realised that she did not have the funds to purchase the equipment they needed to produce the show. She eventually made the call to sell the car which she had won at the Miss South Africa pageant. It is thus clear that young African women who want to make it in life must be vigilant and seize opportunities. Sometimes, one must let go of your most prized possession towards reaching your dreams. It is admirable that Kumalo has set up many private partnerships.

Although some of her businesses had to close its doors and she therefore had to brace the negative publicity on front pages of the newspapers, she stood strong and continued with the companies that did work. Kumalo agrees that “women have historically been excluded and economically, disadvantaged in the workplace. And a black woman has been triply disadvantaged: by marginalisation, poverty, and patriarchy” (Kumalo, 2017, p. 217). Indeed,

she employed more women than men in her various businesses. She says “people often say that it’s hard to work with women. I disagree” (Kumalo, 2017, p. 217). This is but one of the stereotypes that is linked to women which Kumalo defies as she is also in many partnerships with women.

Gwen Lister, founder, and former editor of the Namibian used various radical feminist strategies and has survived many blows in her life. Although she was born in South Africa, she made Namibia her home after graduating with a degree in journalism. In her biography, titled, *Comrade Editor: On life, journalism and the birth of Namibia* she states that she “underwent something of a political awakening” in her adolescent years (Lister, 2021, p. 21). During the same time, she became increasingly aware of the “stark inequalities between black and white people” (Lister, 2021, p. 21). After completing her journalism degree, she found a job at what was known as the *Windhoek Advertiser*, after a gruesome interview with Hannes Smit, then the Editor of the *Windhoek Advertiser* (Lister, 2021, p. 43). She details her harsh working conditions and meagre salary, especially after being involved in an accident when she couldn’t go to the hospital as she did not have any medical aid (Lister, 2021, p. 94). Recalling about how she had to cope, she articulates the following:

Thinking back, I’m astounded by the degree to which journalists – especially women – were and continues to be exploited. At that time, the ‘glass ceiling’ was made of steel. You put your life on the line for pittance, with no allowance or benefits of any kind. There were no labour laws to protect you, and you were summarily dismissed (as I was later) for any reason, without due process or hearing, let alone any form of compensation (Lister, 2021, p. 95).

In her memoir, Lister details how she befriended many SWAPO stalwarts, among which were, Nathaniel Maxuilili, Nico Bessinger, Daniel Tjongarero, Andimba Toivo Ya Toivo, Anton Lubowski, Hage Geingob, Aaron Mushimba and many others. Because she had taken a radical stance against apartheid and political intimidation, she was labelled as a “terrorist sympathiser” (Lister, 2021, p. 98). When the DTA bought the *Windhoek Advertiser*, Smittie was called in and “given an ultimatum: agree in writing to adopt a more sympathetic approach to the Turnhalle and a tougher stance towards Swapo or else”, Smittie refused and rather

opted to resign and Lister followed suit (Lister, 2021, p. 98). Because the block of flats had belonged to the company she worked for, she also had to vacate her flat.

She details another traumatising event when she was arrested at OR Tambo airport for being in possession of “banned” publications. The “banned” publications were merely a photograph of Sam Nujoma in full PLAN regalia as well publications she collected at the UN conference which was held in Paris in April 1993. Although, another journalist who had been with her at the same conference, and who had the same publications in his possession, was not apprehended, she was charged with “19 counts under the Publications and Customs and Excise Act as well as the Internal Security Act” (Lister, 2021, 116). That was the first time that she was arrested, and many others followed only to be found not guilty afterwards.

Lister’s memoir undeniably accentuates the traumatizing experiences in her quest for a free and fair Namibia. She also highlights how she became resilient and persevered, making use of trauma, resilience, and radical feminist strategies.

The autobiography, *Becoming – Michelle Obama*, provides much insight into the life of America’s first African First Lady. As the first lady of America, one would believe Michelle Obama grew up rich and lived comfortably, but through her autobiography we come to learn that she hails from humble beginnings. Her family lived in the top part of a house which was designed as in-law apartment meant for one or two people” (Obama, 2018, p. 6). However, her parents, brother and she lived there. Although they did not possess their own house, she grew up as any child would. She narrates an event as a teenager when she would socialize with friends after school, but realized that one of them constantly made sneaky remarks about her. She earned respect after (Deedee) again made a nasty remark aimed at Obama. She “threw a punch at her (Deedee)”. After the fight she had earned everyone’s respect (Obama, 2012, p. 24). If she had not stood up for herself, she would have been bullied forever. Thus, she made use of radical feminist strategies to earn respect.

When Obama announced to the school councillor that she would like to attend a school called Princeton where her brother was enrolled, the lady announced to Obama “I’m not sure that you are Princeton material” (Obama, 2018, p. 66). This debasement has instead spurred Obama to strive for her goals. She states “I wasn’t going to let one person’s opinion dislodge everything I knew about myself” (Obama, 2018, p. 66). She instead sought support from the

assistant principle who supported her with the application and she was admitted into Princeton. She thus did not allow one person's negative remarks to deter her from her vision and also proved the teacher wrong by applying and being accepted.

Obama addresses the issue of racism, narrating her and other black students' experiences when sharing rooms with white students and also male students. Although males dominated the discussion in lectures, however, after listening to them she realised that they were not really brilliant. "They were simply emboldened, floating on an ancient tide of superiority, bouyed by the fact that history had never told them anything different" (Obama, 2018, p. 79). Indeed, some of her black friends narrated events where "white students had to yield the sidewalk when we walked in their path". According to Obama a friend of hers celebrated her birthday and was summoned to the dean's office where she was told that her white roommate felt uncomfortable with black men in their room (Obama, 2019, p. 79). Of these racist issues Obama states that "if in high school I'd felt as if I were representing the neighbourhood, now at Princeton I was representing my race. I found my voice in class or nailed an exam, I hope to help make a larger point (Obama, 2018, p. 80).

She details the traumatic loss of her dad to multiple sclerosis as well as the death of her friend, Suzanne and how she had to cope with this. (Obama, 2018, p. 146). Her biography details events of how she met Barrack Obama and how their relationship evolved, how she struggled with fertility, falling pregnant and then having a miscarriage. She also realised that when they opted to do in vitro fertilization, she had to go through much of the agony alone. After Barack had provided the sperm, she had to go for an ultrasound alone while he continued working and doing things he normally would have. She felt that it "it wasn't equal," (Obama, 2018, p. 189). Since she stood for equality, she was confused by this.

Obama highlights how newspapers vilified her husband for failing to vote for the crime-bill. She explains that while visiting his grandmother in Huawei, their daughter developed a high fever. They could not take the flight back to be on time to vote, however, the newspapers made sure to discredit Barack Obama. According to her "the Chicago Tribune editorial page criticized the group of senators who hadn't managed to vote 'a bunch of gutless sheep'" (Obama, 2019, p. 197). This was just the first of many more similar incidents which would be blown out of proportion.

Indeed, when problems between the Obama's reared its head, they sought counselling. Both understood where it was where they fit in the puzzle of the family and worked around their responsibilities to make their marriage work (Obama, 2018, p. 207). The autobiography has so many life lessons for both women and men.

At the start of Barack Obama's campaign, Michelle Obama states I knew the stereotype I was meant to inhibit, the immaculately groomed doll-wife with the painted-on smile, gazing bright-eyed at her husband as if hanging on every word. This was not me and never would be. I could be supportive, but I couldn't be a robot" (Obama 2018, p 231). As a qualified lawyer in her own right, she was comfortable to support her husband, but she did not need to feel inferior to him.

Thus, the question of whether female authored biographies can inspire women's empowerment has reference. Abovementioned female authored writings have proven without a doubt that women can be inspired by reading biographies written by women. Women can learn about resilience strategies and life lessons that are immensely valuable towards gaining more grounds and being promoted into senior positions. As leaders in various spheres in life one need to have certain life skills that are sometimes not even taught at schools or at home. Many of the valuable life lessons can only be learned through reading about the lives of other people, especially people who appear to be perfect, or who are seen as idols in their communities or in the world. Indeed, through their writing, we see that they also were rough diamonds and had to be polished in an attempt to become the people that they are today.

2.4. Research gaps

The biographies used in this study have been published quite recently (2017), as such, not much has been written about them. The theories of radical feminism and trauma are clearly evident in both Khwezi – *The Remarkable Story of Fezekile Ntsukela Kuzwayo* by Redi Tlhabi as well as *No Longer Whispering to Power: The Story of Thuli Madonsela* by Thandeka Gqubule. Through abovementioned texts, this study wishes to expose how the characters are disempowered because of the male dominated patriarchal society. It is also crucial to look at the empowerment strategies that both Kuzwayo and Madonsela women use to liberate

themselves. The literature reviewed in this study show that there have not been previous studies conducted in Namibia using this combination of theories.

2.5. Chapter summary

This chapter discussed literature related to the study. The review of the literature generated the research gap and provided the researcher with a deeper understanding about issues of empowerment that surround women. The next chapter discusses the research methods and procedures of the study.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODS AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

3.1. Introduction

The methods and procedures that were used to analyse the two biographical texts *No Longer Whispering to Power: The Story of Thuli Madonsela* (Gqubule, 2017) and *Khwezi: The Remarkable story of Fezekile Ntsukela Kuzwayo* (Tlhabi, 2017) are discussed in this chapter of the study. The primary goal of a research design is to ensure that the analysis of the two texts is in accordance with the problem at hand and data is collected accurately and economically. Simply stated, it is the framework, a blueprint for the research study which guides the collection and analysis of data. This chapter discusses the research design and analyses the text section criteria that was used to select the two texts studied. Ethical considerations are also presented in this chapter.

3.2. Research design

The present study used a qualitative desktop research method where the researcher primarily focused on biographical works of fiction written by African female authors. Qualitative research not only looks at what people think about, but also why they think so (Sullivan, 2012). Today the world is more complicated, and it is difficult to understand what people think and perceive. Qualitative research methods make it easier to understand that it is more communicative and descriptive. Lune and Berg (2017), agree that qualitative research methods are more descriptive and as such inferences can easily be drawn.

Furthermore, some researchers use an interpretive lens to advocate for a correction to the marginalization of underrepresented groups or to societal problems. Maree (2016) states that the unique structure “of qualitative research is that it relies on linguistic words rather than numerical data, and employs meaning-based rather than statistical forms of data analysis” (2016, p. 53). Hence, the data collected for the current study was in the form of written text excerpts extracted from the two biographies. The data was analysed using the content analysis method and guided by the research objectives. In addition to the aforesaid, media sources, journals, literary critics, and various publications were incorporated to build a strong argument on the black women’s dis/empowerment tools and strategies. This study is also concerned about how human beings fit into and organise their surroundings through

“symbols, rituals and social structures” (Creswell, 2016, p. 53). A literary analysis allows you to see reality from multiple perspectives and this approach was applied to this study to analyse biographical works namely, *No longer Whispering to Power: The Story of Thuli Madonsela* by Gqubule, and *Khwezi: The Remarkable story of Fezekile Ntsukela Kuzwayo* by Tlhabi.

Thus, a qualitative data analysis approach was applied. Qualitative studies are explorative in nature as they are often used to explore new research areas or old research areas that are not well understood (Kumar, 2011). Griffin and May (2012) asserts that a qualitative data analysis “includes formal and structural means of analysis (e.g. examining how a story is organised, how it is developed, and where it begins and ends) as well as a functional analysis that looks at what the story (narrative) is “doing” or what is being told in the story” (p. 104). This research adopted a qualitative research approach which explored the disempowerment of black women. Inferences were drawn from the biographies to determine how black women are weakened through the lack of support from the justice system and their communities. This study argued that such systems continually fail to protect women, and as a result, women become vulnerable and victims of these societal structures. According to the Centre for Disease Control (CDC), nearly one in five women have been raped or experienced attempted rape during their lifetime. One in three female rape survivors had abused for the first time between the ages 11to 17. One in eight female rape survivors reported that they had been abused before the age of 10 (CDC, 2021). As a qualitative study, this research went beyond the numerical representation of data and analysed characters in the texts in a descriptive manner.

Qualitative content analysis is a research tool that uses a set of procedures to make valid inferences from text (Zhang & Wildemuth, 2009). In this study, content analysis will be done to determine the factors leading to the disempowerment of women characters and reflect on resilience or survival strategies. The researcher will use relevant secondary sources such as journals to complement the analysis of the selected biographies.

3.3. Procedures

The study used a thematic approach to analyse the data collected from the primary and secondary sources. Thematic data analysis is a method of analysing qualitative data that is

applied to written texts where the data is examined to identify common themes, topics, ideas, and patterns of meaning that come up repeatedly (Terry, Hayfield, Clarke & Braun, 2017). This means that similar themes and patterns were identified, grouped together and then analysed. This study identified patterns of radical feminism that lead to the traumatising of women in the two biographies under study. Characters in the two novels were also considered and they formed part of the thematic analysis.

3.4. Content analysis

This study used qualitative content analysis to scrutinise the biographies under study and reach conclusions. Content analysis is a systematic, quantitative approach to analysing the content or meaning of communicative messages, such as photos, symbols, sentences, expressions, and words, and so on. Content analysis is a descriptive approach and as such was used to describe data in the current study.

Hence, in this study, qualitative content analysis was used as a research tool that uses a set of procedures to make valid inferences from the two texts (Zhang & Wildemuth, 2009). In this regard, content analysis was done to determine the factors leading to the disempowerment of women characters and reflect on their resilience or survival strategies. The researcher used relevant secondary sources such as journals to complement the analysis of the selected biographies.

3.5. Ethical considerations

All the sources that were cited in this study were acknowledged through the APA referencing system as per NUST ethical guidelines. An ethical clearance certificate was granted as permission for the study to be conducted. Hence, the data that was used in this study was not plagiarised and the results were not fabricated. The researcher also declared that this was her original work, and it had not been made available or submitted elsewhere as part of her studies.

3.6. Theoretical framework

3.6.1. Feminism

Feminism can be divided into three waves (Llewellyn, 2015). The first feminist wave was in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The second was in the 1960s and 1970s, and the third extends from the 1990s to the present. Feminist theory emerged from these feminist

movements. The first wave advocated for women to leave the kitchen and join the workforce as secretaries, typists, and receptionists. The second wave was concerned with seeking equal pay for employed women. This means that during that time, female workers were paid far less than their male colleagues while performing the same duties. The third wave became the radical feminist revolution where women fought for equal job opportunities as those performed by their fellow male workers. The theory of feminism advocates for the equality of women against male oppression. It claims that it is the role of the feminists to fight to overturn gender inequalities.

Some of the areas in which women advocate for equality are the societal beliefs, economic, and political equality to advance women's rights and interests. Currently, feminism is fought as community based and as politically aware coalitions that are inspired by independent and cumulative experiences of women (Vukoičić 2013). This view is based on the claim that a society is based on patriarchal principles, according to which men are privileged over women, which results in discrimination against women in public and private life (Vukoičić 2013)). Through the 'radical feminist movement' women concluded that male supremacy is 'a systemic form of domination-a set of material, institutionalized relations' (Willis, 1984, p. 93). All forms of discrimination against women are traced to the patriarchal society. This has resulted in women awakening to the fact that they need to bring about change in their lives. Although the practice of radical feminism is driven by western and European values, African women have also realised over the years through globalisation and education, that women's rights can be advocated for. In particular, the story of Thuli Madonsela, shows that women who are educated are empowered and less oppressed as compared to the uneducated. Madonsela rose to become a prominent lawyer and a public prosecutor in the South African justice system. Other women in Africa see Madonsela as a role model and young girls and women try to emulate her without fear of male domination.

3.6.2. Radical feminism

This study employed radical feminism and trauma theories to examine the social causes and institutional structures constructed by patriarchy to disempower women. It focuses on the distribution of power to achieve equality and addresses societal practises which oppress women.

This study argues that an understanding of the trauma and radical feminist theories and how they have developed shed light on the substantial work which African female writers have theorised to date. Furthermore, this study calls for a change in how trauma and radical feminism theories are perceived in the African literary context. The study thus showed that African writers have in the past twenty years focused on feminist issues and their effects on women. This background created an appropriate context to locate this study by examining how African black female writers have understood and employed feminist theories into their narratives and how the major issues concerning women have been re-shaped in the process.

The study set out to review literature on trauma, resilience, and radical feminism theories to show that feminist issues have always been of concern to the African writers. Hence, the study examined: (1) how women have been disempowered (2) how women have dealt with trauma because of disempowerment (3) and finally, whether female authored biographies can inspire women's empowerment in the selected biographical texts.

As such, in the context of this study, radical feminism advocates for a paradigm shift in the way women are treated in societies. According to Dahlin-Jones (2014), "this branch of feminism emerged in Europe in the 1960's focusing on the role of male violence against women, prostitution and inequalities between genders" (p. 5). One of the major challenges faced by women is that once they have children, they must take care of the children, which in fact reduces them to low-cost manual workers and inferior existences. Radical feminists believe that there should be a shift in the way men treat women, especially with regards to the fact that men feel that they are the superior gender. Indeed, patriarchal systems view women as the "subordinate gender", according to Vukoičić (2017, p. 35).

Since men regard women as the "subordinate gender", women are merely seen as sex objects and breeders; the lower class or second-hand citizens. In view of this, female African literary texts have been used as tools to encourage women to fight back and devise liberation strategies. Because women are not only subjugated at home, but also in the workplace, it is necessary to look at how power relations between men and women are depicted in their private areas of life as well as within the context of the family.

Furthermore, radical feminism also advocates for women to defend themselves from improper conditions, to maximise their talents and work together with men to make life

better for everyone. Gqubule reiterates a speech which appeared in *Soweto's Golden City Post* in which Robert Kennedy is quoted when he visited Soweto in 1966. The publication was entitled 'The Day We Will Never Forget' (2017, p. 51). She says that Robert Kennedy made them feel "worthwhile [...] to believe the things that [they] believed in; that justice, freedom and equality for all men are things [they] should strive for so that [their] children should have a better life" (2017, p. 52). Looking at the fact that women have been employing radical feminist approaches to change the present situation of women, it is shocking to note that to this day women are still taking the back seat in many societal issues. Through the analysis of the two biographies, both genders are sensitised on the problems that women encounter and to find a common ground in addressing these issues.

Graham (1994) also underscores the above view. In his article *Liberal vs Radical Feminism Revisited* he cites the works of John Stuart Mill's *The Subjection of Women* and Mary Wollstonecraft's *A Vindication of the Rights of Women* in which they argue that "since women are as good as men, morally and intellectually, they should not therefore be placed in an inferior or less powerful position" (p. 156). It should be noted that the call is not for women to obtain preferential treatment, but for both sexes to be treated equally. Graham further maintains that men are treated as "persons" and women are treated like women and as such are still treated like slaves (1994, 156). Radical feminism thus calls for women to be treated equally to men. Graham calls it a "level playing field" (1994, p. 157). "A level playing field" would mean that there is an equal representation of women in top structures in political parties and businesses which would ensure a 50-50 representation of men and women in governments where they also have a voice to decide on and vote for laws to be changed or effected.

In essence, this study drew interconnections between male domination and the subjugation and dominance of black women as depicted in various female authored writings.

3.7. Trauma and resilience theory

The trauma theory emerged in the 1990s when a group of critics began to study the cultural effects of trauma. As one of the founders of trauma theory, Cathy Caruth's *Trauma: Explorations in Memory* (1995) combined the essays and interviews of professionals in several disciplines, such as psychiatry, literature, film, and sociology (Eyerman, 2019). Trauma can be

defined as a deeply distressing or disturbing experience (Payne, Levine & Crane-Godreau, 2015). In modern studies, trauma and resilience are concepts that can be studied in multidisciplinary contexts and approaches (Steven, et al., 2014). The concepts originally emanate from the fields of psychology and neurobiology science, for example brain imaging, genetics, and epigenetics. Morehead (2018) defines trauma from the psychological point of view as the unique individual experience of an event or enduring condition, in which the individual's ability to integrate his/her emotional experience is overwhelmed, or the individual experiences (subjectively) a threat to life, bodily integrity, or sanity. In light of these multiple definitions, it is apparent that trauma results when a person is exposed to stressful and painful situations. Bowen (cited in Selye, 1984) defined resilience as the human body's physiological response to stress as a means of coping with diverse conditions. When the person has the capacity to recover quickly from difficulties; toughness from the pain and stress, they become resilient.

3.7.1. Trauma because of disempowerment

Trauma is a direct consequence of colonialism and its driving force; apartheid, which has had devastating implications for the ordinary black South African citizen. It had a negative impact on the lives of many black people and instead of improving the lives of the people, it became worse and revolved to generations of people. It should be contended that the trauma of apartheid as a direct consequence on women disempowerment cannot be accentuated.

In addition, during the apartheid era, different policies were introduced to keep Black, Coloured and Indian people in line. As a result, the black people resisted these laws by staging peaceful demonstrations. Unfortunately, the whites retaliated. "On 21 March 1960 the black people of South Africa demonstrated against the pass laws in Sharpeville. At least Eighty-one (81) people were detained, and sixty-nine (69) people were killed" (Joyce, 2012, p. 212). The trauma experienced by the young people who were shot at and who had to endure the tear gas and the confusion, was immense. The parents of the children who were part of this demonstration, also experienced enormous trauma for which they did not receive any counselling.

Furthermore, when the “language of the oppressor” (Afrikaans) was introduced at schools, a peaceful march was staged (Gqubule, 2017). On 16 June 1976. Many young men and women were wounded and killed (Joyce, 2012). This was traumatic for many black people whose relatives had been killed or wounded or arrested in these protests. Those who were arrested were relentlessly tormented; nevertheless, many adopted a resilient attitude and for this reason have been survivors in a somewhat bleak and meaningless universe.

Trauma has been defined as “a phenomenon that is too shocking to be fully registered upon occurrence. It is only experienced belatedly” (Rodi-Risberg, 2006, p. 33). From this definition, it can be understood that the victim will only fully register the impact of what has happened to him/her at a later stage. Another definition by Caruth refers to trauma as, “including “symptoms that had previously been called shellshock, combat stress, delayed stress syndrome, and traumatic neurosis, and referred to responses to both human and natural catastrophes” (1995, p. 3).

Furthermore, Caruth states that these symptoms had previously been classified as Post Traumatic Stress Disorder:

There is a response, sometimes delayed, to an overwhelming event or events, which takes the form of repeated, intrusive hallucinations, dream thoughts or behaviours stemming from the event, along with numbing that may have begun during or after the recalling of the event” (Caruth, 1995, p. 4).

Caruth’s definition of trauma is in line with Rodi Rosberg’s which states the person who has experienced trauma would only be responding to the trauma sometime after the traumatic event had taken place. For instance, the two texts in this current study were written by two African authors in which they disclose the life stories of other fellow females. Although Kuzwayo and Madonsela did not tell their own stories, other women were bold enough to represent their suffering in the form of literature.

Other scholars, Craps and Buelen (2008) state that trauma studies is “an area of cultural investigation that came to prominence in the early-to-mid-1990s, prides itself on its explicit commitment to ethics, which sets it apart from the poststructuralist criticism of the 1970s

and early 1980s in which it has its roots” (p. 1). In this regard, it has become imperative to study trauma in works of literature which look at what caused trauma and how characters dealt with it. As such, a number of novels looked at historical contexts in which human beings try to make sense of their varied experiences. In her work *A Postcolonial and Feminist Reading of Selected Testimonies to Trauma in Postliberation South Africa and Zimbabwe*, Murray takes an in-depth focus on literature which testifies of the trauma that women underwent. She states that the feminist writings are “personal and political attempts” through which women tell their stories (2009, p. 3).

In this study, the trauma and resilience theory was employed to analyse the two texts, *No Longer Whispering to Power: The Story of Thuli Madonsela* (Gqubule, 2017) and *Khwezi: The Remarkable Story of Fezekile Ntsukela Kuzwayo* (Tlhabi, 2017). The abovementioned biographical writings underscore how women had been traumatised. In her biography *No Longer Whispering to Power: The Story of Thuli Madonsela*, Gqubule (2017) traces the trauma which many black women endured back to the increasing oppressive conditions such as the introduction of the passbook as well as the Urban Areas Act of 1923 which resulted in black people being forced from their homes. This was a traumatic experience for many black people as they were separated from their families, and could not move freely since they were restricted by abovementioned Acts.

Caruth as cited in Murray (2009) states that “the overwhelming of the senses that occurs when trauma is experienced means that the event is not fully integrated into the cognitive frames of reference of the victim.” (p. 4). This means that someone can only fully comprehend the extent of the trauma much later after the actual event. Thus, the traumatic event can haunt a person, months or even years after the traumatic event.

Furthermore, Craps and Buelen (2008) argue that trauma studies, with some validation can be perceived as rejuvenating an “ethical guise”. This is relevant to this study because women like Fezekile and Madonsela evolved to become even much stronger women after their traumatic ordeals at the hands of patriarchal men. For example, Tlhabi labels Fezekile’s life as one continuous traumatic event when she states that “she dies so many deaths in the forty-one years she was alive, yet always managed to resurrect herself. From our conversations, it seemed to me that her life was one long bruising battle. As soon as she would catch her breath, another blow would land” (2017, p. 219). Seemingly, the only means through which

women are able to cope with the trauma is for them to have a resilient attitude which would provide them with strength to survive physically and mentally. Resilience can be seen as facing their traumas, getting up and literally looking the other way. McCleary and Figley (2017), contend that resilience is a useful concept that can focus attention on the strength as well as the vulnerability of people who have experienced trauma. In other words, victims of trauma have the means to recover and move on from the pain of the past.

Moreover, Sippel, et al. (2015) state that resilience is “often thought of as the capacity of the individual to (a) bend, but not break, and to (b) bounce back from adversity (p. 10). For many women, it meant bouncing back from severe adversaries, threats, and significant sources of stress which they had to face. From the aforementioned, women are made to understand that resilience is not merely a process through which a person suppresses the warning signs related with a psychological ailment after a distressing incident. Ungar cites Keyes et al. (2002) who argues that “resilience is a separate, but interdependent set of processes associated with mental health that is orthogonal to the presence or absence of disorder” (2013, p. 255). As such trauma becomes a sort of catharsis or healing process as the person who has experienced the traumatic event is able to release suppressed emotions. Hence this study’s argument that the women in the two texts were resilient in that they ‘bounced back’ after traumatic events which they had endured.

Langeland et al., (n.d.), reiterates that “in the psychological community, resilience is a quality that allows an individual to recover from adversity stronger than before” (p. 5). The factors that make an individual psychologically resilient are often emotional and attitude related; here the primary resilience metric is the emotional wellbeing of the individual. It means people have better chances of dealing with the traumatic experience, once they adopt a resilient attitude. Women in general and specifically in the texts under study, adopt a resilient attitude, and become survivors in a bleak society hence, giving hope to countless African women.

Because black people were subjected to substantial trauma, they had to find ways to adopt a resilient attitude. Women mentioned in both texts, including the authors, incidentally also women, showcase sheer resilience in adverse circumstances they had to face. Hence, the current study is informed by resilience theory since it argues that women possess the means to withstand adversity and bounce back from difficult life events.

3.8. Chapter Summary

This chapter discussed the research methods and procedures as applicable to this study. The researcher presented the research design, data collection procedures, data analysis and ethical considerations which are relevant to the study. It also discussed the theoretical frameworks, radical feminism as well as trauma and resilience theories. The qualitative research approach was used. This study was a desktop analysis which means that the researcher adopted a critical approach in analysing the two biographies. The following chapter discusses the major findings and analyses the data from the two texts using radical feminism supported by the trauma and resilience theory.

CHAPTER FOUR

ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

4.1. Introduction

This chapter analyses the two *biographies* *Khwezi – The Remarkable Story of Fezekile Ntsukela Kuzwayo* (referred to as **Khwezi** henceforth) by Redi Tlhabi and *No Longer Whispering to Power: The Story of Thuli Madonsela* (henceforth referred to as **Thuli**) by Thandeka Gqubule. The two texts were discussed under the subheadings of related themes to provide for an exhaustive analysis. Examples of themes related to disempowerment include the oppression of women through patriarchy while themes of empowerment such as education and the legal justice system which are rooted in radical feminism were also discussed in this chapter. The data presentation and analysis in this chapter were examined following the study's objectives, and guided by the radical feminism theory while examining trauma and resilience as applicable to the study.

The main objective of this study was to evaluate the extent to which women have been disempowered, and the empowerment strategies in the two female biographical writings. The study considered the following sub-objectives:

- 1) To investigate how women are disempowered as depicted in the selected biographies
- 2) To examine the strategies that women use to empower themselves as depicted in the selected biographies; and
- 3) To determine how female authored biographies inspire other women through empowerment as presented in the selected biographical texts.

Both biographies were published in the same year (2017), as such, the researcher traced the prevalence of empowerment and disempowerment through radical feminist approaches in both texts.

4.2. Synopsis of *Khwezi – The Remarkable Story of Fezekile Ntsukela Kuzwayo* (hereafter “Khwezi”)

The biography, “*Khwezi*” was written by a South African female journalist and radio presenter, Redi Tlhabi who narrates the life of Fezekile Ntsukela Kuzwayo (now deceased). The author, Tlhabi, paints a picture of a profoundly brave and painfully naive activist thrust into

the public domain. Moreover, Tlhabi divulges the story of Fezekile, who was born and grew up in exile (Zimbabwe and Swaziland) to Judson and Beauty Kuzwayo. When Judson died (in a car accident), Fezekile was only 9 years old and because he (Judson) was a member of the African National Congress, he was close to many political figures, such as Walter Sisulu, Jacob Zuma and Ahmed Kathrada amongst others. (Tlhabi, 2017, p. 15). As a result of Judson's ties with the ANC, Fezekile remained in close contact with many of her father's friends, including Jacob Zuma (Tlhabi, 2017). Indeed, Tlhabi states that she had hoped to write a biography of her father with the help of Zuma "since he had so many stories about him and spoke of him not only as a comrade and friend, but also as a brother (2017, p. 37). Her life changed even though she and her mother remained attached to the ANC communities in the countries where they lived. Moreover, their security was precarious, and their lives were marked by tragedy.

Through this biography, Tlhabi details how Jacob Zuma (then South African Deputy President) was controversially acquitted in the High Court in Johannesburg in May 2006 after legal proceedings were filed against him for raping Fezekile in his home (Tlhabi, 2017). The trial was contentious not only for the seriousness of the charge, but also because of the fact that Zuma was an authoritative leader, a father and grandfather who had admitted in court that he did, in fact, have sexual intercourse with someone half his age – who could have been his daughter. Also, given the seriousness of the case, and the fact that Zuma had known that Fezekile was HIV positive, the then Deputy President, revealed that he had taken a shower afterwards to minimise the chances of contracting HIV. The biography emphatically looks at how the patriarchal Zuma was treated like the prodigal son, while Fezekile was vilified in the press and by the public and forced to take refuge outside of South Africa. Moreover, she could not stay in South Africa as mobs of people descended on to her home and burned it down "to a chorus of call to 'burn the bitch'", after which she and her mother fled to Holland (Tlhabi, 2017, p. 3). Even more controversially, is the fact that Zuma was elected president of South Africa in 2009 after being acquitted of rape in 2006 (Tlhabi, 2017).

For the sake of protecting her identity, Fezekile used the name "Khwezi" as a pseudonym during and shortly after the trial. This was an important measure to disguise her identity following multiple threats and insults. The biography is a particular explanation of Fezekile's life, detailing the trauma she endured during her childhood and after she had been raped a

fourth time as well as how she became resilient through it all. It also recounts her life in exile growing up in African National Congress (ANC) training camps during the Apartheid regime to the events leading up to and including the rape trial and ends at the time of her death in 2016, ten years after Zuma was acquitted of the rape. Finally, it also details her experiences following Zuma's exoneration and of how she had been denigrated by the males, females, and the press in South Africa.

4.3. Synopsis of *No Longer Whispering to Power: The Story of Thuli Madonsela* (hereafter referred to as “Thuli”)

The abovementioned biography details the life of Thulisile Nomkhosi "Thuli" Madonsela, the first female, black Public Prosecutor in South Africa. Having been actively involved in politics during the apartheid era, she was a stern believer in equality for all (Cohen & Jackson, 2016). In addition, the volatile society prompted her to change “unjust laws” (Gqubule, 2017, p. 16). Her political consciousness was a product of the United Democratic Front – which Gqubule describes as focused on grassroots social justice – rather than the African National Congress, characterised in the biography as hierarchical, secretive, and top-down (Gqubule, 2017).

Not only did Madonsela have to endure patriarchy in the form of the absurd apartheid laws, but she also had to face her father, a strict patriarch, who did not want the young Madonsela to wear trousers (Gqubule, 2017). Because of the volatility of Soweto in the 1970s her parents sent her out of the country to be educated in Swaziland, at Evelyn Baring High School. Imposing his patriarchy on her, her father forced her to be educated as a nurse after completion of her high school qualification, but Madonsela had other ideas. “When Madonsela would not become a nurse, her father would kick her out of the house” (Gqubule, 2017, p. 22). Indeed, he refused to pay for her studies which in turn forced her to return to Swaziland in order to pursue her undergraduate studies where after she graduated with a BA in Law from the University of Swaziland in 1987.

The author and Madonsela had known each other for more than three decades. While Madonsela was working as a unionist during the State of Emergency in Johannesburg in the mid-1980s, Gqubule was held for a month in solitary confinement at the notorious John Vorster Square, after being betrayed by a white friend secretly working for the apartheid police. Madonsela, at the time pursuing an LLB at the University of Witwatersrand, was

among the other activists arrested; she was detained without trial at Diepkloof Prison, where Gqubule would later join her (Gqubule, 2017).

4.4. Disempowerment of women as depicted in the two biographies, “*Khwezi*” and “*Thuli*”

This section discusses the disempowerment of women as portrayed in the two texts *Khwezi* and *Thuli*. This study argues that the patriarchal system that is deeply rooted in most African societies can be blamed as the enabler and a conduit that exacerbates the oppression of women (Perry & Jaggernath, 2012). In the text *Khwezi*, Zuma uses patriarchy to defend his disenfranchising act in the cases against Fezekile. In fact, gender inequalities and the disempowerment of women in most African societies are traced back to male domination. The lack of education, economic independence, and socio-cultural encumbrances steeped in patriarchy put women in a position of bondage (Abia, 2018). The next subheading discusses how women are disempowered by the patriarchal masculine society in the texts “*Khwezi*” and “*Thuli*”.

4.4.1. Patriarchal masculinities and disempowerment of women in “*Khwezi*”

Patriarchal masculinity is the practice that emphasises the superiority of masculinity over femininity and the authority of men over women to maintain gender inequalities (Greig, Deligiorgis, Montoya, Myrntinen, Quinones, Wong & Chanthavysouk, 2021). Further, the patriarchal system is the belief that supports male domination in society. This means that the patriarchal system is structured in such a way that it disempowers women. According to (Ejumudo, 2013) examples of male domination include insisting that only women must be assigned to domestic duties, childbearing and raising of children, the prevalence of physical violence and the violation of women’s sexual rights. The domination of men over women is a practice that creates an unequal society spearheaded by patriarchy to oppress women (Ejumudo, 2013). Moreover, masculinities are socially constructed attributes, behaviours, and roles associated with men and boys (Connell, 2014). Combining the two terms patriarchal masculinities in this study are defined as a system that supports the elevation of the male gender by affording them dominant roles in a society. Examples of these patriarchal masculinities include hegemonic, subordinate, complicit, and marginal. Besides dominance, these qualities are used by men to command respect and authority in a society. In addition, Guerrero (2003) maintains that women have taken it upon themselves to begin and join radical feminist movements by mobilising other women with activism in the quest to fight

and abolish the patriarchal society. Other disadvantages of hegemonic masculinities include violence against women and children, substance abuse, femicide, HIV infection, reckless driving, and crime (Obinna, 2021). An analysis of the two biographies reveals that this system disempowers women while men benefit because special privileges and status are granted to males in patriarchal societies.

Tlhabi makes use of the text, *Khwezi – The Remarkable Story of Fezekile Ntsukela Kuzwayo*, to dissect the court case and find Zuma to be a typical African male who assumes that sex is a privilege at his disposal whenever he has the urge for it. The patriarchal leader exposes this when he states, “I had tested and secondly I had a way of having intercourse with the people that I had intercourse with” (Tlhabi, 2017, p. 151). The above quotation exposes the gender inequalities and disempowerment which women have to endure. The phrase “the people that I had intercourse with” should raise eyebrows. The president was a married man, yet he publicly admits that he had various sexual partners. Ironically, the South African nation did not question the morals of the leader. Indeed, they were silent at a time when they should have spoken. The rape survivor had to flee the country shortly after the president was found not guilty. This gives insight into the masculine privilege attributed to Zuma as well as the manner in which the society protects men, even when they (men) are wrong. The author illustrates that although Fezekile was been raped, she should have been in good hands since there is a justice system (Tlhabi, 2017, p. 141). She also maintains that a rape survivor is as much on trial as the perpetrator in a rape trial. (Tlhabi, 2017, 87). Thus, the legal system did not serve its course, as it denied her a voice and an attempt to regain her dignity. Indeed, the author maintains that it is imperative that women and men enjoy the same rights, resources, protection as well as opportunities.

4.4.2 Rape culture as a disempowerment tool

In the context of the present study, rape is when a man intentionally penetrates a woman’s vagina without the woman’s consent (Tracy, Fromson, Long & Whitman, 2012). It is men who usually take advantage of the vulnerability of women and use that opportunity to satisfy their sexual desires on an unwilling woman. Gqola (2015) is adamant that patriarchy should be blamed as the cause of rape (p. 6). Similarly, in the text *Khwezi*, Tlhabi (2017) points out that male domination is the main reason for the disempowerment of women.

Fezekile's rape cases as a child, at the ages of 5, 12 and 13 illustrate this disempowerment (Tlhabi, 2017). It is important to note that, Fezekile was raped at the tender age of 5 after she went to her neighbour's house to take a bath (Tlhabi, 2017). In exile, all the people were very closely knit and undoubtedly taking a bath at the neighbour, Aunty Martha's house, did not raise any eyebrows. More so, when aunty Martha's brother had instructed her to undress, it did not alarm Fezekile as she was going to bath. However, what he did to her was unexpected because she was five years old; too young and innocent to comprehend what was happening to her. However, it did not stop there. Fezekile was again raped at age, 12, 13 and 31. In the context of this study, it is argued that when a man rapes a minor, he objectifies her body and glamorises sexual violence, thereby creating a society that disregards women's rights and safety (Pagano, 2017). A person who lures children to rape them is known as a paedophile (Arundale, 2018). As such, the men who raped Fezekile at the tender ages of 5, 12 and 13 years, can be regarded as paedophiles.

When she was twelve years old, her mom would wake up to clean or leave for work, and Fezekile would go to *Malume* (uncle) Godfrey's bed. She notes, "I have always been scared of sleeping alone. I am not sure, really, just as far as I can remember I have never liked sleeping alone, as I always loved cuddling up to someone" (Tlhabi, 2017, p. 39). Fezekile continues to state that she would lie with Uncle Godfrey while her mother would sit on the chair while the three of them chat. Unfortunately, this uncle saw this as an invitation to sexually assault her. This type of rape is associated with traditional cultural incest. This is when uncles rape their nieces or cousins as way of following a particular traditional norm. For example, in the Otjiherero culture, they practice the *Tjiramue* which is part of their culture and which allows for cousins to have sexual relations (Kefas, 2019). It is identical to what uncle Godfrey did to Fezekile. Both the Namibian and South African laws, regard this as a form of rape called statutory rape. According to the South African Criminal Law Amendment Act 32 of 2007, sexual contact with girls under the age of 16 constitutes "statutory rape", regardless of consent (Kruger & Oosthuizen, 2012). It is punishable with a maximum penalty of six years imprisonment. Statutory rape is a nonforcible sexual activity in which one of the individuals is below the age of consent. It does not matter how the rape happens; it is punishable by law.

The third time that Fezekile was raped, Tlhabi divulges that Khwezi was "virtually kidnapped, bundled into a car and taken to a house of a grown man called Mashaya" who raped her

(2017, p. 39). Article 3 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the child states that “in all actions concerning children, whether undertaken by public or private social welfare institutions, courts of law, administrative authorities or legislative bodies, the best interests of the child shall be a primary consideration” (1989, p. 4). Tlhabi, in her disillusionment of what Fezekile had to endure, sums it up correctly when she states that “the uncles, who were principled enough to fight a noble fight against an oppressive, racist system, lacked the morality to appreciate the gravity of their violation of a little girl” (2017, p. 38). The reason given why these perpetrators were never tried in a court of law is because as a minor Fezekile did not know where to lay a case and secondly, a committee of aunties in exile had overseen the matter after which they (the men) were found guilty of rape (Tlhabi, p. 103). Minors who are raped usually speak out when their parents force them to speak (Kefas, 2019). It is sad to note that they were in exile, fighting colonial oppression, fighting for justice and equality, yet there was no justice for the women and children who were raped.

It is thus logical that Fezekile suffered from trauma because she was raped and had no one to turn to for help. Often children do not report gender-based violence to anyone because of the fear of reprisal from the rapist. Sometimes the rape victim feels horribly tormented to the point of blaming herself. As such, it should be argued that male domination is the main reason associated with the disempowerment of women in most societies and is associated with manifestations of the upbringing of the abuser (Alfaro, 2019). The trauma becomes exposed when the abused turns older and they cannot handle violent actions. In all the three occasions when Fezekile was raped by the three different men, it had left her disheartened and disempowered. It is only through the support of other brave women that she had the courage to speak out to expose the rapists. According to Parpart (2013), a person who cannot speak out are left as disenfranchised and traumatised at the same time. Hence this study argues that it is imperative that radical feminists continue fighting against the rape culture that delegitimises women. It is a harsh reality to acknowledge why radical feminists conclude that women cannot achieve equal status with men unless they cease to perform submissive tasks which would ultimately deprive them of equal education opportunities. Fezekile made use of radical feminist strategies when she stood up against a hegemonic patriarchal leader, after he had raped her.

If what had happened to Fezekile had not been enough, she is again raped at the age of 31 by her father's best friend, who was also a very powerful leader in South Africa at the time. In the text, *Khwezi*, Zuma uses the patriarchal system to defend his actions against the rape of Fezekile. The rape incident happened one evening when Fezekile stayed at Zuma's house. On that particular night, while everyone else had left the house, Zuma remained with only Fezekile. After Fezekile went to the guestroom to sleep, Zuma went into the guestroom allocated to Fezekile and found her lying on the bed dressed in a 'kanga' (a colourful lighter fabric worn by women tied around their waist). Zuma then joined her on the bed and offered to rub her back. In the process, Zuma noticed that Fezekile "had no underwear" (Tlhabi, 2017, p. 71). Within no time, Zuma was on top of her raping her. She was surprised to discover that her assumed 'father' or *Malume* was having sexual intercourse with her.

At this point Fezekile felt that she had to break the silence and speak about this dehumanising rape incident. She was fearless and she disclosed her rape to her close friend, Kethani, who encouraged her to file a rape case against the powerful Jacob Zuma. Sadly, some of the aunties tried to persuade Fezekile to drop the case against Zuma. She states that one of the aunties asked her if she realised what such a case would do to the ANC (Tlhabi, 2017, p. 77). One would have hoped that the aunties would stand for the rights of women by advocating for disadvantaged women like Fezekile's rights. At this point it was important for Fezekile to speak out because a rape incident can severely traumatise the victim. It was one of the ways in which she fought against male domination and in so doing, it underscores her resilient attitude. Exposing the abuser gave her a sense of relief and at the same time it was a radical feminist stance to report a powerful person who had all the material and state apparatus at his disposal. Hence, this study's argument that the use of the political muscle by Zuma just like many other dominant men completely disempowers women. It is when women like Fezekile gunners the courage to report him that she becomes a radical feminist because she stood up to challenge the authority of Zuma.

According to Gqola (2015) "something makes it acceptable for millions to get raped on a regular basis" and then she continues by stating "that something is patriarchy" (2015, p. 6). Arguably, the reason why men rape women is because of the male dominance associated with the patriarchal society. Men use rape as a weapon to instil fear in women, hence Gqola (2015) refers to it as the "female fear factory" (p. 78). She elucidates that "the manufacturer

of female fear works to silence women by reminding us of our rapability and therefore blackmails us to keep ourselves in check” (Gqola, 2015, pp. 79, 80). Essentially, this means that women should fear when walking alone during the day or night; women should fear being raped if their clothing is too revealing or short – women thus have no right. As such, men see women’s bodies as objects for sexual pleasure and personal fulfilment. The patriarchal society features the male figure as that which should possess the masculine gender power which should not be contested by the feminine gender. They then seek to destroy the feminine as its opposing sex by the use of violence to obtain gender power (Gqola, 2015, p. 39). This action then creates fear that disempowers women. Hence, Gqola (2015) states that “rape is an effective way to remind women that they are not safe and that their bodies are not entirely theirs. It is an exercise in power that communicates that the men creating fear has power over the woman who is the target of attention” (p. 79). The male gender also uses debasement to make women inferior. Men constantly attempt to reduce the image of women, rendering them worthless and they put an extra demand on women to look beautiful. All these actions disempower women; therefore, when Fezekile opened a case against Zuma she acted with a radical feminist stance as a way of overcoming the fear factory created by the rape culture.

4.4.3 ‘Jackrolling’ as a weapon of disempowering women in post-apartheid South Africa

Jackrolling is a type of rape that is used to violate a woman by forcing her to have sexual intercourse against her will. When the same rape is performed by a group of men taking turns, it is termed jackrolling. ‘Jackrolling was a political act reflecting militarised masculinities and patriarchal practices’ (p. 60). Thlabi (2017) narrates an incident where a woman named Busi Mthembu, and two other women were raped by a group of soldiers in post-apartheid South Africa. She expounds what transpired:

One of the policemen said to me, “You will never forget this day.”

They took her to an open field and took turns raping her.

‘There were about six of them, or seven. I don’t know. It just did not end. It did not end. (p. 57).

Similar to rape that is committed by a single man against an unwilling female, when a woman is raped by a group of men, the victim is severely traumatised, and the memories haunt her for the rest of her life which leave the victim psychologically damaged and broken. Both types of rape are kinds of acts performed by young men at random. Hence, in this study, any form of rape is a traumatising act that silences and disempowers the woman. In the text, *Khwezi*, (Thlabi, 2017) reveals that several women were jackrolled. Busi Mthembu expounds that she was raped by a group of the South African Defence Forces (SADF) soldiers who broke into her house just one year after the end of the apartheid rule. She had refused to give information about the African National Congress (ANC) activities and names of prominent leaders. The group of six soldiers decided to punish her by taking turns to rape her. The rape was so traumatic that she says, “she died that day” (Thlabi, 2017, p. 58).

Another similar jackrolling rape incident was reported in the text *Khwezi*, but this time it was called ‘gang rape’. Thlabi, started a conversation on social media in an attempt to find out if there were women who had been gang raped. She received six responses sent to her email within minutes. Some of the victims were identified as Zanele, Lerato and even another one by the name Khosi who was nearly raped by a random man. This shows that jackrolling is a type of rape that is prevalent in South Africa and women often suffer in “silence and shame” (Thlabi, 2017, p. 65). Unfortunately, these crimes are never reported to the police because the victims fear the shame of public embarrassment. The victims should be educated to know that speaking out is a radical strategy that makes them stronger. However, it is also essential to look at how to deal with the perpetrators of these kinds of crimes. Gqola states the women are taught “to fight back, to make them stop,” (2015, p. 7). However, men are taught nothing. We need to find ways to stop the acts of rape completely. The perpetrators should be taught to think about how their actions hurt the victims.

AfriForum (2020), identified several types of rape in their 2020 issue titled ‘*Serial Rape in South Africa*’. The types of rape are: gang rape (jackrolling), child rape, infant rape, corrective rape and rape by a person of authority. The report concluded that a large number of rape perpetrators continue to commit rape crimes while they are on bail or parole. The report condemns the broken justice system which punishes offenders with leniency and allows them to go back into society and commit the same crime before they have even been punished for

their current offence. One of the reasons that one rapist gave in this report was that of sexual entitlement (AfriForum, 2020). While rape affects women in a negative way, the society plays a role in further traumatising and disempowering women. Alao (2018), spoke out against the actions of society by saying that the extreme social stigma contributes to the suffering of rape survivors by casting those who have been raped into silence for the fear of being disowned by their families. Women find themselves in these situations despite having not chosen to be raped.

The next subheading engages a discussion about a form of rape that is committed by a person of authority.

4.4.4 The judiciary system as a disempowerment tool

The South African judiciary system is made up of a hierarchy consisting of several ranks. These are the Constitutional Court, the Supreme Court of Appeal, the High Courts, Magistrate's Courts and the Heads of Court Meeting. These courts are governed by the Courts and Administration of Justice Act Chapter 8, Section 165-180. (The Department of Justice and Constitutional Development, 2021). On the contrary, the legal system as represented in the biographies under study, did not serve its course as it denied Fezekile a voice and an attempt to regain her dignity. Indeed, Gqola extrapolates that:

The Republic of South Africa, therefore, has the contradictory situation where women are legislatively empowered, and yet we do not feel safe in our streets or homes. Truly empowered women do not live with the haunting fear of rape, sexual harassment, smash and grabs and other violent intrusions into their space, bodies and psyches. A country that empowers women would grant us our entitlement of freedom of movement, sexual autonomy, bodily integrity and safety (2015, p. 65).

It was not until very recently that three new bills were altered and introduced in South Africa. As a matter of fact, the *Domestic Violence Bill* has been amended “to include victims of assault in any and all perceived intimate and or sexual relationships, including individuals who are dating, engaged or involved in customary relationships” (Roman 2021, pp. 41-42). The revised bill also allows for protection orders to be obtained online (Roman 2021, pp. 41-42). In addition, the *Criminal and Related Matters Bill* dictates that “bail will only be granted in

exceptional cases, victims will be heard in court before bail is granted” and “relatives of deceased victims will be allowed to make a statement before parole is determined” (Roman 2021, pp. 41-42). The third bill, the *Criminal Law Bill* deals with sexual offences related matters. It “recognises sexual intimidation as a sexual offence. This bill also extends the National Register for Sex Offenders to all known sex offenders” This register includes the names of all sex offenders, in addition to the perpetrators who commit crimes against children and people with disabilities (Roman, 2021, pp. 41 - 42). Although many of these bills have not yet been implemented, the law gives victims of Gender-Based Violence (GBV), women and children a ray of hope. They can at least be assured that when they report a GBV sexual offence, justice can be served, and the perpetrator can be punished. According to AfriForum (2020), the reason for the failure of Fezekile to receive justice can be blamed on that of the flawed justice system of South Africa. The justice system fails to apply the rape laws by simply granting bail to a rapist who then immediately returns to society on the following day. The rape victim will still be exposed to the rapist who may end up killing the victim. Also, the legal system does not offer protection and emotional support to the victim.

Additionally, the patriarchal influence in the texts under study is reflected when the defence council implied that Fezekile’s mother had allowed her to sleep with Godfrey (the man who had raped Fezekile when she was twelve years old). “The defence seemed to suggest that when a mother ‘agrees’ to her daughter sharing a bed with a grown man, it does not constitute abuse” (Tlhabi, 2007, p. 125). During the court proceedings Fezekile had actually been tried for being raped while she was still a minor instead of the males who had abused her being brought to book. Thus, there was no safe place for the girl-child. It is in this kind of situation that the court system persecutes the victim because she does not have a strong legal representation and the resources to pay for it. Fezekile was further disempowered because she was fighting a battle with an eloquence of all male lawyers representing Zuma and the judge was a male too. Arguably, this means that the patriarchal system disempowered her in court as well. The patriarchal system was unable to assist Fezekile in any way and thus, suppressed the female voices. An in-depth analysis of the court case confirms that of the seven legal representatives on the case, only one was a female (Tlhabi, 2007, p. 128). Thus, given the masculine nature of this legal team, Fezekile was disempowered because she had no one who could relate to her experience of being an abused woman and how humiliated

she felt after she was raped. The male lawyers were cold-blooded. Not only did they steal Fezekile's diary, but they used all the evidence from her diary (which they took without her consent) to make her and her mother appear to be the real culprits (Tlhabi, 2017, p. 97). It is thus evident that justice was not served in Fezekile's case and one can argue that the all-male bench of judges, lawyers and prosecutors were biased. Tlhabi (2017) accentuates that the defected justice system is reflected in the text *Khwezi* when the defence council implied that Fezekile's mother allowed her to sleep with Godfrey (the man who had raped Fezekile when she was twelve years old (p. 108). By blaming both Fezekile and her mother the court emphasises that men should **not** be expected to behave in a moral manner, yet women are always expected to behave in a moral manner. Hence, the conclusion by the legal team that Fezekile and her mother behaved in an immoral manner. As a matter of fact, Fezekile and her mom were incriminated, instead of the perpetrators being found guilty of their heinous crimes against a defenceless child and woman.

This has undeniably spurred the recent "slut shame walks" across the globe. For instance, rape victims have in the past been vilified for what they had worn at the time of the rape or being out late at night. Reger (2014) maintains that "slut walks emerged as a form of feminist protest early in 2011 when a police officer remarked that women should stop dressing like sluts if they did not want to be victimised" (p. 84). During the court proceedings Fezekile was actually tried for being raped while she was still a minor instead of the males who had abused her being brought to book. It was humiliating when Zuma's male lawyers successfully applied for her permission to question Fezekile about her sexual history (Tlhabi, 2017, p. 118). They demanded to know how many men she has had sex with in her entire life and which ones of the sexual intercourse acts were consensual and not. Gqola (2015) reiterates the stance of other feminists who argued that Fezekile's sexual past and sexual history should not have been used in the court:

They problematised the courts treatment an inclusion of Fezekile's sexual past and sexual-violence history, arguing that part of what the procedure communicated to women who had a past, and therefore, all women, was that it makes no sense for women to report rape since there is no realistic chance that the average woman,

who lives an interesting, dynamic life, and asserts sexual agency in terms of play, intercourse or any other expression, can attain justice (p. 119- 120).

Thus, there was no safe place for a woman or girl-child who had been sexually violated. As such, this study argues that the patriarchal court in *Khwezi* proved that it could not assist Fezekile, or any minor nor any man or woman who is raped in any way and has thus suppressed the voices of the women, more so, the voice of Fezekile. It should be noted that the cultural practice of the Zulu people in South Africa organises the social leadership structure through the patrilineal descent system (Ngubane, 2018). This cultural belief that patriarchal positions accords the male gender the privilege of being born to dominate over the female gender. This means that only male descendants inherit farmland, power, and authority from one generation to another through the male lineage (Berge, Kambewa, Munthali & Wiig, 2014). The female is never recognised to assume any roles of authority and therefore remains prone to abuse. The same paternal authority permits men to marry as many women as the men wants. It extends to a point where women do not have the power of choice to refuse a man who approaches them for sexual intercourse. This practice of patriarchy has now become an infringement to modern laws that supports the rights of women (Romany, 2012).

4.4.5 Patriarchal masculinities and disempowerment of women in “*Thuli*”

Madonsela encounters patriarchy at the hands of her father when he forbids her to wear pants and when he compels her to do nursing. He thus infringes on her the freedom to choose what she wants to wear and which career path to follow. This means that she was disempowered from an early age when the person she looked up to took it upon himself to take away basic rights and privileges from her. This study contends that she used a radical feminist strategy by running away from home.

However, her father’s patriarchy does not prepare Madonsela for what awaits her many years later. After President Jacob Zuma informed the South African nation that had paid the bond for the mansion worth R246 million, the City Press reported that the president did not have a bond and that he had lied to the South African nation (Gqubule, 2017, p. 92) . The Public Protector (Madonsela) was tasked to investigate whether the President “had breached the

executive ethics code by lying to the Parliament” (Gqubule, 2017, p. 93). It is clear that the South African nation wanted answers of whether the president had indeed paid a bond or whether he was not being truthful. According to Gillies (2019), in most corrupt African countries, women in such positions can easily be silenced through the passing of a bribe to whitewash the prosecution report. Unfortunately, Madonsela believed that “corruption is undemocratic: it disempowers the poor and disproportionately and illegally enriches the underserving”, (Gqubule, 2017, p. 40), as such she continued to prepare the report, which undeniably, was a radical step to take. Even so, as a woman, although she had filled an authoritative position herself, she was blatantly disregarded by authoritative men.

For instance, in the entire South African fraternity, there was no one to give “*Secure in Comfort Report*, later also referred to as *The Nkandla Report*” (Gqubule, 2017, p. 94). Madonsela was fighting for justice and for the welfare of the ordinary citizens of the country, but she only encountered stumble blocks in her path. Gqubule states that two men “dressed in the kind of grey suit of which apartheid-era bureaucrats were particularly fond of, held a press conference where they stated that one of the most powerful blocs in Cabinet had decided to interdict Madonsela and her office from releasing the Nkandla report” (2017, p. 95). These powerful men in government were determined to traumatise and stall her from doing her work. Moreover, many top authoritative leaders in the ANC had tried to prevent Madonsela from doing what she was paid for, that is, releasing the report.

Madonsela was thus prevented from fulfilling her duties as a Public Protector and when she did, it caused pandemonium. It should be argued that quest to fulfil her duties was radical considering the fact that she was bullied by Zuma’s powerful position. “There were insults, there were jokes. There was recognition, and praise” (Gqubule, 2017, p. 97). It was clear that the patriarchal leaders’ intention was to prevent the “*Secure in Comfort*” report from being released, because either they were in cahoots with Zuma or they themselves were engulfed in corrupt dealings which they feared would be brought to light should Zuma be jailed. The irony of the situation was that on her appointment, Madonsela, was instructed by Mr Zuma to perform her duties without “fear or favour” (Gqubule, 2017, p. 107). This means that she was going to perform her duties impartially and without opposition from the politicians who did not support her appointment. Interestingly, Madonsela’s investigations revealed that

these politicians were involved in scandalous situations. One can also argue that the appointment of a female Public Protector by Zuma was deliberate because he believed that she will be easy to silence even if the truth was unearthed.

According to the Economic and Political Weekly (2011) the term corruption has never been clearly defined. The publication questions whether corruption is “merely about financial misdemeanours and theft of public money?” It continues to question whether corruption also involves the abuse of power, and if that is the case then what sort of power? (p. 7). When one understands the gravity of the “Secure in Comfort Report”, it is evident that the President had abused his patriarchal power in order to renovate his personal dwelling with public funds. More appropriately stated, he stole from the poor. Admittedly, Madonsela was only able to confide in the Archbishop Desmond Tutu that she had been concerned of the “moral decay spreading like a cancer through South African political and social life” (Gqubule, 2017, p. 109). Similar to the Fezekile biography, Madonsela’s story also showed that Zuma’s corrupt practices had not been questioned by the public. Besides, Gqubule (2017) states that “the silence from the streets was deafening” (p. 107). Thus, this study emphasises that, Madonsela’s biography intends to conscientise the reader about corruption by a person in power and the damning effect it has on the entire society. When corruption becomes rampant in the South African government, resources that are meant to empower women and children are totally removed from them. Services such as education, health care and employment of the youth are destroyed together with the economy. Hence, this study’s intention to examine the extent to which women have been disempowered and the empowerment strategies employed in the female biographical writings under this study.

Under patriarchal society, the woman in this case, Madonsela is deprived of the power to make decisions and execute her duties which she was paid duly for. Moreover, Madonsela was disempowered through bullying and harassment. She received death threats and was informed that a gang boss “had been paid to carry a hit on her” (Gqubule, 2017, p. 143). This incident changed her entire life as she could no longer spend time with family and friends nor attend any public functions (Gqubule, 2017). It is clear that Madonsela had to be silenced. In the light, the intellectual frameworks of both, Said and Fanon explore the process of the construction of “the Other” through race and sex. In the biographies of both Fezekile and

Madonsela, the orient is constructed through the expert and intellectual formation. Said successfully examines what has come to be a binary relationship of subject and object, of the dominant Occident and the inferior Orient. According to Said (1978), the world is made up of two unequal halves, the Orient and Occident (p. 20). Both Madonsela and Fezekile become the inferior Orient in this case, while the patriarchal men in power are the Occident. Following this logic, this means that men are empowered while women remain disempowered.

As a matter of fact, Gqubule successfully demonstrates how patriarchal power and politics are fundamentally interconnected with victimisation and bullying tactics. It also emerged through a whistle blower that a hit in the form of a car accident was plotted against Madonsela, as “three hitmen were engaged and R740 000 was paid to the gang boss” (Gqubule, 2017, p. 144). These bullying tactics were extremely disempowering and dehumanising. As she had already secured a ticket for a jazz festival in Cape Town, the VIP protection services strengthened the security at the jazz festival, however, they relaxed the measure after the festival (Gqubule, 2017, p. 144). This did not make sense. Whether she had been at the Cape Town Jazz Festival or not, her safety was compromised, and the VIP protection service should have taken care of her until they had established that her life was not endangered anymore. This and other similar threats occurred before Madonsela was tasked by the “Dominican Order in the Catholic Church to investigate the involvement of the Gupta family in state affairs and awarding of contracts to companies linked to the family” (Gqubule, 2017, p. 147). This investigation led to the “State of Capture” report, but even before this report was released, Madonsela had received threats. Without a doubt, the aim of the threat was to intimidate, bully and coerce her from doing her appointed duties. One of the threats was a letter from the Gupta family through a law firm Van der Merwe and Associates, which read:

...If you choose to conclude that my clients were in any way whatsoever involved in inappropriate conduct under circumstances where we have tendered evidence to the contrary and under circumstances where we had a clear right to contradict the evidence you have gathered you do so at your own peril and at your own risk” (Gqubule, 2017, p. 147).

These kinds of coercions are tantamount to victimisation and will render any person, even more so, a woman, defenceless. It was intended to traumatise her because they wanted to instil fear in her. Irrefutably, she would constantly be thinking about protecting her life rather than publishing the report. Certainly, the people who were threatening Madonsela, had her totally under their power and by victimising her, they were as a matter of fact, oppressing and disempowering her. This shows absolute disregard for her position, as they were overstepping her boundaries as a woman. Despite all this, Madonsela proved that she had a strong and resilient personality. Notwithstanding all these threats, Madonsela went ahead to publish the report anyway. Arguably, this is a radical act which empowered Madonsela and made her victorious.

Although Madonsela was a powerful woman in her own right, she was silenced, and feared being punished by the dominant males in power. Undoubtedly, this was the cause of her trauma and this was further exacerbated by the fact that she had already bought tickets to attend the Capet Town Jazz Festival. Although the VIP Protection Services were instructed to intensify her security, they relaxed their measures after the event (Gqubule, 2017). Ironically, Madonsela's contract was supposed to expire within the next five months. Hence, the way she was treated by the VIP Protective Services exemplified the cold-heartedness of men to women and at the same time calls on women to react and challenge being violated by men. This action was plotted as a disempowerment strategy by her adversaries and Zuma's sympathisers. She was alienated from her close relatives and friends (Gqubule, 2017). This highlights how women are disregarded and unfairly treated by the dominant patriarchal system which calls for women to be respected, even if they do not fill positions of power or authority. In her book entitled *Rape: A South African Nightmare*, Gqola (2015) states that "the female fear factory is a lesson in subjugation" (p. 96). It should thus be argued that the bullying and harassment which Madonsela was made to endure, should also be viewed through same lens, Madonsela had to fear releasing the reports and she had to fear for the safety of her own life, and that of her family.

The biography also highlights how women are marginalised by the patriarchal society. Moreover, it shows that even if women are educated and fill positions of authority, they still do not receive the necessary respect they deserve and as such, are not seen as equal partners

in the postcolonial era. The next section discusses the strategies women use to empower themselves.

4.5 Female empowerment strategies in *No Longer Whispering to Power: The Story of Thuli Madonsela*

This section of the study examines the strategies that women use to empower themselves in the text *No Longer Whispering to Power: The Story of Thuli Madonsela* from a radical feminism perspective. Radical feminism is a perspective within the feminist movement that calls for a radical reordering of society in which male supremacy is eliminated in all social and economic contexts, while recognising that women's experiences are also affected by other social divisions such as race, class, and sexual orientation (Umunnakwe, Ikenga, & Abakare, 2021). In the aforementioned text, the main character, Madonsela is a remarkable model of female empowerment. Despite being surrounded by a tunic of men; she stood her ground in complete defiance and rose to office ranks that are known to be occupied by men. The discussions below dig deep into the various empowerment strategies throughout Madonsela's life as portrayed in the text. These empowerment examples were supported by evidence from scholars who were reviewed in chapter two. Other relevant evidence was quoted from literary texts that were written by authors from the feminist perspective, particularly the radical view.

4.6 Invasion of the male judiciary space

The South African Chapter of the International Association of Women Judges (SAC-IAWJ) advocates for the empowerment of women; that is their inclusion in participating in the judiciary system, because day-to-day problems of women and children can be properly resolved through judicial systems (SAC-IAWJ, 2021). According to the gender transformation and Judiciary Project, (2017) the proportion of women in the magistracy was 40%, however, they do not occupy parity in positions of influence in government. South Africa has made enormous strides in ensuring that women are adequately represented in and participating in political and leadership positions, not only in political party structures, but at legislative, executive, local governance, diplomatic and international levels (Hills, 2015). As such, Madonsela is one of them. In light of this, the ascendancy of Madonsela to the position of the South African public protector (PP). This position empowered Madonsela and other women

because she had the opportunity to amend laws according to the requirements of the South African society. Madonsela states that she turned down an offer to study at Harvard as she was afforded an opportunity to be part of the group who drafted the Constitution. She notes, “Harvard would always be there, but not the opportunity to draft my own country’s Constitution” (Gqubule, 2017. p. 58). Madonsela, seized opportunities that were available; and as a result, she was able to climb the ladder of success.

It is women and children who suffer the most when politicians misappropriate money and resources that belong to South Africa (Iheonu, Agbutun, Omenihu, Ihedimma, & Osuagwu, 2019). Madonsela’s work as public prosecutor came to save the Republic of South Africa from a robust infiltration of government by corrupt individuals (Godinho, Hermanus, & Eberhard, 2018). She produced the *State of Capture* report whereby the public protector had instructed the president to appoint a commission of inquiry to investigate the capture of state institutions by the Gupta family (Wolf, 2021). Zuma was implicated in this report. As such, what Madonsela had accomplished was to provide an opportunity for other women to witness female empowerment when an ordinary South African woman was assigned to the duties of a public protector. Such kinds of posts were usually afforded to male figures in both colonial and post-apartheid South Africa. Conversely, Madonsela dealt with several cases that were worth admiring. At the pinnacle of her career, she became radical when she successfully compiled a report, endorsed that the sitting president, Jacob Zuma, should be prosecuted. Zuma was popularly known for office misconduct in various scandals including the Nkandla corruption case, the arms deal, and the South African state capture case (Mlambo, 2019). Madonsela was severely admonished by Zuma’s worshippers not to pursue the case, but she defied their claims. Despite the political and bureaucratic corrupt system during President Jacob Zuma’s tenure of office, she managed to secure a successful prosecution (Zindela, 2016). Her actions were radical because she overturned the thinking of politicians who would normally get away with a crime of corruption because of their political influence. In an attempt to weaken Madonsela’s authority, a lawyer representing the Guptas made the following malevolent threat directed at Madonsela:

I have warned constantly against your approach and the processes followed, all in vain just to be advised [...] that you will issue your report on Friday.’

‘It is obvious that you had a pre-determined view of how your report should look and I submit that the evidence you have gathered was gathered as window-dressing for your decision that you have taken before my clients’ version could be heard or your version could be tested. You seem to ignore the Act responsible for your existence and it leaves me flabbergasted (Gqubule, 2017, p. 147).

Despite the intimidating message above with which they tried to undermine Madonsela’s authority by threatening her, she takes a radical feminist stance and continued with the investigation against the Guptas. Madonsela remained resolute and determined. Thus, she remained strong and felt empowered to demonstrate her anti-corrupt stance. Empowerment results when the loss of government resources due to corruption scandals are harnessed (Fagbadebo, 2019). The mere fact that Madonsela was a woman and she was compiling a case against a sitting president at the time, proved that she could “protect the public from improper conduct” (Gqubule, 2017, p. 143). This meant that she could uphold what her office was supposed to do, what she was ultimately appointed and paid to do.

4.7 Protest organisations and women’s rights

Madonsela is among the many women in South Africa who reacted against the brutal attacks targeted at the black community by the apartheid government. During 1986 university student protests, she became a trade union organiser. She joined the United Democratic Front (UDF), uMkhonto we Sizwe (MK) and the African National Congress (ANC) as a way to advocate for the empowerment of women. During the apartheid period, black South Africans were not allowed to protest for any reason. The Regulation of Gatherings Act 205 of 1993 was intended to regulate the holding of public gatherings and demonstrations at certain places (Mukumba & Abdullah, 2017). The words spoken by Prof. Mervyn Shear after Madonsela, when her fellow university students protested, described the extent of their resistance towards their emancipation:

Student unrest on campus continued in the period leading up to the declaration of the second state of emergency on 12 June 1986. The BSS [Black Students Society] informed

the University that it was unlikely that black students could attend lectures on 1 May or on 16, 17 and 18 June in recognition of Soweto day [...].

Much of the planning of the protest meetings and marches took place in the residences at night and by early on the morning of the event, plans had already been formulated and it was extremely difficult to dissuade the organisers that an alternative strategy might be wiser or more successful. Not only the students were involved, but the security police were inevitably fully apprised of the plans by early morning (Gqubule, 2017, p. 43).

Protesting is a method that is used to resist authoritarianism. Protesting is one of the empowerment tools used by the oppressed people (Manabe, 2019). It was during the apartheid period when Madonsela decided to join protest organisations to revolt against the oppressive apartheid government laws. Joining protest organisations was a form of resistance against oppression, while at the same time empowering Madonsela and her fellow female South Africans. From the year (1986) when Madonsela decided to join protests, it would take 8 more years before South Africa gained independence from the apartheid government. Resistance was a survival strategy for most university students. Frates (1993), states that founding the African National Congress (ANC) in 1912 was an organised resistance against racial oppression. In the process, a significant number of women entered the struggle leading to the formation of the ANC Women's League (ANCWL). Such organisations inspired Madonsela's quest and many other women that she led to empower themselves. The excerpt above explicitly details the actions by the Black Students Society (BBS) that they would not be attending university lectures for the duration of their planned protest action. The manner in which the resistance protests by Madonsela and her fellow protesters prompted a response by Prof. Mervyn Shear on 12 June 1986. Given this background, Madonsela has thus stuck to her beliefs in defying oppressive systems, by standing up against Zuma. She was not alone as there were people who would not be silences. Moreover, opposition parties demanded that Zuma adhere to the findings of Madonsela. The EFF, with a young and radical Julius Malema, voiced their concerns:

So the question we are asking today – and we are not going to leave before we get an answer [...] is: When are you paying the money, because the Public Prosecutor has

instructed you that you must pay the money, and we want the date of when you are paying the money? (Gqubule, 2017, p. 111).

The EFF continued chanting “pay back the money” in parliament. This in turn caused chaos and eventually the parliamentary proceeding was forced to a halt (Gqubule, 2017, p. 111). Although these kinds of protests caused a lot of embarrassments for the South African nation, as they were broadcasted live, the protests proved to be radical and action had to be taken.

Gqubule (2015) reveals that during the State of the Nation Address, on 12 February 2015, journalists who were in the parliament to report on this event realised that there was no (telephonic or internet) signal. Members of Parliament joined journalists by chanting the “Bring back the signal!” (p. 112). “It soon became clear that security forces had used a signal jammer to interfere with media broadcast” (Gqubule, 2015, pp. 113,114). Again, as awkward as it may have been, this type of protests has proven to be useful as the signal was restored. If the media had kept quiet, it would have been a severe blow to the democracy of the nation.

It should be noted that the #Me Too Movement and the Slut Shame Movement have been pivotal in gaining recognition for women. Backed by the First Lady of Namibia, this resistance against oppression has allowed women to counterattack authoritarianism and it gave women a voice. In addressing the Commonwealth Lawyers Association Africa Hub Public Lecture under the theme “Beyond Barriers - Opportunities for Women in Positions of Influence”, the First Lady of Namibia, Monica Geingos encourages women to articulate their experiences as that provides “agency and a safe space for others to follow suit” (Geingos, 2021). She postulated that women should take collective action which would defend oppressive systems (Geingos, 2021).

The advice of First Lady of Namibia should be taken to heart. Women should take part in protests such as the #Me Too Movement and the Slut Shame Movement. It is through such movements that women gain a voice which allow them to defy oppressive systems that keep them in shackles.

4.8 The role of radical feminism as an aid against the oppression of women

The feminist ideology advocates against male domination. The actions of Fezekile and Madonsela apprise the world about their bravery and the kind of fight which they put up against any patriarchal society dominated by men across all spectrums of society. That Fezekile had had the courage, to report the then Deputy President, Jacob Zuma to the police to open a case against him, is a radical. Madonsela also takes a radical feminist stance when she braces the storm and compiles and releases two reports against a powerful political figure like Jacob Zuma. *The Secure in Comfort Report (Nkandla Report)* and the *State of Capture Report (State Capture Report)* would ultimately lead to the downfall of Zuma's presidency.

The foremost important role of radical feminism is to advocate against male domination (Tong & Botts, 2018). Radical feminists seek to empower women by advocating for equal rights amendment, access to credit, and equal pay (Goetz & Jenkins, 2018). Relating to these definitions, one would argue that the actions of Fezekile and Madonsela educate the world about their bravery and the kind of fight women have to wage against the patriarchal system across all spectrums of society. Seemingly, in her biography, Thuli Madonsela, advocates for policy reforms in favour of women. Reporting Zuma to the police and opening a case is an act of bravery that challenges the rule of law pertaining to a South African sitting or former president. Arguably, Madonsela's radical feminist stance is admirably courageous as she compiles and releases two reports against a powerful political figure, like Jacob Zuma. Significantly, *The Secure in Comfort Report* and the *State of Capture Report* eventually led to the downfall of Zuma's presidency. Madonsela proved that Zuma was not immune to the rule of law when the law was applied to a sitting president. She had been tasked to look at whether he had breached executive ethics codes:

The next day, 21 November, constitutional law expert Prof. Pierre de Vos asked Public Prosecutor Thuli Madonsela to probe whether Zuma had breached the executive ethics code by lying to parliament after numerous media revelations that the Department of Public Works and, consequently the taxpayer had, in effect, paid for much of the property (Gqubule, 2017, p. 93).

In reply to the above question, Madonsela acted by producing a scandalous report known as the *Secure in Comfort Report* in which a sitting president had fraudulently lied that his rural homestead was going through a security upgrade. Through this report it became evident that Zuma had embarked on a complete renovation to make his home a state-of-the-art village homestead and added a swimming pool, amongst others, using state funds. Through this scandalous corruption, Zuma abused millions of South Africa's taxpayer's money which placed him in a privileged position and afforded him the "right" to live in a lavish house.

Amongst the many reports the Thuli Madonsela was supposed to write as part of her duties as public protector, was the report of Michael Komape, six years of age, who died an undignified death by drowning in a pit latrine (Gqubule (2017). Michael and his friend went to the toilet "during a break between classes", with Michael not returning to class (Gqubule 2017, pp. 180 - 181).

It is thought that the toilet seat collapsed, sending Michael hurtling into the pit latrine. He must have struggled for his young life before surrendering, defeated to the abyss. His friend went back to class, perplexed and concerned about why Michael had not come out of the toilet yet. Hours later, when asked, he told the teachers who were searching frantically for him, that he hadn't seen his friend since they had gone to the toilet that morning (Gqubule, 2017, p. 181).

Taking the above into consideration, it should also be argued that Zuma's corrupt and avaricious practices have left women and children deprived, hence Madonsela acted against this corruption as a way of giving a voice and empowering not only to women but the entire South African nation. Gqubule promulgates that "the indignity of Michael's death shocked his mother. Children are buried in white coffins, here, in Michael's country. But no matter how clean his pale wooden coffin looked, nothing could quell the stench of scandal emanating from how he had died, 20 years into South Africa's democracy" (2017, p. 181). As such, it should be argued that Jacob Zuma with his corrupt practices betrayed the South African people through his self- enrichment schemes, taking into consideration that the renovations to his Nkandla residence was valued more than R2,4 million Rand, yet a boy drowns in a pit latrine. A selfless

leader would first make sure that the children have proper classroom structures including ablution facilities, before fending for his family and himself.

Rightfully so, some prominent South African politicians complained about this kind of corruption as Mataboge (2014) notes that, "the Nkandla matter has taken its toll on not only the image of the presidency, but the government and the whole country ... it has created doubt about our commitment to root out corruption," (p. 1). Thus, challenging the law on its own was an act of empowerment especially against a powerful person like Jacob Zuma who had a mass of wealth and violent manpower at his disposal. Tlhabi (2017) divulges the following about Madonsela:

In Madonsela's eyes, the people govern through others. Power is entrusted to representatives – it does not belong to them. The people then hold the power to keep their representatives honest. Corruption is undemocratic: it disempowers the poor and disproportionally and illegally enriches the undeserving. The failure of leaders of the Zuma administration to embody the spirit of the country's democratic Constitution is anathema to her (p. 40).

It is thus understandable why Madonsela adopted a radical feminist stance which placed her in a position to root out corruption, even if it meant taking on a hegemonic patriarchal leader. According to Gqubule (2017)

Madonsela went to court because if she accepted the president and Parliament's stance that her powers were merely suggestive, her legacy would be a toothless office, unable to execute its primary mandate as envisaged in the law. But there was another reason: she believed deeply that one should not stand idly by when entrusted with the power to change things for the better (p. 118).

Madonsela should be lauded for not hiding Jacob Zuma's greed and deception. She showcases resilience and stand up for the principles she believes and upholds. It is commendable that Madonsela stands tall and confident and that she did not lose hope in the face of adversity. Gqubule (2017) states that Madonsela 'may, yet play a larger role in addressing grand

structural inequality – larger than the one she has already played through her office’s jurisprudence of dignity. She has taken a stand for social justice on the side of the poor, and helped to spark the rise of a movement based on the value of human dignity and solidarity’ (p. 191). Women should be encouraged to follow the example of Madonsela when faced with difficult circumstances in order to redress the wrongs in society.

4.9 Education as an empowering strategy

“If you educate a man, you educate an individual. But if you educate a woman, you educate a nation.” This is a popular African maxim shared by Dr Emman Kwegyir Aggrey (1875-1927) who was from Ghana. Both the characters presented in the two texts under this study, Fezekile and Madonsela represent women in two distinct ways. Fezekile’s ‘O’ Level qualification from Zambia was not accepted in South Africa. This placed her in a financially disadvantaged position which had a ripple effect on her personal well-being, and it adversely affected her mother’s as well. Even though she did not have a matric qualification, she worked as an unqualified teacher and was performing excellently during her stay in Dar es Salaam (Tlhabi, 2017, 176). She immersed herself fully with activities she enjoyed in Amsterdam as shown by the following quote:

With her magnetic personality and adventurous spirit, she became active in the cultural NGO scene. She worked for Aidsfonds and the Koninklijk Instituut voor de Tropen (Royal Tropical Institute, or KIT) an NGO that supports civil society movements and programmes that ‘improve health and ensure equitable social economic development’, according to the institute’s website. It provides research, training, and education mainly for countries in the global South. KIT also has a gender office. This was right up Fezekile’s alley; she immersed herself in her work, becoming popular with her colleagues (Tlhabi, 2017, 172).

Madonsela on the other hand, rose through the ranks to become a national leader in the South African justice system. It would have been impossible for her to attain such great heights had she not been educated. Thuli Madonsela is a professor of law and a South African lawyer who was born in 1962 in Johannesburg. She holds a Doctor of Law degree from the University of Stellenbosch and the University of Cape Town (Wolfe & Bernstein, 2016). Madonsela rose to power amid a platoon of men. Despite all odds, Madonsela succeeded in

bringing Jacob Zuma before the courts through her effort in compiling the *State of Capture Report* and the *Secure in Comfort Report* which resulted in the corruption cases which he is currently facing. The following excerpt from the text *No Longer Whispering to Power: The Story of Thuli Madonsela* attempts to trace Madonsela's education roots until she rose to the position of Public Protector of South Africa:

Madonsela remained steadfast, holding on to her dream of becoming a lawyer. This determination to hold, valiantly, on to principle is another of the characteristics that people who knew her in her Swaziland days recall. She refused to study nursing. After Madonsela obtained her junior certificate, Evelyn Baring's Principal Ginindza helped her to secure a bursary to return to Swaziland and complete her high school studies. (Gqubule, 2017, p. 30).

Without education, Madonsela as an ordinary South African woman who was born during the apartheid era, would never have become a Public Prosecutor. Her humble beginnings commenced when she was in high school at Evelyn Baring in Swaziland. She was determined to become a lawyer and refused to follow her father's wishes of studying to become a nurse. This was another radical stance, considering the fact that he was the one who had to pay for her studies. Her father chased her away from home because she refused to study to become a nurse. Madonsela was not deterred by this move, instead, it strengthened her to rise to new challenges. In a way, this incident shows how the girl-child can be unfairly treated. In this case, Madonsela is forced to study towards a career chosen for her by her parents and when she refuses, she is punished. Such circumstances could have impacted the girl-child negatively, who would often be forced into homelessness and prostitution when there is a lack of funds to study. Against all odds, Madonsela was unwavering and determined to become educated and eventually became South Africa's most powerful advocate occupying the seat of the Public Prosecutor. The contrast between the two women is how men in the position of power can exploit women as sex objects as in Fezekile while on the other hand they still attempted to undermine the authority that Madonsela occupied as Public Prosecutor.

4.10 Female biographical writing as an empowerment tool

The purpose of a biography is to share the life of another person with an audience. An author may choose to write a biography because they find the subject's story to be interesting or to

have themes that are identical to current economic or political issues. Another reason is that; biographies enlighten readers about the life of a notable person (Brettell, 2021). They are a way of providing historical details, the subject's motivations and psychological underpinnings, their environment, and the impact they had, both in the short and long term. According to Nweze, cited by Shands et al., “autobiography as a genre can be deployed by female minority groups and feminists to obtain a more important role in literature and history” (2015, p. 16). The abovementioned definition applies to biographies as well as the genre that falls under autobiography.

Women who write biographies and autobiographies (referred to as auto/biography hereafter) share stories of disempowerment, empowerment, and resilience through sharing their real-life experiences. They can write their auto/biographies, or they can employ someone who can write their life stories on their behalf. Nweze (cited by Shands, 2015), maintains that “when women writers use the form and especially when their protagonists are girls or women, they subvert the notion of the voicelessness of the second sex in black society and literature, and they become active subjects in the communities they live in” (p. 17). This is significant to this study since the two texts examined are both biographical writings written by women. The authors wrote to explicitly narrate what women go through on a regular basis using a feminist approach. The author of *Khwezi – The Remarkable Story of Fezekile Ntsukela Kuzwayo*, Redi Tlhabi, had followed the trial of Fezekile extensively. Tlhabi (2017) states that when Fezekile had left the country (after the court case) she wondered how she “could have been part of a society that had at worst allowed and at best observed her lynching” (p. 4). As such, the biography was written more than ten years after the rape trial. On writing the biography, Tlhabi (2017) states:

In this book, Fezekile’s voice rings loudly and defiantly. It is ironic, really, that I always knew where Fezekile was, but held back – I knew that many journalists had tried to speak to her, but she had always run from them. First impressions last; had I pursued her aggressively, it would have put her off. I wanted her to know that I was writing unapologetically, as a feminist who *believed* her – this is precisely why I approached her (p. 5).

Moreover, both Madonsela and the author, Thandeka Gqubule were incarcerated for being involved in protests meetings and marches. Gqubule was arrested in June 1986 when a “red-haired white student” knocked at her door and announced, “himself as a member of the security establishment” leading “apartheid police to her door” (Gqubule, 2017, p. 43). During that same month, Madonsela was apprehended and detained at Diepkloof Prison without trial, while Gqubule was detained at John Vorster Square (Gqubule, 2017, pp. 45 and 46). Gqubule was later transported to Diepkloof Prison where she and Madonsela met (Gqubule, 2017, p. 45). It is thus clear that the author and Madonsela had the same ideals for a free and fair South Africa. Through this biographical writing, both authors, Tlhabi and Gqubule, adopt a radical feminist stance by speaking on behalf of Fezekile and Madonsela.

The other reason why women write is to share their sentiments, thereby seeking refuge or escaping from the real troubled world. Many women have been abused by men in different ways and remained silent until they died. Telling one’s personal experience encourages other women to speak out against abuse. Speaking out is a way of releasing emotions, pain and to cast out the shame of being raped or abused. There is a feeling of great relief after a rape survivor speaks out. There are some people that could judge Madonsela and Fezekile for speaking about their struggles, but many readers can sympathise and build the courage to report a rape incident or write a report against a powerful politician like Zuma. While Fezekile had been raped by a ‘man in power’, and her house was burnt down after the trial; after Zuma had been found ‘not guilty’, Madonsela also had to face the same ‘man in power’, in court, in a landmark case to scrutinise whether her ruling as public protector were “legally binding and enforceable” (Gqubule, 2017, p. 123).

The purpose of a biography is to share the life of another person with an audience. An author may choose to write a biography because they find the subject's story to be interesting or to have themes that are indistinguishable to current economic or political issues. Another reason is that; biographies inform readers about the life of a notable person (Brettell, 2021). They are a way to introduce readers to the historical details, the subject's motivations and psychological underpinnings, their environment, and the impact they had, both in the short and long term. The process of writing and reading are both engaging because they offer insight into a person’s life. By so doing, the writer, captivates the reader's attention.

Women who write auto/biographies share stories of disempowerment, empowerment, and resilience through real-life experiences. They can write their auto/biographies; they can employ someone who can write their life stories on their behalf.

Indeed, as outlined above, female authored biographies can inspire everyone, especially girls and women who have been disempowered. Reading about the trials and tribulations encountered by Fezekile and Madonsela and how they used empowerment strategies, can teach us valuable lessons. Moreover, it is commendable that a number of women are putting pen to paper to illustrate their stories of trauma, resilience and how they become radical in the face of adversity. Women are thus encouraged, not only through the biographies of Fezekile and Madonsela, but also the abovementioned auto/biographies, not to lose hope in the face of adversity.

The biographies of Fezekile and Madonsela serve as an inspiration that empower women. Although Madonsela and Fezekile went through various stages of difficulties in their lives, they chose to share their good and gruesome life experiences. Sharing one's life experiences means that the next person can be trained and equipped to deal with some of these, especially the bad experiences. For example, a woman can be better equipped when she hears other women sharing their encounters about rape. They will know how to deal with rape before it happens, recognise red flags that lead to rape and what constitutes sexual violation. In the context of the Fezekile's biography, Tlhabi divulges that her situation was tricky in that most people seemed to doubt that she was in fact raped. On the other hand, her story is educational and encourages other women to report a rape incident committed by any person in power. The extract below expounds how Fezekile educates other women in the event that they are raped:

When I saw the SMS, I knew something was wrong, but did not want to believe it. So, I tried to go back to sleep.

Kimmy Msibi, whom Fezekile regarded as a sister, was the first person Fezekile told about the rape. I talk to her to understand what Fezekile must have been thinking that night.

Why did you suspect that something was wrong? I mean, it is strange to assume that an SMS automatically spells trouble?' I ask her.

Well, she had sent me a message before that Malume is looking at her sexually. She was very uncomfortable. I knew she was in Zuma's house and very uncomfortable. (Tlhabi, 2017, p. 72).

In the above extract, it is important to note that what Fezekile did as her first step of action was to tell someone whom she trusted that she had felt uncomfortable about Jacob Zuma that night. Fezekile also told Kimmy Msibi about her rape ordeal. Kimmy was supportive and non-judgemental (Brooks & Burman, 2017). Fezekile's first action educates other women to tell a person they can trust who can assist them in finding help on reporting the incident and from other support services related to rape. Reporting a rape incident is done at the nearest police station and one has to immediately seek for medical help at the nearest clinic or hospital (Mgopa, Rosser, Ross, Mohammed, Lukumay, Massae, & Leshabari, 2021). The challenge that rape victims face is that they may feel ashamed and worried that the police will not believe them, or worried that they will be blamed (Koo, Nguyen, Andrasik & George, 2015). Thus, when other women read about what Fezekile went through when she was raped by Zuma, they become educated and better equipped should they be challenged with similar situations.

4.11 Auto/biographies as historical vessels

Auto/biographies impact and inspire the lives of many people. The stories shared in these genres are true lived life experiences of the person. It is through reading the autobiography that the reader is informed about Madonsela's experiences during the apartheid era. Apartheid was a political system of segregation or discrimination on the basis of race that was at the order of the day in South Africa from 1948 to 1990 (Lemon, 2021). Biographical writings can serve as vehicles that transport historical events from one generation to another. In the biography *No Longer Whispering to Power: The Story of Thuli Madonsela* (Gqubule, 2017), the reader learns about the life of Madonsela during and after the apartheid era. The apartheid system was twice oppressive for black women as they were mostly employed as domestic workers. Gqubule states that "under apartheid, domestic workers constantly navigated between two worlds – one white and wealthy, in which they sold their labour, and another, black and poor, in which their real lives played out" (2017, p. 18). The white South African government imposed various laws. Amongst these laws were the Bantu Labour Act

and the so-called Urban Areas Act and myriad regulations issued under them. Section 10 (i) of the Urban Areas Act, relating to residence in the urban areas, prohibits any African from remaining in an urban area more than 72 hours unless he is in possession of a permit or he otherwise qualifies under the section to remain without a permit (Landis, 1975). Life in South Africa was harsh for Black South Africans as “only 10 per cent of teachers in Soweto had a matric certificate” (Gqubule, 2017, p. 15). A person without a matric certificate was relegated to do only manual labour. Furthermore, Cock (1989) cited by Gqubule explicates that “by law, black women could not perform skilled labour” (Gqubule, 2017, p. 18). Government officials recognised the homemaking role of the women and feared that their presence in the cities would lead to the establishment of a stable black urban population. This information presented in Madonsela’s text shows that when a biography is written, historical events are transmitted from one generation to another.

4.12 Release of painful experiences and healing

Both the writer and the reader of the biography, release personal traumatic experiences known as catharsis (Briassoulis, 2019). Just by speaking out, emotions are released. According to Aristotle, catharsis is the purification or purgation of the emotions (Ananth, 2014). The reader or the writer engages in the eradication of their traumatic emotions after which the healing stage of resilience takes place. Eliminating bitterness is a psychological process that leads to the healing of a victim or the person who is suffering from past painful experiences (Benner, 2016). It is this interpretation that saw Fezekile narrate her painful life experiences while purging her emotions. She endured two separate traumatic incidents that other women could relate to; the death of her father and her being raped from childhood until she was 31. The first narrative expounds that:

After her father’s death she experienced hallucinations and nightmares. She had a pain on her middle, or her belly button and she started wetting her bed, a thing she had outgrown even before she turned 18 months. According to the hospital there was nothing wrong with her stomach. She was then given tablets which were prescribed to mad people and that aggravated her condition (Tlhabi, 2017, p. 129).

The above incident occurred after the death of Fezekile’s father. She experienced signs and symptoms of a mental disorder. It was an experience that traumatised her to a point where

she suffered from urine discharge disorder. She had to be cured using drugs which are normally prescribed to people with mental illness. Moreover, after being raped by Zuma, Fezekile explicates in her diary how heartbroken she was in the following statement:

I think that what I will do is to take it one step at a time. First get through the court case, whatever that brings (of course I hope we win, that the truth prevails, and justice is done). Then I can deal with the other stuff more clearly, removing the man who raped me from my father and my father from the man who raped me... I am hurt that he did that, disturbed by what he has done to our relationship, to the memory of our fathers. I'm disgusted by the thought of him on top of me and sweating and ejaculating inside me. I am confused by him looking at me as anything other than a daughter' (Tlhabi, 2017, p. 96).

The above incident was written after she was raped by Zuma, a person who represented her father. She felt 'hurt' and humiliated. Through her writing one could argue that she undergoes a state of catharsis (Ananth, 2014). This means that, by speaking out against her rapists, Zuma to be specific, Fezekile went through a process of accepting all the painful life experiences and the negative emotional reactions which was generated from them (Ford, Lam, John & Mauss, 2018).

4.13 Chapter summary

This chapter presented and analysed the data from the two texts studied; *"No Longer Whispering to Power: The Story of Thuli Madonsela"* (Gqubule, 2017) and *Khwezi: The Remarkable Story of Fezekile Ntsukela Kuzwayo* (Tlhabi, 2017). The texts were discussed under themes that fall under the objectives of the study. The data were presented to address the impact of female authored biographies on women empowerment. Furthermore, the study discussed the strategies women used to empower themselves and lastly, the methods used to disempower women as depicted in the selected biographies. The reality of life as explicated in *Khwezi* (2017) and *Madonsela* (2017) undoubtedly impacts and inspires women to speak out about the many problems women face and provides a few lessons to women on how to deal with these problems they face daily.

CHAPTER FIVE

FINDINGS, RECOMMENDATIONS AND CONCLUSION

5.1. Introduction

This chapter summarises and concludes the study. The purpose of this conclusion is to summarise and reflect on the study for which the main objective was to evaluate the extent to which women have been disempowered and the empowerment strategies women employ in the two female biographical writings: Khwezi – *The Remarkable Story of Fezekile Ntsukela Kuzwayo* by Redi Tlhabi and *No Longer Whispering to Power: The Story of Thuli Madonsela* by Thandeka Gqubule. This chapter sums up the major findings in this study and aligns them to the study's research objectives and provides recommendations for future studies. The three sub-objectives:

- To investigate how women are disempowered as depicted in the selected biographies.
- To examine the strategies women, use to empower themselves in the selected biographies.
- To determine the impact and inspiration of female authored biographies

The study's conclusions are also drawn from the above objectives which are presented at the beginning of the study.

5.2. Summary and major findings in relation to research objectives

5.2.1 Objective 1: To investigate how women are disempowered in the two biographies

The study divulged that Gqubule and Tlhabi address similar concerns of trauma, resilience, and radical feminism. It concluded that patriarchy is the major root cause of women's disempowerment as it is the greatest enabler of rape (Gqola, 2015, p. 6). It showed that the most dehumanising manner of disempowering a woman is when she is raped. Fezekile said that she felt like dying every day and wished she had lost a limb (Tlhabi, 2017, p. 13). Having been raped on several occasions from childhood until she developed into a mature woman, she was deprived of living a carefree life. Another observation made in this study is that, when a group of men team up against an ordinary woman, they can do anything especially when there is money involved. It is evident in this study that Fezekile did not stand a chance amid a group of corrupt males. The judge who dismissed Fezekile's claim that she was raped by Jacob Zuma, was soon promoted to become the Deputy of the Transvaal judiciary as soon as Zuma

assumed office as president. This pointed out at a number of red flags. Dismissing Fezekile's rape claim was the only way the judge and lawyers could pave Zuma's path to become the president of South Africa.

On the other hand, Madonsela was faced with fierce opposition when she announced that she would publish the Public Prosecutor's report. The intimidation from across Zuma's affiliates was aimed at threatening her. The present study revealed that a male dominated society can go to any length to disempower women as long as they have the means. Had Madonsela's reports against Zuma been prevented, corruption in South Africa would have escalated. People are more aware of corrupt practices and speak up about corrupt practices.

Both authors, in their quest at exposing the trauma women are exposed to, have revealed that men are in complicity which renders them voiceless. As such Nweze (n.d.) cited by Shands, Mikrut, Pattanaik, & Ferreira – Meyers (2015) state that, "when women writers use the form and especially when their protagonists are girls or women, they subvert the notion of the voiceless of the second sex in black society and in literature and they become active subjects in the communities they live in" (p. 17). Hence, the authors have been instrumental in accentuating the dehumanising manner in which women are treated and as such, the biographers and their subjects become advocates for change.

Moreover, Gqubule and Tlhabi have taken it upon themselves to conscientise the society in which we live about the manner in which women are relegated and disempowered. Through these biographies, they are able to point to the specific problems women face and through which women are encouraged to regain their voices.

It is evident that the biography as a genre could be used to encourage women to be vocal about their traumatic experiences as well as to eliminate dominant systems which oppress them. As such, the aforementioned biographies are employed, to encourage women to advocate for change in the status of women which would subsequently enhance their decision – making capacities while challenging the injustices and inequality which women are exposed to on a daily basis

5.2.2 Objective 2: The strategies women use to empower themselves

It is understandable why Fezekile made use of the pseudonym “Khwezi” as a rape complainant may not be named according to the South African Law, in order to protect her privacy and also in order to prevent any form of stigmatisation (Gqola, 2015, p. 102). Fezekile’s empowerment strategy is to declare that her real name *Khwezi – The Remarkable Story of Fezekile Ntsukela Kuzwayo* should be used on the cover of the biography. In so doing, she not only reclaims her name, but she also regains her voice and breaks the silence. Tlhabi states that “Khwezi is politics – a symbol of the arduous fight against political and patriarchal power, and against Zuma, its torchbearer. That she had to take on a different name, albeit a beautiful one lent to her by a friend, testifies to the physical and mental savagery inflicted upon her. But today, in these pages, she is here to reclaim her own name” (2017, p. 7). She thus uses her name as an empowerment strategy. Conversely, her perpetrator will be haunted by this biography forever. By using her biological name in this biography, Fezekile, stands up for many maltreated and abused women. This is indeed a radical move from her side. The mere fact that Fezekile has agreed for her biography to be written is not only bold, but it provides agency for other women as well.

Moreover, Madonsela’s rise to the position of power as South Africa’s Public Prosecutor was through her education. The study concludes that it is not a waste of resources to educate a girl-child because it is the best method of empowering her. Madonsela was adamant that she would become a lawyer. The only obstacle that stood in her way was that her father wanted her to become a nurse. Her father kicked her out of the house, which proved to be an advantage, rather than a disadvantage and motivated her to achieve her goal. Before Madonsela rose to power, she practised her leadership skills by joining civil protest organisations at school and the community. This was another way that she used as an empowerment strategy, by cementing her decision-making principles. She became very vocal and determined to observe the law. The biographies emphasise that women should make use of the opportunities offered to them in order to empower themselves.

Madonsela should be proud of the fact that Zuma was arrested for contempt of court for failing to appear in court on charges compiled as a result of the *State of Capture* and *Secure in Comfort* reports (Maughan & Marais, 2021). The late Fezekile should have been alive today

to know that although Jacob Zuma was not found guilty of rape, he has to face his day in prison, even though it is for other charges made against him. The fact that Zuma is facing the charges of corruption gives the ordinary South African hope for a fair justice system.

5.2.3 Objective 3: The impact and inspiration of female authored biographies

The present study revealed that biographical writing plays a significant role to empower women. The impact of literary texts written by women to represent other women serves as an inspiration because real-life stories are presented. Many women are ashamed to speak out, as a result, they suffer in silence. The stories of both Fezekile and Madonsela as well as other women mentioned in this study can inspire many women to be vocal about their shared experiences. Most of the time, women who suffer in silence end up committing suicide. They endure severe trauma as they are afraid of being stigmatised and humiliated.

There is a definite argument that Zuma manipulated the South African justice system for his rape case to be dismissed. Notwithstanding, there are many honest office bearers such as Madonsela who refused to be bribed or intimidated. As such, it is through the writing of the biography that many women are given hope. Madonsela successfully managed to compile the *State of Capture* and *Secure in Comfort* reports which detailed how Zuma had used his office to engage in corrupt dealings and which would hopefully bring Zuma to book. Arguably, there are many instances where the law cannot be distracted because principled office bearers like Madonsela will stand up. The actions of Madonsela demonstrate that justice prevailed because Zuma was prevented from looting South Africa's national resources through corruption.

5.3. Conclusion

This study concluded that women have been disenfranchised in the past and are still relegated in every facet of life. Although Madonsela was an educated woman and Fezekile an uneducated woman, both had to face severe humiliation as they suffered under male supremacy. This study also concluded that the girl-child should not be denied access to education as it would disadvantage her financially, reduce her chances of getting a well-paying job which in due course would deny her the means to attain proper nutrition, housing and education. This study also concluded that rape disempowers women, traumatises them

and leaves them scarred for life. Women live in fear of being raped since fear is instilled in them, in what Gqola terms the “female fear factory” (2015, p. 12). This study concluded that as long as men are the perpetrators, women would never be able to benefit from the “full and equal enjoyment of all right and freedoms” guaranteed by the constitution of South Africa. This study also advocated for rapists to be held accountable and that stricter punishment should be imposed on the perpetrator.

This study advocates that woman should be encouraged to make use of the available empowerment strategies in the form of resources, education opportunities, bursaries or grants that are available. Women should seize opportunities to study which may allow them to occupy positions of power and authority. Madonsela opted to leave home and studied in Swaziland, while Fezekile was involved with an NGO as an Aids activist. This study also concludes that women should take part in protests such as the “slut shame walk” or #Me Too” in order to defy the dehumanising treatment by men.

This study also concludes that women can learn valuable life lessons when they read auto/biographies written by female authors. It is easy to look at a woman who has made great strides in life and think that it was an easy journey. However, when one reads the life story of that woman, one would not only be enlightened on the trauma and subjugation that she was made to endure, but also the resilience and radical feminist strategies that she had to adopt to emerge victorious. Conclusively, Madonsela and Fezekile have defied hegemonic patriarchy and women can learn so much of their lives by reading their biographies.

This chapter summarised the study by connecting the research objectives to the research findings. This study confirmed that Black female biographers can take a political stance in stressing that black women face disempowerment daily. This study has shown that women can employ radical feminist boldness to alter their circumstances for themselves and for other women, including the men.

5.4. Recommendations

- The researcher recommends further literary studies by to ascertain the importance of the auto/biography genre.
- This study focused on South African biographies written by black female writers. Further literary research could be conducted on biographical texts by female writers

in different African countries using the radical feminist theory. This would enhance one's understanding of the biography genre and shed more light on the disempowerment of black women.

- Further study should be conducted on auto/biographical texts using STWANISM and nego-feminist theories.
- The researcher proposes that further literary studies should also focus on whether girls and women can play a transformative role in boosting economic growth, reducing inequality and poverty.
- Finally, the researcher recommends that further literary studies look into ways in which institutional, political and social barriers impede and deprioritizes women with regards to the specific needs of women, namely, balancing family life, and work, maternity and parental leave as well as reasonable and attainable child care.

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