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**AN ANALYSIS OF GENDER ISSUES
IN ZAMBIAN LITERATURE IN ENGLISH**

By

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**A Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfilment
Of the Requirements for the Degree of
Master of Arts in Literature**

The University of Zambia
May, 2006



DECLARATION

I hereby declare that the work in this research report
is my work and that it has not previously been
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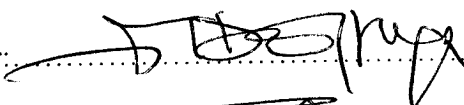
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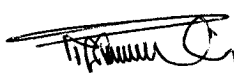
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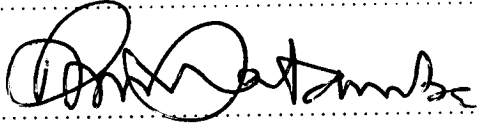
APPROVAL

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ABSTRACT

Domination of females by males is evident not only in the economic, political, educational and social spheres, but also in the field of written literature. Analyses of gender stratification in all these fields reveal and reflect the extent and nature of male dominance. In the area of written literature, gender inequalities are reflected and even perpetuated through the portraiture of male and female characters, the type and choice of language used, among other means. This study analyses the treatment of gender issues in six primary texts, all of them Zambian novels written in English. Three of the novels are male-authored while the others are female-authored. The male-authored texts are: *The Accusing Finger*, *Ticklish Sensation* and *Changing Shadows* by Nyambe Wina, Gideon Phiri and Henry Musenge respectively. The female-authored works, on the other hand, are: *Picking up the Pieces*, *Behind the Closed Door*, and *The Fight for Justice*, by Maliya Mzyece Sililo, Susan Chitabanta and Josephine Bwalya Muchelemba respectively. The purpose of this study is to identify intratextual and intertextual common features and trends. The method of analysis utilises theories of gender and textuality, particularly Gerard Genette's theory of textuality. The findings of this study reveal that Zambian literary works written in English are not only male-dominated, but also perpetuate and largely reflect the gender inequalities of Zambian society. Generally, male characters are portrayed in better light than female ones; they are generally more privileged than the womenfolk economically, politically, socially, and generally occupy higher positions than women. According to the findings, the male-domination of the literary field has not only entrenched the male perspective and writing style, but also influenced women writers to largely follow the male writing tradition. However, the findings also reveal that, despite being influenced by male writers, female writers also exhibit archetypes which are peculiar to a female perspective in writing. Finally, the findings show that some archetypes exist in Zambian literary works written in English by both male and female writers, and that these archetypes are largely similar to what obtains in similar works written by other African writers.

To my wife, Chilombo
My son, Mainza
My daughter, Nachizo

and

My late father, Gideon "G K" Kaubi Chilala
For his words of wisdom:
"The only suit I can buy you which no man can take away from you,
and which you will still wear in your grave,
is education."

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Many people contributed in various ways to make this project possible. My sincere and deepest gratitude to my supervisor, Prof Mapopa Mtonga, who helped with the revision process and remained committed until the project was completed. I am also grateful to the University of Zambia for providing the necessary moral and material support. Thanks to Mavis Chibangu for helping type the work. And finally thanks to my wife, Chilombo, for being very supportive and understanding during the long months of my demanding work.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Copyright Page	
Declaration	i
Approval	ii
Abstract	iii
Dedication	iv
Acknowledgements	v

CHAPTER ONE: GENERAL INTRODUCTION

1.1	Introduction.....	1
1.2	Theoretical Framework.....	3
1.2.1	Definition of Gender Theory.....	3
1.2.2	Types of Gender Theory.....	4
1.3	Gender in Traditional Zambian and African Societies.....	5
1.4	'Outsider' Misconceptions on Gender in African Societies.....	7
1.5	Objectives of the Study.....	9
1.6	Summary and Conclusion.....	9
1.7	Definition of Terms Used.....	9

CHAPTER TWO: REVIEW OF LITERATURE

2.1	Introduction.....	12
2.2	Genette's Theory of Textuality.....	12

2.3	Gender and Textuality.....	14
2.4	Review of Zambian Literature.....	16
2.5	Review of African and International Literature.....	21

CHAPTER THREE: SHORT SYNOPSES OF TEXTS STUDIED

3.1	Introduction.....	30
3.2	Ticklish Sensation – Gideon Phiri.....	30
3.3	Changing Shadows – Henry Musenge.....	32
3.4	The Accusing Finger – Nyambe Wina.....	36
3.5	Behind the Closed Door – Susan Chitabanta.....	39
3.6	The Fight for Justice – Josephine Bwalya Muchelemba.....	42
3.7	Picking up the Pieces – Maliya Mzyece Sililo.....	44
3.8	Summary.....	47

CHAPTER FOUR: ANALYSIS OF MALE-AUTHORED TEXTS

4.1	Introduction.....	48
4.2	Paratextual Analysis.....	48
4.3	Analysis of Main Texts.....	53
4.3.1	Images of Men and Women.....	53
4.3.2	Gender Roles and Stereotypes.....	68
4.3.3	Language and Gender.....	80
4.3.4	Gender Stratification.....	86
4.3.5	Race and Gender.....	90

CHAPTER FIVE: ANALYSIS OF FEMALE-AUTHORED TEXTS

5.1	Introduction.....	91
5.2	Paratextual Analysis.....	91
5.3	Analysis of Main Texts.....	97
5.3.1	Images of Men and Women.....	97
5.3.2	Gender Roles and Stereotypes.....	111
5.3.3	Language and Gender as Reflected in Women’s Novels.....	121
5.3.4	Gender Stratification.....	130
5.3.5	Gender Identity.....	133
5.3.6	The Question of Marital Rape.....	133
5.3.7	‘Father’ Trope.....	134
5.3.8	Womanhood Versus Motherhood.....	134

CHAPTER SIX: FINAL SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

6.1	Introduction.....	136
6.2	Archetypes of Female Experience.....	136
6.3	Archetypes of Male and Female Writing in Zambia.....	138

CHAPTER ONE

1.0 GENERAL INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

Theories of gender, like feminist theories, developed as a result of women's response to their inferior position relative to men's position in patriarchal societies. In Africa, as elsewhere in the world, the history of man-woman relations and co-existence has been one of superior-inferior, dominant-subordinate, strong-weak, privileged-disadvantaged, in favour of men. Frederick Engels in *The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State* (1884), argues, with justification, that the first class antagonism which appears in history coincides with the development of the antagonism between man and woman in monogamian marriage, and the first class oppression with that of the female sex by the male.¹

A study of early civilisations shows that man's dominance over woman has nothing to do with whether or not a particular society is civilised. It is wrong and misleading to assume that women are only disadvantaged in the so-called 'uncivilised' societies. Even 'civilised' societies have organised their social systems in such a way that men have an advantage over women politically, economically and socially. The world, for instance, owes a lot to ancient Greek civilisation in terms of science, architecture, art, among others, yet there is overwhelming evidence that Greek men, who were the prime movers of Greek civilisation, considered women inferior to men. Women, in ancient Greece, were confined to the house – raising children and working at the loom, while the men handled the 'tougher' world outside the home. According to Finley (1964), the inferior status of women in ancient Greece was neither concealed nor idealised, and that 'women were held to be naturally inferior and therefore limited in their function to the production of offspring and the performance of household duties'.²

Even within the modern European states, women's lot has not differed much from what obtained in the ancient western civilisations. In the early modern England, for example, the gender hierarchy still placed the woman below the man, who had the patriarchal role

of governor of his family and household – that is, wife, children, wards, and servants. This was considered to be not only the natural, but also the divinely determined set-up in man-woman relations. The man's role as head of the family was considered analogous with that of God in the universe and the king in the state.³

Similarly, some African scholars have argued that in precolonial, traditional African societies, the role of women was complementary rather than subordinate to that of men; that this was due in part to the fact that in indigenous African societies, power was drawn from seniority in terms of age, rather than gender. They have further contended that colonialism brought to Africa the European notion that the woman belonged to the home; that her chief role was to raise her children. Niara Sudarkasa (1996) draws attention to the absence of gender in the pronouns of many African languages and the interchangeability of first names among females and males.⁴

While African women may have undergone somewhat different experiences in their relations with men compared to their European counterparts, they too have traditionally been at a disadvantage in their relations with men. Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* has been credited with positive portrayal of precolonial African society, as contrasted with Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*. However, Achebe has been criticised by some feminists and gender analysts for his treatment of female characters.⁵ In *Things Fall Apart*, which gives one a glimpse of Igbo life in an indigenous African setting, Achebe sees man as associated with strength and power, woman with weakness and powerlessness.

However, as Chris Knight argues (1991: 41), while male dominance may be universal or nearly so, 'it is offset by numerous factors in different cultures to a greater or lesser extent'. Thus, there are some aspects of African and other cultures that can be said to be positive from the gender point of view. For example, in the Igbo society that Achebe wrote about, there existed the 'Women of Nnobi' or *Inyom Nnobi* – an all-female traditional council which acted as some kind of women's trade union and was headed by the Agba Ekwe. This woman carried her staff of authority and had the final say in public

gatherings and assemblies. One of her tasks was to ensure that the men strictly observed taboos protective of women, among them the two-year ban on sexual intercourse with a nursing mother. The Agba Ekwe also dealt with reports of sexual harassment of young girls travelling along bush paths. One of the measures taken by the Council against men was invocation of the right to order mass strikes and demonstrations by all women. Under the order, the women would refuse to perform any of their duties and roles, both public and domestic; and this included withdrawal of sexual and maternal services. They would only attend to suckling babies, and in some cases even attack any men they met during the strike or demonstration. (1991: 140)

In our discussion on theories of gender, therefore, we shall consider what factors have influenced both men's and women's thinking about each other in the world at large.

1.2 Theoretical Framework

1.2.1 Definition of Gender Theory

Since textuality is the main basis of analysis of the data used in this study, we shall discuss how this is used by writers in their portrayal of gender. Gender theory is here contrasted with feminist theory, from which it developed. Some elements of the two theories therefore overlap.⁶

Firstly, feminist theory refers to all conceptual approaches that take as their point of departure the belief that gender hierarchies are not only socially constructed but also ethically indefensible. The purpose of such approaches is to pursue women's empowerment by dismantling the gender hierarchies, which are perceived to favour men. Gender theory, on the other hand, refers to the conceptual framework feminists have constructed, without its prescriptive underpinnings, but including a broad variety of topics on gender that have not been exhaustively explored by feminists.⁷

Secondly, gender theory distinguishes between gender and sex and uses them as independent variables, although the use of the theory does not in itself constitute a feminist approach. Gender theory argues that gender is a more complicated concept

than sex; that while sex is about maleness or femaleness, measured in biological difference, gender is about masculinity and femininity. In other words, while sex is a biological construct, gender is a social construct whose interpretation may differ from one society to another.⁸

1.2.2 Types of Gender Theory

The Constructionist or Social Constructionist position argues that both sex and gender arise in social interaction and have no existence independent of social interactions; that is, they are not dependent on 'nature' or biological constructs, which are also socially determined. The fact that sex and gender are merely 'constructed' is made invisible by the normal workings of social life, so that they appear natural rather than artificial.⁹

This stands in sharp contrast to Essentialist theory, which argues that sex and gender are the same thing; that they are inseparable; that both arise from 'nature' and are 'God-given'. Essentialists believe that chromosomal characteristics and visible sex markers such as the vagina and penis cannot be separated from gender. There are only two genders, determined by one's biological make-up at birth, and these remain unchanged for life; there is no territory in between, and anything else other than these two genders is a perversion.

The essentialist position sees divisions of labour as biologically determined. It is a binary model of gender, which saw a biologically sexed male as innately masculine, with appropriate masculine appearance, character traits, and behaviours; similarly, it saw the biologically sexed female as naturally displaying appropriate feminine appearance, character traits, and behaviours.¹⁰

Essentialism has other forms, such as Reverse Essentialism, which, while believing in essentialism, utilises it to present the strengths of the traditionally devalued role(s) and or identities. It focuses on the differences that are thought to be innate and how the groups that are traditionally thought to be of less value have traits that are valuable. Semi-essentialism, on the other hand, recognises only part of gender (usually gender

identity) as innate while recognising other aspects of gender as constructed. Thus, in the semi-essentialist view, one can have an essential gender identity while at the same time exploring the constructed nature of gender roles.¹¹

Gender theorists have since the 1970s challenged the binary model of gender by which biological capabilities, or sex, become the basis on which, at birth, each human being is appointed to either one of the two categories. As one grows up, this gender identity is continually reinforced and naturalised through language and social structures such as kinship relationships, religion, the media and education.

Thus, while sex remains the same regardless of ethnicity and culture, gender is subject to cultural and historical experience. Maleness and femaleness are not perceived the same way by all cultures. Each culture's perception of gender is reflected in or reinforced by its social structures.

1.3 Gender in Traditional Zambian and African Societies

In a paper entitled 'Affective Culture and Children's Cognitive Development', Mapopa Mtonga (2002), an expert on African culture, draws attention to the fact that indigenous Zambian society assigns particular tasks and roles to children as they grow, based on their gender. In an earlier study of the Chewa and Tumbuka tribes of eastern Zambia, Mtonga (1988) explains that as children grow their gender roles and tasks tend to change according to what society assigns for them. In other words, Mtonga's study confirms our earlier observation that social roles are determined, not only by gender but also by age. Through plays and games Chewa and Tumbuka children are socialised and enculturated into four areas of need: emotional support; intellectual stimulation or capacitation; physical support; responsibility training.¹²

These areas of need manifest in different forms as children pass through the six basic stages of development. The first stage is from birth to three months; the second stage is from four to twelve months; the third stage, from one to three years; fourth stage, from

four to eleven years; fifth, eleven to sixteen years; and the sixth stage, from seventeen to twenty years of age.

During the first stage, Chewa and Tumbuka children growing up in the typical traditional village context are associated with lullabies, whereas during the second stage the children are associated with lullabies, songs and play things. On the other hand, during the third stage the children engage in children's games, dances and plays, which include 'playing house'. In all these stages, gender role specification is irrelevant as the children, both boys and girls, engage in the same activities.

However, gender begins to matter once the children reach the fourth stage of development, when the use of gender pronouns and terms is first introduced eg., *kanyamata* (little boy), *katsikana* (little girl). During this stage the Chewa male child engages in playing house, dances and other games. The Tumbuka male child also engages in these activities, in addition to cattle-herding. On the other hand, the girl child, from both tribes, engages, at this stage, in playing house, dancing and playing games.

The fifth stage, for the Chewa boy, is associated with herding, more games and moonlight plays; for the Tumbuka boy, it is associated with herding, songs, poetry and moonlight games. By contrast, this stage for the Chewa girl involves cookery games, other girls' plays, as well as day and moonlight games; for the Tumbuka girl, it is the time for cookery games, dances and girls' plays both for the day and for the night.

By the final stage, the Chewa boy is considered mature enough to participate in *Nyau* cult dances and other forms of music. Similarly, the Tumbuka boy graduates to *mganda*, *fwemba*, *ngoma* and other dances for men and grown boys. On the other hand, Chewa girl, at this stage, is considered fit enough for female puberty music, *chimtali* and other dances. For the Tumbuka girl, it is also time for *chimtali* and other girls' dances such as *mpanje*.

It is evident from Mtonga's study that Chewa and Tumbuka children are nurtured according to predetermined gender roles which not only shape their worldview, but also the relations between boys and girls. By the time they are grown men and women, the distinction between them, which is absent in the first three stages of development, becomes more pronounced. As wives, women are expected to have already learned the art of cookery, along with other skills and capabilities expected of them. Similarly, men should fulfill their role as husbands. A closer look at the gender roles outlined above reveals the fact that the boys are assigned the 'masculine' tasks, while the girls are assigned the 'feminine' ones as determined by the society.

Thus, while agreeing that African culture is as guilty as western culture with regard to the downgrading of women by men, this study also recognises the fact that there are some elements of African culture that exalt women – in some cases even above men; as well as elements which defy the western concept of gender roles. For example, Ifi Amadiume (1987), a female Nigerian writer from the Igbo tribe, explains that in her tribe, it is possible for a woman to become a 'husband' and for a male to become a 'daughter'.¹³ According to Amadiume, this is due to the fact that Igbo society has a 'flexible gender system' which makes it possible for women to occupy roles and positions usually monopolised by men. Therefore, they exercise considerable authority and power over both men and women. In this regard then such women could be classified as 'males' without having any stigma attached to the classification. Gender roles were not rigidly masculinised or feminised. (*ibid.*, p185)

1.4 'Outsider' Misconceptions on Gender in African Societies

Perceptions of gender in African societies have to a large extent been polarised along outsider-insider lines. Much of the 'outsider' views, as represented by the early western settlers and missionaries were essentially misconceptions. At the core of the misconceptions was the simplistic assumption that African women were downtrodden and suppressed while western women were not. Anthonia Kalu calls this kind of misconception 'missionary feminism'. Kalu, who as an African provides an 'insider'

view, gives an example of Amanda Berry Smith, a 19th century African-American missionary in Africa, who in one of her reports on African women states:

*'The poor women of Africa, like those of India, have a hard time. As a rule, they have all the hard work to do. They have to cut and carry all the wood, carry all the water on their heads, plant all the rice. The men and boys cut and burn the bush, with the help of the women; but sowing the rice, and planting the cassava, the women have to do. You will see a great, big man walking ahead, with nothing in his hand but a cutlass (as they always carry that or a spear), and a woman, his wife, coming on behind, with a great big child on her back, and a load on her head. No matter how tired she is, her lord would not think of bringing her a jar of water, to cook his supper with, or of beating the rice; no, she must do that. A great big boy would not bring water for his mother; he would say: "Boy not tote water; that be woman's work". If they live with missionaries, or Liberians, or anyone outside their own native people, then they will do such things; but not for one another.'*¹⁴

In the same report, however, as Kalu observes, Amanda writes of her life with the Bishop, her husband:

'We used to get up in the morning early; I would boil some water and make the Bishop a cup of cocoa or coffee, and so give him an early breakfast. The natives were always kind and hospitable; they would have their meal about nine or ten o'clock; but we would be very faint by that time, not being used to it; and, as the Bishop was a very early riser, I knew it was best for him to have something to eat before that time. And then I always took a cup of tea, or something it was late in the day...' (ibid)

As Kalu observes, nowhere in Amanda Berry Smith's account is there an indication that she ever paused to ask herself why the Bishop did not boil water for his own tea. In other words, the missionary woman was trained and inclined to detect and correct any 'wrong' practices of the native, while she saw her own role as wife of the missionary as being guided by biblical 'truth' and therefore correct and unquestionable. Yet the truth is that the missionary woman was, like the native woman, subordinate to her husband, only in a different way. Her judgmental and superior attitude was based on the assumption that western culture was the norm to which native culture was expected to measure up.

1.5 Objectives of the Study

Given the above premise, it is now prudent to look at the objectives of this study, which are:

- (i) To identify and analyse gender issues in Zambian literature in English.
- (ii) To investigate the contribution of both male and female writers to Zambian literature in English.
- (iii) To identify intertextual and intratextual similarities and differences between male and female Zambian writers in English.
- (iv) To identify the causes of the gender gap among male and female writers in Zambia.

1.6 Summary and Conclusion

According to the concept of social engineering, every society has norms and social systems which to a large extent not only determine but also influence the behaviour of the people that are part of it, individually and collectively. Thus, traditions and customs of a particular society, just like laws and regulations, can 'engineer' people's behaviour towards desired or required goals and expectations. Societies, therefore, have created norms which influence, among other things, relations between men and women, both within and outside the marriage context. Every culture has structures which determine and shape conceptions of masculinity and femininity; they also determine gender roles.¹⁵

1.7 Definition of Terms Used

Extratextuality: Concerned with factors in the cultural and social setting in which the text is written, to which it makes connections, draws on or helps define (eg., cultural norms and practices, economic and social factors, publishing policy of publishing houses, etc)

Feminisation of Poverty: Concept used to describe the state of poverty affecting mainly women because of their poor access to productive resources.

Gender: Definitions of masculinity and femininity that are determined by one's culture. Therefore, the definitions of male and female can change across countries, societies, and subcultures.

Gender Gap: A gap in any area between men and women in terms of their levels of participation, access to resources, remuneration, rights, benefits, etc.

Gender Identity: A subjective, but continuous and persistent, sense of ourselves as male or female.

Gender Imbalances: Inequalities which exist between females and males and are not related to their sex roles.

Gender Issues: Needs or concerns that arise when there is a sense of injustice felt based on gender roles.

Gender or Sex Role Stereotype: The socially determined model which contains the cultural beliefs about what the gender roles should be.

Gender Role: The behaviours, attitudes, values, beliefs and so on that a particular cultural group considers appropriate for males and females on the basis of their biological sex.

Gender Stereotypes: Oversimplified but strongly held ideas about the characteristics of 'men' and 'women'.

Gender Stratification: Unequal distribution of rewards (socially valued resources, power, prestige, and personal freedom) between men and women, reflecting their different positions in a social hierarchy.

Intertextuality: Concerned with the similarities and differences between the various literary texts to be analysed in the study (eg., comparing and contrasting the work of a male author with that of another male author or a female author).

Intratextuality: Concerned with the contents of the text – style, diction, plot, thematic issues, characterisation, choice of narrator and protagonist, etc.

Male Establishment: The network of males in positions of authority acting to preserve or extend the patriarchy.

Paratextuality: Concerned with those devices within and outside the book that mediate the book to the reader (eg., title, author's names, notes, prefaces, forewords, etc)

Patriarchal Message: A statement that has within it explicit or implicit beliefs in support of male supremacy.

Social Engineering: The art and science of making people comply with what you want by means of laws, regulations, customs, taboos, teachings, etc.

End Notes

1. Quoted in: Chris Knight, 1991. *Blood Relations: Menstruation and the Origins of Culture*
2. M I Finley, 1964. *The World of Odysseus*, p143
3. *The Norton Anthology of English Literature*, Norton Topics Online (<http://wwwnorton.com/>)
4. For details see Niara Sudarkasa, 'The Status of Women in Indigenous African Societies', 1996. Article in *Women in Africa and the African Diaspora*, Roselyn Terborg-Penn and Andrea Benton Rushing, eds.
5. See Florence Stratton, 1994. *Contemporary African Literature and the Politics of Gender*
6. See Marysia Zalewski, 1995. 'Well, What is the Feminist Perspective on Bosnia?' In: *International Affairs* 71:303-344
7. See Yosef Lapid, 1989. 'The Third Debate: On the Prospects of International Theory in a Post-Positivist Era'. In: *International Studies Quarterly* 33:325-30
8. See Jill Steans, 1998. *Gender and International Relations: An Introduction*
9. For a more detailed treatment, see John Money, 1995. *Gendermaps: Social Constructionism, Feminism, and Sexosophical History*
10. Sandy Stone, 1991. 'The "Empire" Strikes Back: A posttranssexual manifesto', article in Kristina Straub and Julia Epstein, eds., *Body Guards: The cultural politics of gender ambiguity*
11. See Stone, *ibid*
12. Cheela F K Chilala, 'Where Adults Fear to Tread: Children's Theatre in Africa', article published in *ASSITEJ International Fourth Yearbook of Theatre for Children and Young People 2002/2003*, pp23-4
13. See Ifi Amadiume, 1987. *Male Daughters, Female Husbands: Gender and sex in an African society*
14. See Marie Umeh. 1987. 'The Poetics of Thwarted Sensitivity', article in R.Vanamali, E. Oko, A. Iloeje, and Ernest Emenyonu, eds., *Critical Theory and African Literature*
15. [http://www.reference.com/browse/wiki/social_engineering_\(political_science\)](http://www.reference.com/browse/wiki/social_engineering_(political_science))

CHAPTER TWO

2.0 REVIEW OF LITERATURE

2.1 Introduction

Written literature, as a social structure, is one means by which societies reinforce gender perceptions. By studying the literature of a particular society, and by applying gender theory methods of analysis, it is possible to develop a fair opinion of what that society perceives as maleness or femaleness; what it considers to be the basis of manhood and womanhood; and how it perceives relationships between males and females. This study proceeds from the premise that a study of Zambian literature yields helpful information about gender in Zambian society.

It is however necessary to review what has been written on the subject, not only in Zambian society, but also elsewhere in the world. However, since the literary works dealt with in this study are texts, it is prudent to look at literature on textual theories. While a vast body of literature and theories exist on text and textuality, much of what is used to analyse the texts selected for this study comes from Gerard Genette's textuality theory.

2.2 Genette's Theory of Textuality

Genette's theory of transtextuality is laid out in his classical work, *The Architext: An Introduction* in which he describes transtextuality as 'everything that brings [the text] into relation (manifest or hidden) with other texts'.¹ In other words, what interested him was textual transcendence.

Genette identifies five main types of transtextual relations: intertextuality, paratextuality, metatextuality, hypertextuality and architextuality, all of which relate to the study of literary texts.

Intertextuality is *'the literal presence (more or less literal whether integral or not) of one text within another'* (*ibid*). For example, making reference to another text, allusion and plagiarism.

Paratextuality refers to *'those luminal devices and conventions, both within the book (peritext) and outside it (epitext), that mediate the book to the reader'* (*ibid*). This includes titles, author's names, notes, prefaces and forewords. Although the paratext exists on the borders of the text, or is peripheral to the main text, it nonetheless provides the textual interface or framing for which the author takes direct responsibility.

This view is also held by Dalgaard (2001) who notes that the paratext receives secondary attention because of its peripheral nature; yet it is usually the interpretation of the paratext that researchers use to determine whether or not to proceed to the core text. In the framework of Genette's transtextual analysis, therefore, the paratext is no less important than the primary text. The paratext, for example, contains the title of a literary work. The title is a significant element of the text, which is why authors spend a good amount of time coming up with an appropriate title. Generally the title serves two purposes. First, it is supposed or intended to attract readers to the book. Second, it reflects, to an extent, the contents of the core text.

Metatextuality is *'the transtextual relation that links the commentary to the text it comments upon'*. According to Genette (*op cit*), all literary critics have, for centuries, been producing metatexts without knowing it. This category would generally include secondary texts that comment upon a text or place it within a larger context. Examples would include reviews, classifications, catalogues, tables of content, journals, subject indices, bibliographies, *inter alia*.

Hypertextuality, within the framework of Genette's theory, encompasses *'relationships of imitation and transformation, which pastiche and parody can give us an idea of'* (*ibid*). The superimposition of one text upon another should be interpreted only metaphorically or semantically, not literally. Thus, hypertextuality is not used or

interpreted in exactly the same way in contemporary times, especially after the advent of computer hypertext.

Lastly, architextuality encompasses the kind of relation *'that links each text to the various types of discourse it belongs to. Here we have the genres, with their determinations that we've already glimpsed: thematic, formal, modal and other'* (ibid) In other words, architextuality refers, not to the relations among individual texts, but to the theme and style of a text, which identify it with a larger corpus of similar texts.²

Not all of Genette's theories of transtextuality will be useful for this study. However, the theories constitute a key element of this study's theoretical framework. Thus, for example, intertextuality, as used in this study, is different from the intertextuality of Genette's theory.

Intertextuality, as used in this study, is concerned with the similarities and differences between the various literary texts to be analysed in the study – both primary and secondary.

In analysing the texts, this study is in agreement with Genette's assertion that it is incorrect to assume that the narrator and the author are the same.³ Despite the distance between the narrator and the author, however, the author is still the creator of the text and all its contents – the plot, setting, characters, dialogue, style, tone, mood, *inter alia*.

2.3 Gender and Textuality

It is possible to analyse a text from the gender perspective even if the author does not clearly state his or her position on gender. It is also possible, and perfectly justifiable, to make deductions about the author's ideological inclinations, or stance on gender, based on what is contained in the text. While some authors would feel comfortable revealing that their work was written from a feminist perspective, no writer would ever openly state that their work proceeds from the premise of male chauvinism.

However, even where the author does not state their position, it is possible, through textual analysis, to deduce, with a fair degree of accuracy, whether the author is gender-sensitive or not, feminist or male chauvinistic. In the light of the fact that literature is to a large extent a mirror of the society which produces it, it is fair to assume that the patriarchal nature of a society will be reflected, consciously or unconsciously, in the works of its authors, both male and female.

It can also happen that, while the author may indicate a particular ideological inclination as being the main influencing factor of their work, independent analysis of the text might lead to different conclusions. Thus, for example, while the famous Norwegian playwright and poet, Henrik Ibsen, distanced himself from the fight for women's rights, he is generally credited with contributing, through his plays, to the women's liberation movement and, as Tiina Rosenberg (2003) notes, one of Ibsen's plays, *A Doll's House*, is 'usually seen as the starting shot for women's liberation in international drama and society on the whole, both in Europe and outside Europe'.⁴

Yet, when Ibsen addressed a banquet in his honour by the Norwegian Women's Rights League on May 26 1898, he stated: *'I'm not a member of the Women's Rights League. Whatever I have written has been without any conscious thought of making propaganda. I have been more poet and less social philosopher than people generally seem inclined to believe. I thank you for the toast, but must disclaim the honour of having consciously worked for the women's rights movement. I am not quite clear as to just what this women's rights movement really is. To me it has seemed a problem of humanity in general.'*

Analysis of the text of *A Doll's House* has led to mixed conclusions as to whether or not Ibsen was, as most feminists claim, a feminist writer. In fact, the question is relevant to the plays written by Ibsen. Thus, for example, Rosenberg (*op cit*: 186) argues: *'Ibsen women shock by not sticking to decorum, to their proper place. They are not "feminine" in the sense of being "proper" mothers and sisters.'* Rosenberg's conclusion is based on her analysis of Ibsen's treatment of male and (especially) female characters.

Joseph Mbwayu (1987) argues that a writer's ideological views may be deduced by analysing the text from three angles: first, the material they *include* in the text; second, what they *omit*; and thirdly, the *commentary* they make through characters.⁵ With regard to this study, therefore, what the authors include will be as vital and relevant as what they omit with regard to gender issues. Equally important will be the comments, if any, made by the authors through characters who can justifiably qualify as the authors' mouthpiece.

While making reference to relevant feminist views such as those of Rosenberg, however, this study is by no means a product of modern feminist criticism which, as Booker (1996: 89) observes, '*focuses on the relationship between literature and patriarchal biases in society and on the potential role that literature can play in overcoming such biases*'. Booker adds that feminist literary critics '*have continued their attempts to recover the feminine literary tradition and to explore the differences between literature written by women and that written by men.*' (*ibid.*, p98).

As part of textual analysis, this study will compare and contrast the works of male and female writers. However, its ultimate concern is the handling of gender issues by both male and female Zambian writers writing in English.

2.4 Review of Zambian Literature

The question of a national literature is relevant to the Zambian situation. John Chileshe states that 'modern African literature' was generally a reference to '*African literature in the metropolitan language, particularly as these languages tend to be the national languages, as opposed to the indigenous ethnic regional languages (and literature in these languages)*. This literature is usually designed as creative writing in which an African setting is authentically handled or to which experiences originating in Africa are integral' (1983: p294). Of the Zambian situation, Chileshe writes: '*English, a foreign or second language for the majority of the population, has held a special status*

since the colonial periodEnglish remains the single most important language (out of eight designated official languages)' (ibid, p257)

The body of Zambian literary works written in English has been growing since the pre-colonial days – but took a giant leap after independence due to the state's development of the education sector. The state-owned publications Bureau and the National Educational Company of Zambia (NECZAM) churned out numerous works in English. Chileshe observes:

'Although writing in the indigenous languages proceeded in spurts, more "national" effort was now to be devoted to "standard" writing in English. As an indication, between 1965 and 1979, almost as many literary works were published in English (forty-two) as in all the indigenous Zambian languages put together (forty-seven), by the state owned publications Bureau and NECZAM. With the rapidly increasing educational provision in the country, the English-speaking literate group in Zambia was not only growing considerably in size, but it now had at its head individuals already well-integrated into the ranks of the emergent post-independence bureaucratic managerial bourgeoisie, either on the terrain of the economy and the administrative apparatus, or as full-time cadres of the political parties especially UNIP. Thus the drive towards literacy, primarily in conjunction with mastery of the English language as the key to power, noted in the 1950s, was now accorded official state support' (ibid., pp305-6).

Chileshe argues that colonialism in Zambia, as elsewhere in Africa, marginalised women:

'Up to the mid-1950s, colonial government policy in collusion with the interests of the mining industry and other industrial sectors, was to keep the costs of African male labour low (primarily through meagre wages) as one aspect of profit maximization. So not only was it prohibitively expensive for husbands to bring their wives along into the urban areas, but government migration policy actually discouraged this, while labour laws made it very difficult for those women who did get to the urban areas to obtain jobs, other than such menial occupations as domestic service.' (ibid: 260)

Chileshe further asserts that, in the light of the above context, women were more severely affected by the scarcity of educational provision for Africans:

'The opportunity cost of education for African women was relatively high: males were more likely to bring a surer return - even if only because females once married off become part of another family. Added to this were the "fears" among the male population about the effects on the "morals" of African girls of

extended western education. Consequently even where schools were available, women were actively discouraged from going beyond the first few years of primary education. The highly disadvantageous effects on the literacy rates of women-and subsequently their access to positions of power at independence – are illustrated in the fact that while shortly before independence in 1963 the African male literacy rate in Northern Rhodesia (age 15 years and above) was put at 35 per cent, that for females was only 22 per cent... In 1970, the literacy discrepancy between the two genders actually widened to 61%/44.5%. One of the effects of this situation has been that ultimately literary production in Northern Rhodesia/Zambia has been exclusively a male domain' (pp261-2).

Publishing in Zambia can be traced back to the colonial days – specifically 1937. Under the then Northern Rhodesian colonial government, a quasi-governmental voluntary organisation was established called the African Literature Committee of Northern Rhodesia. The composition of the Copperbelt-based Committee was: the Provincial Commissioner and Educational Officer at Ndola as Chairman and secretary respectively; the other members were missionary and government-approved African representatives.

In 1948 the body was transformed into an intergovernmental institution incorporating Nyasaland – the Joint Northern Rhodesia and Nyasaland Publications Bureau. After the intergovernmental body's disintegration in 1962, the Northern Rhodesian branch assumed the name Northern Rhodesia Publications Bureau. At independence in 1964, it became the Zambia Publications Bureau (Chileshe, *ibid.*, pp263-4).

Though most of the works published by the Publications Bureau were in indigenous languages, between 15 to 20 per cent were in English. The number of literary works published in English increased significantly after the government's creation of NECZAM in 1967.

The following year, NECZAM published its first work of fiction – a collection of short stories, *A Point of No Return*. The collection was written by a male writer – Fwanyanga Mulikita. The first 'full length' novel in English published by NECZAM, in 1971, was also written by a male author, Andrey Masiye. Entitled *Before Dawn*, the novel was part-biography. In the same year another male Zambian author, Dominic Mulaisho, became the first Zambian to have his work published under the Heinemann African

Writers Series. *The Tongue of the Dumb* was the ninety-eighth book in the series after the initial publication of Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* in 1958.

The first woman to be published by NECZAM was Beatrice Archer, in 1978, a decade after the institution's first publication. Her work, *Poison of My Hate*, was a novel. However, it is important to note that Beatrice Archer was non-Zambian. She was part of a cadre of expatriates who contributed to the list of literary works published in Zambia. The others included Chimam Vyas, Robert Baptie, Timothy Holmes, Fergus Macpherson, Carl Mason, David Wallace, Liebetraut Rothert-Sarvan, David Simpson, among others.⁶

As elsewhere in Africa, indigenous Zambian writers came on the scene rather late. Thus, the first indigenous Zambian woman to have her work published by NECZAM was Susan Chitabanta. Her novel, *Behind the Closed Door*, was only published in 1988, twenty-four years after independence, and twenty years after the publication of the first title in the NECZAM series - Mulikita's *A Point of No Return*.

The inter-racial New Writers Group, formed in 1964 and which began to publish a literary journal called *New Writing from Zambia*, was dominated by males. The founders and early members, who were mostly university and college graduates, included Elias Chipimo, David Simpson, Richard Hall, Kelvin Mlenga, Sundie Kazunga, William Saidi and Chimam Vyas (Chileshe, 1983, *op cit.*, pp304-5).

According to Chileshe the first ever novel by an indigenous Zambian was published by the Northern Rhodesia Literature Committee in 1946. Entitled *Namu Siaya at the Mine*, the novel was authored by a male, Enock Kaavu. Another pre-independence novel authored by an indigenous Zambian was Andrey Masiye's *The Lonely Village*, which was published by London's Nelson and Sons in 1950.

The pre-independence and early post-independence Zambian works were thematically not concerned with gender issues. Their preoccupation was with the issues that mattered

most at the time: aspects of traditional Zambian society; the conflict between traditional and western society; the presentation of aspects of modern Zambian society; as well as the colonial experience.

During the struggle for independence, Zambian men and women fought side by side, as Edith Dahlschen observes (1970: p54). In fact, as Mabel Milimo notes, during the independence struggle the key issues were centred on nationalism.⁷ Zambian men and women saw themselves as victims of colonialism and racism; their focus was the attainment of political freedom and racial equality, not gender equality. Even in the early years of independence, as Milimo notes, gender '*was not an issue*'. (*Ibid*)

Although no comprehensive study of gender in Zambian fiction has ever been undertaken, lessons may be drawn from a comprehensive study done on Zambian music in the book *Woman Know Your Place: The patriarchal message in Zambian popular song* (1998), edited by Sara Longwe and Roy Clarke.

The study, which drew its results and conclusions from an analysis of 94 songs produced by a variety of Zambian musicians, both male and female (mostly male), was intended '*to explore the male supremacist message of many of these songs in order to get a better sense of their full meaning and ideological importance*' (Longwe and Clarke, 1998: 2). Thus, for example, the songs generally portrayed single women as '*promiscuous, parasitic and destroyers of marriages*' (*ibid*: 27). The songs also generally exhibited a patriarchal viewpoint and pervasive assumptions of male supremacy; of man as central and woman as peripheral and Other.

The researchers, led by Sara Longwe, drew the following conclusions after analysing the 94 songs (*ibid*: 5):

1. The proper place for a woman is as a wife, and in the home.
2. The husband is the head of the household and the wife should submit to him.
3. The husband's power in the home provides the basics for the power of the male establishment in the wider society.

4. Single women in wage employment are out of control, and must be brought under male authority.
5. Women who are not controlled by men are - by definition - misbehaving.
6. Sexual misbehaving originates in the natural sinfulness of women; misbehaving men are the victims of sinful women.
7. Men must respect the patriarchal system by exercising their powers fairly, and should not mete out punishment without due cause.
8. Women must respect their dependent position by not making excessive or greedy demands upon the men upon whom they are economically dependent.
9. Male supremacy is above question - it is given by custom and tradition, and is part of the natural order of the world.
10. The voice of authority is a male voice.

With findings like this, it is not surprising that, as late as 1985, the Zambia Association of Research and Development (ZARD), observed that '*the ideology of male supremacy in Zambia has remained unchallenged*' (1985: 2).

2.5 Review of African and International Literature

Available literature on the subject of gender both on the African continent and internationally generally points to a social dichotomy in which males have the advantage over females.

Some publications of early modern England provide insight into the woman's subservient position. The *Book of Common Prayer* (1559) and *The Law's Resolution of Women's Rights* (1632), both of which took off from the Genesis story of Adam and Eve's creation, marriage and the Fall, contained marriage liturgies which proclaimed religious and legal definitions of gender roles and norms. The *Law's Resolution of Women's Rights* contained several laws then in use regarding the women's legal rights and duties in three estates – as unmarried virgin, wife, and widow. Similarly, a treatise on household government by John Dod and Robert Cleaver (1598) focuses on and contrasts the duties of husband and wife, and Gervase Markham's book, *The English Hus-Wife* (1615) outlines the woman's responsibility to understand and administer

medicines to her family and to be a perfect cook. The focus of Richard Braithwaite's *English Gentlewoman* (1631) was concerned primarily with the virtues and activities expected of women of the higher class. The main purpose of the publication was to discourage bad behaviour.⁸

Ifi Amadiume, a female Nigerian writer, observes: '*African women produce more than 70 percent of Africa's food. They do practically all the processing, accounting for more than 90 percent of all time spent processing and preparing food, and provide the bulk of agricultural labour.*' (2000: 27)

Similarly, Marilee Karl (1995: 5) states:

'It is also true ... that far fewer women than men participate politically, economically and socially, and women have far less decision-making power ... An examination of gender discrimination, that is, discrimination against women, reveals enormous gaps between men and women in all societies, and many of the obstacles that prevent women's equal social participation.' Like the mass media, written literature can in the words of Karl, '*reflect and perpetuate discriminatory stereotypes and negative images of women and reinforce cultural attitudes that inhibit women's participation*'. (ibid: 12)

It is sometimes difficult to determine whether the gaps are merely a reflection of social realities or the author's own creation. Carole Boyce Davies (1986: 86), in an article entitled 'Maidens, Mistresses and Matrons: Feminine images in selected Soyinka works', does not support the notion that the gaps may be excused if they merely reflect socio-cultural realities. This is because, as Davies argues, '*the artist has the power to create new realities; to represent male-female relationships and the role of women as they have been in the past and might be in the future: women as neither victors nor victims but partners in struggle*'.⁹

Conversely, Davies (1986: 75) argues that literature, because it 'mirrors and or recreates social, historical and economic realities' is one of the means by which negative attitudes and stereotypes of women are '*perpetuated, even created*'. In similar vein Abena P. A. Busia (1986) criticises Ghanaian writer Ayi Kwei Armah for producing novels which portray women as dependent on men. The women in Armah's novels, Busia contends.

never have roles independent of the novel's hero or protagonist, who is 'always a man in a male-dominated society'.¹⁰ Armah's women, according to Busia, are always the wives, lovers, or blood relatives of the central male characters. Not even major canonical writers such as Chinua Achebe and Wole Soyinka have been spared from criticism in the way they portray female characters in relation to male characters. In 'Maidens, Mistresses and Matrons', Davies (*op cit*: 77) finds the title of Soyinka's *The Lion and the Jewel* as problematic as the contents with regard to the treatment of gender. The title reflects, summarises and foreshadows the contents in that it attributes lion-like characteristics to the male – Bale Baroka, that is, strength and prowess. On the other hand, the village belle, Sidi, is portrayed as the 'jewel' – an ornament or prized 'possession'.

While acknowledging the fact that Chinua Achebe's classic work *Things Fall Apart* is impartial in its recreation of Igbo society, Florence Stratton argues that the book is guilty of 'a subjective bias' in its portrayal of women. She adds that the novel's narrator 'does not always maintain an objective stance on the issue of gender relations, but instead aligns himself with the sexist views of the male characters'. (1994: 32)

Acclaimed author of *Male Daughters, Female Husbands*, Ifi Amadiume who, like Achebe, is Igbo, specifically accuses the famed writer of 'masculinisation' of Idemili, a female god, in *Things Fall Apart*. Amadiume, as quoted in Stratton (1994: 26), observes that the novel refers to Idemili, the Igbo water goddess, as 'god of water'.

While Amos Tutuola portrays Adebisi, a female character, as a heroine in *The Brave African Huntress*, her superiority over men is only due to the fact that she has 'magical powers' which the male characters do not have.¹¹ Without the magical powers, Adebisi would be like any other woman - subject to the power of men.

Davies, in the introduction to *Ngambika*, argues that another area where African women are marginalised is literary criticism. Not only are there few female literary critics in Africa, but the mostly male African critics tend to treat the works of female African

writers as inferior to those of male writers. Stratton (*op cit*: 1) lends weight to this view: *'African women have been rendered invisible in literary criticism.'*

African written literature is therefore perceived to be patriarchal – a man's world to which the woman is a mere appendage although, as Davies acknowledges in the introduction to *Ngambika (op cit)*, there is *'an ever-increasing corpus of literature by African women writers'*.

One of the effects of the preponderance of patriarchy in literature, Judith Fetterley (1978) argues, is what she terms the 'immascultation' of women by men.¹² This refers to the process by which the female readers of literature are being taught to identify with a male perspective and is contrasted against the more familiar *emasculation* of men by women. Ahmed Ahsamuzzaman (2003: 67) lends support to Fetterley's theory, stating that *'immascultation as a system conforms to ideology and ideological state apparatuses of which patriarchy is the most prominent'*.¹³

In the light of the androcentric bias of written literature, some women have argued that only women writers can competently deal with issues involving female characters; that only women writers can wholeheartedly confront the realities of the marginalisation of women. Poonam Garg (1985: 6), supports this view:

*'African women writers, not unlike their English counterparts, revolt against male orthodoxy, they repudiate restrictions, oppression and inherent traditional norms and values, to such a degree that their works become much more than a literature of escapist sensationalism, which is also traditional in that it does, to some extent, realistically contribute to a sense of self definition, self-expression and assertion of a characteristically women's consciousness.'*¹⁴

Naana Banyiwa-Horne is more elaborate, contending that African women writers are more qualified to write about female characters than are their male counterparts:

'By virtue of their shared gender experiences, women writers are inclined to depict female characters in more realistic terms, with a great deal of insight, and in meaningful interaction with their environment... On the other hand, male depictions of female characters are often from a fiercely male perspective, reflecting male conceptions, or rather misconceptions, of female sexuality. Male writers tend to overplay the sexuality of their female characters, creating the

impression that women have no identity outside their sexual roles. Their women are seen primarily in relation to male protagonists and in secondary roles ... Furthermore, male images of African womanhood tend to be idealized and romanticized.' (1986: p119-20)

Stephanie Newell uses the term 'masculinism' to describe a situation where a male author '*anxiously re-invents and represents women to a male addressee, adapting old gender models to maintain male control of changing social and cultural formations. Where masculinity is the ideology supporting male social and political power, masculinism is a more obsessional male mind-set, designating one particular set of representations within the gender ideology... It is more of an attitude, a conservative and entrenched way of thinking about gender relations*' (1996: p50).

Bernth Lindfors argues that Africa's unique historical circumstances make it difficult to create a '*national literature*' (1997: p121). Lindfors further argues that most modern African literatures are much too small and much too young to have developed their own distinguishing characteristics; that the inherited colonial boundaries make it difficult to define the concept of nationhood.

In the context of language diversity, Lindfors contends, it is difficult to reach a national audience if one writes in one of the indigenous languages. On the other hand if one writes in one of the European languages, there is the obvious problem of reaching an indigenous audience, especially in the light of the low literacy levels in Africa.

Lindfors quotes the argument of Chinua Achebe, who prefers to write in English rather than his native Igbo, as contrasted to Ngugi wa Thiong'o, who at some point in his writing career shifted from writing in English to writing in Gikuyu:

'A national literature is one that takes the whole nation for its province and has a realised or potential audience throughout its territory. In other words a literature that is written in the national language. An ethnic literature is one which is available only to one ethnic group within the nation. If you take Nigeria as an example, the national literature, as I see it, is the literature written in English; and the ethnic literatures are in Hausa, Ibo, Yoruba, Efik, Edo, Ijaw, etc.' (op cit: 126)

Davies states that the first African writers to achieve prominence were male, and provides the following reasons:

'The selection of males for formal education was fostered by the colonial institutions which made specific choices in educating male and female. Then, too, the sex role distinctions common to many African societies supported the notion that western education was a barrier to a woman's role as wife and mother and an impediment to her success in these traditional modes of acquiring status' (op cit., p2)

Stratton agrees with the assertion that colonialism has had a bearing on the development of African literature. She adds that, in fact, African male writers have been influenced by the colonial legacy in their treatment of female characters (*op cit.*, p171). According to Stratton, *'colonial policy in Africa favoured the education of boys over girls and thus operated to cut women off from the written word' (ibid., p 80).*

Katherine Frank lends weight to this viewpoint when she observes:

'...until very recently African literary history has been an almost exclusively masculine domain for a number of reasons: the vast majority of African women simply did not have the necessary education to produce literary works, and, even when they were literate, they were generally barred from the social and political contexts and forces with which most African literature has become concerned. Yet, it is not as if African women have been hopelessly mute; they have always played a central role in their cultures' oral traditions, and, despite their exclusion from educational, social and political opportunities, a number of African women have overcome the obstacles and succeeded in writing and publishing their works' (1996: pp244-5).

Among the African women writers that have been published and have gained some degree of prominence on the continent and beyond are Bessie Head of South Africa, Mariama Ba of Senegal, Flora Nwapa and Buchi Emecheta of Nigeria, and Grace Ogot of Kenya. As Cynthia Ward observes, these writers have since the mid-eighties increasingly been read by college students in North America, mainly because of their inclusion on feminist reading lists alongside Charlotte Brontë, Toni Morrison and Virginia Woolf (1996: p78).

According to Stratton (*op cit*: 58), the year 1966 can correctly be said to mark *'the advent of a contemporary female tradition in [African] fiction'* because it is the year in

which the first novels by African women writers were published. In that year Flora Nwapa published *Efuru* while Ogot published *The Promised Land*.

In fact, Nwapa was the first woman to be published under the Heinemann African Writer's Series, of which Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* was the first publication. On the other hand, Ogot's novel was the first female-authored work to be published by the East African Publishing House.

However, there is a gap of eight years between *Efuru* and Achebe's *Things Fall Apart*, which was published in 1958. And since *Efuru* is the twenty-sixth title in the Heinemann African Writers Series, there is a gap of twenty-five titles - all male-authored - between *Things Fall Apart* and *Efuru*. Furthermore, the next female-authored work in the series, *Idu*, also by Nwapa, only appeared in 1970, after thirty more male-authored titles.

Stratton argues, however, women's writings generally exhibit recurrent literary patterns which amount to a tradition. According to her, the literary tradition encompasses and manifests itself in the works of women writers living in different geographical, psychological, cultural and historical contexts. Stratton gives an example of the findings of an extensive study of Victorian women writers compiled by Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar in a publication entitled *The Madwoman in the Attic*. In the preface to the book, Gubar and Gilbert write:

*'Reading the writing of women from Jane Austen and Charlotte Brontë to Emily Dickinson, Virginia Woolf, and Sylvia Plath, we were surprised by the coherence of theme and imagery that we encountered in the works of writers who were often geographically, historically, and psychologically distant from each other. Indeed, even when we studied women's achievements in radically different genres, we found what began to seem a distinctively female literary tradition that had been approached and appreciated by many women readers and writers but which no one had yet defined in its entirety. Images of enclosure and escape, fantasies in which maddened doubles functioned as asocial surrogates for docile selves, metaphors of physical discomfort manifested in frozen landscapes and fiery interiors – such patterns recurred throughout this tradition, along with obsessive depictions of diseases like anorexia, agoraphobia, and claustrophobia.'*¹⁵

According to Stratton, the images of enclosure and escape, as well as the use of doubles, are some of the patterns that recur in the works of African women writers. In the convention of paired women, two female characters – sisters, cousins, friends, co-wives, among others – are juxtaposed within the familial or social context. They respond differently to male domination or oppression: while the one actively resists, the other passively submits.

Stratton further argues that all women, whether resisting or not, are buried in the ‘shallow grave’ of patriarchy; that their life experience amounts to a living burial. Every woman either gives up without a fight or fights to escape from the grave. The works of Mariama Ba, Buchi Emecheta, Bessie Head, Rebeka Njau, Flora Nwapa and Grace Ogot, according to Stratton, exhibit ‘*images of living burial and homicidal and suicidal impulses*’ (*ibid.*, p143). The homicidal and suicidal impulses are associated with asocial doubles whose behaviour defies the boundaries set by patriarchy.

Stratton has an explanation for the similarities between the works of Western and African women writers: ‘*The most likely hypothesis is similarity of female psychological and artistic response to what, despite cultural specificity in its manifestations, is a cultural constant: patriarchy*’ (*op cit.*, p 143). In other words, patriarchy provokes similar reactions among women regardless of their differences racially, geographically and historically.

End Notes

1. Quoted in: http://imv.au.dk/%7Eruned/pub/dalgaard_acmht01.html
2. <http://www.jahsonic.com/Genette.html>
3. See Gerard Genette, *Narrative Discourse*, trans. Jane Lewin (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1980)
4. See Tiina Maria Pursiainen Rosenberg’s article, “A Doll’s House Revisited: The Nora Performance on Contemporary Stockholm Stage”, published in

Proceedings of the Relevance of 'A Doll's House' – Translation and Adaptation International Ibsen Conference (Dhaka: Centre for Asian Theatre, 2003)

5. See Joseph Mbuyu's unpublished MA thesis, *Craftsmanship and Partisanship in Zambian Prose Fiction since Independence: A critical evaluation of the novels of Mulaisho, Masiye and Sibale* (Lusaka: University of Zambia, 1987)
6. See John Chileshe, 'Literature in English in Zambia: A bibliography of published works to 1986', article in *Research in African Literatures*, Vol 19, No 3, Fall 1988
7. See Margaret C Snyder and Mary Tadesse, *African Women and Development: A history*
8. http://www.norton.com/nael/17century/topic_1
9. See full article in *Ngambika: Studies of women in African literature* (Trenton: Africa World Pres, Inc., 1986)
10. See "Parasites and Prophets: The use of women in Ayi Kwei Armah's novels" in *Ngambika, ibid*
11. See Esther Y Smith, "Images of Women in African Literature: Some examples of inequality in the colonial period", *Ngambika, op cit*
12. For a more detailed treatment of the 'Immasculation Theory', see Judith Fetterley's *The Resisting Reader: A feminist approach to American fiction*
13. See article "Nora – the Emergence of a Dissenting Voice", published in *Proceedings of the Relevance of 'A Doll's House'... op cit*
14. For a more detailed treatment of the subject, see Poonam Garg, *Movement from Group Affiliations Towards Individual Mores in Women Writers of Africa*, 1985
15. Quoted in Florence Stratton, "The Shallow Grave: Archetypes of Female Experience in African Fiction", article in *Research in African Literatures*, Vol 19, No 2, Summer 1988, p143

CHAPTER THREE

3.0 SHORT SYNOPSES OF TEXTS STUDIED

3.1 Introduction

This chapter will provide the necessary background information and synopsis of each of the six texts to be analysed in the study: Gideon Phiri's *Ticklish Sensation*, Henry Musenge's *Changing Shadows*, Nyambe Wina's *The Accusing Finger*; Maliya Mzyece's *Picking up the Pieces*, Josephine Bwalya Muchelemba's *The Fight for Justice*, and Susan Chitabanta's *Behind the Closed Door*. The first three are by male authors, the last three by female authors.

3.2 *Ticklish Sensation* – Gideon Phiri

Gideon Phiri's *Ticklish Sensation* was first published in 1973 by the National Educational Company of Zambia (NECZAM), and reprinted by the same institution in 1978, with some corrections. The text analysed in this study is a 1994 revised version by the Zambia Educational Publishing House (ZEPH).

Most of the setting of the story is the colonial period, ending with the attainment of independence by Zambia. From the textual evidence, the story unfolds from the time Jojo is fourteen years of age (p2), to the time he is about thirty – because the narrator, Jojo, states that the events he talks about happened 'thirteen years ago' (p3). Geographically, the setting vacillates between the rural and urban areas in the eastern part of colonial and later independent Zambia, starting with Jojo Phiri's village, Njoka, and ending with Fort Jameson (now Chipata), a modern town.

The story is told from the first person point of view. It is limited to the experiences of the main character, Jojo Phiri, who is also the narrator. Thus, both the main character and narrator are male, as is the author. The style of narration is free-flowing conversational type.

Ticklish Sensation falls in the Bildungsroman mold – it is a coming-of-age story built around the journey of sexual self-discovery by a young man whose teen hormones are beginning to run wild, provoked by sensational and tempting stories about the ‘ticklish sensation’ from the two Big Brothers, Tondo and Pinto. The plot, which unfolds chronologically, takes the story through difficult, challenging and sometimes even humiliating and demeaning experiences for Jojo in his quest for experiential knowledge of the much-talked-about ticklish sensation. Jojo’s quest earns him the nickname, ‘Lucifer’s Saliva’.

The seed of Jojo’s obsession with the ticklish sensation is planted in his innocent heart during his stay in the ‘House of Wisdom’ – ‘*a circular ramshackle*’ hut in which Jojo sleeps with other boys (p17). Jojo prefers to call it the ‘House of Confusion’, a term he finds more fitting than the ironic ‘House of Wisdom’.

The House of Wisdom has four occupants: Jojo is the youngest, at fourteen years of age, while the eldest is Tondo Jaulani, aged eighteen. In between there is Zaka Panda, fifteen, and Pinto Bauleni, seventeen. Tinto, Jojo’s younger brother, only six, is considered ‘too young’ to share the hut with the boys. Instead, he shares a hut with Tangu and Nyuma, Jojo’s sisters, both eight.

Njoka village, sprawled below a hill about fifteen miles west of Fort Jameson (Chipata), is also the home of Jojo’s parents, Solomon and Elena. Jojo’s grandmother, Loliwe Kuzwe, also lives in the same village. Solomon is a reserved man nicknamed ‘Thunderbolt’ because of his strict disciplinarian approach to his children’s upbringing and his hot temper. He also earns himself a host of other nicknames, among them, ‘*Mhale wa Chilengedwe*’ (‘Nature’s Brother’) because of being a hard worker who never runs out of food and whose children never starve.

Jojo initially pursues the ticklish sensation on two fronts – the village environment and the school environment, at the Chewa School. At the village, he is drawn first to Kinki Salamu and then to Keterina Dumbo, a married woman, while at school the first source

of his infatuation is Noli Mbao. His mad obsession with both girls leads to disaster: his pursuit of Kinki leads to his removal from the House of Wisdom; his pursuit of Noli leads to trouble with his teachers, Lona Gumbo and James Bowa, and the headmaster, Tenthani Mulilo. Jojo is then sent to Mazabuka to continue with school while staying with his cousin, Ten Phiri, in Nakambala compound.

In Mazabuka, Jojo enrolls at the Mazabuka Upper School, a school of more than three-hundred pupils under the management of Grey Hamwaanza. This is 1959. Before long, however, despite being bright in class, Jojo's quest for the ticklish sensation drives him into the snare of a fellow schoolmate called Lise Chanda, sister to his classmate Kaponga.

After graduating from the Mazabuka Upper School, Jojo enrolls in the Fort Jameson Secondary and Trades School in Eastern Province, in 1960. The school later comes to be known as Chizongwe, and is separated from the Walela Girls' Upper School by the Kaizore stream. However, the stream and the strict regulations do not stop Jojo from getting involved with Puna Nyangu, a Standard Five pupil from the girls' school. So obsessed is he that he has difficulties sleeping.

This time around, however, the pursuit of the ticklish sensation drives Jojo into a love triangle – while he pursues Puna, he is also infatuated with another girl from Walela, Meeky Banda. His lust for Puna leads him to the bottom of a well, literally; but his infatuation with Meeky grows into true love. He later marries her and thus discovers the true meaning of the ticklish sensation. Not only does he understand the ticklish sensation, he also understands the true meaning of love. He can look back at his stupid adventures and infatuation mistaken for love. He has matured from a naïve teenager to a considerate young man with experiential knowledge of the pitfalls of youthful lust.

3.3 *Changing Shadows* – Henry Musenge

Changing Shadows was first published in 1984 by NECZAM and reprinted twice – by the Kenneth Kaunda Foundation in 1987 and in 1992 by the Zambia Educational

Publishing House (ZEPH). The text used in this study is from the second reprint. Unlike *Ticklish Sensation*, which has both author and protagonist as male, *Changing Shadows* is a male-authored novel with a female protagonist, Mwila. Another difference between the two is in the narrative technique: while *Ticklish Sensation* is narrated from the first-person point of view, *Changing Shadows* is written in the third person.

There are at least two similarities between the two texts: first, *Changing Shadows*, like *Ticklish Sensation*, is a coming-of-age story centred on Mwila who, like Jojo, grows through school life and a host of difficult experiences to adulthood. Second, the setting in *Changing Shadows* also shifts from a rural to an urban setting – in fact, it even shifts to such places as Nairobi and England.

Thematically, *Changing Shadows* is about a young woman's attainment of success, despite being vulnerable to men, through determination, persistence and focus. If Jojo is a picture of a man vulnerable to the lure of women because of his quest for sexual self-discovery, Mwila is vulnerable to the power of men because of her quest for economic and social success and stability.

As the title suggests, Mwila's quest draws her through a series of life-changing experiences both at home and abroad – she develops from a naïve and sleepy school girl to a knowledgeable, experienced, sophisticated young woman. She outgrows the limits and limitations of the rural life and steps into the portals of high-class life; for while Jojo's obsession is to discover the mysteries of sex, Mwila's obsession is to discover the world.

The genesis of Mwila's journey of discovery, Kalonga Girls' Secondary School, is similar in setting to what we find in the case of Jojo's Chizongwe – the girls' school is separated from the boys' school by the Kalonga stream, just like Jojo's school was separated from the girls' school by the Kaizore stream. Mwila's school, run by the Catholic Church, is located near Mansa in the Luapula Province. The action begins in the post-independence period of Zambia.

Just like Jojo runs into trouble over matters to do with the opposite sex at his first school and had to leave, Mwila also runs into trouble with the strict authorities at her school over an alleged – but non-existent – relationship with a boy from the boys' school. As school headgirl she operates under the watchful eye of Sister Mary and the school principal, Sister Theresa. Like Jojo, Mwila is bright in school, and her position as headgirl places her in the unenviable position of being the chief enforcer of discipline among the students. Ironically, however, it is on grounds of indiscipline that Mwila is expelled from school.

Mwila arrives home rather frustrated, and her return becomes a subject of village speculation and gossip. With difficulty she explains the circumstances of her expulsion to her parents who, recognising the need for her to get a decent education, decide to allow her to go to Lusaka with her uncle, Bwalya, to continue with school. Thus she finds herself in Chilenje South, Lusaka.

In Chilenje South, Mwila shares a room with Kabinda, the twelve-year-old daughter to her uncle Bwalya and his wife Mwenya. Her very first trip to the town centre heralds the changes that will characterise her experiences in the city. Life in Lusaka, however, is not as rosy as expected because, even after staying in the city for six months, Mwila fails to find a place in school. While purchasing items for home at a local shop she meets Musonda, a girl who works as a secretary for a firm of solicitors. The two become good friends, spending a lot of time together and sharing stories and experiences.

One Friday night Musonda, one of the catalysts that change Mwila's outlook on life, invites Mwila to a friend's birthday party in Woodlands. The party brings to her attention, in a poignant manner, the fact that she is a 'backward' village girl. At the party Mwila is surprised to see Musonda and other young ladies drinking alcohol, while she insists on having soft drinks. She is even more surprised to see how young ladies mix freely with wealthy elderly men. Musonda explains to her that the men are sugar daddies. 'This is city life,' she says casually. Musonda is to Mwila what Pinto and

Tondo are to Jojo in terms of negative life-changing influence.

Soon, however, Musonda's influence begins to take its toll on Mwila who, despite being a *'very honest and courteous girl who was naturally ready to learn from new situations'* (p68), is nonetheless ignorant of the dangers of city life. It is through Musonda's influence that Mwila breaks her moral inhibitions. She starts to drink and allows herself to be entrapped by Kangwa, a sugar daddy, married and powerful, the Under Secretary in the Ministry of Science and Technology.

Before her whirlwind affair with Kangwa, however, Mwila meets Bwanga, a young man with whom she falls in love. It is through her relationship with Bwanga that Mwila learns her first major lesson in life – that men can be selfish, manipulative and destructive: when she falls pregnant, Bwanga, the 'loving' man she has fallen for, initially denies any responsibility for the pregnancy but later persuades her to have an abortion.

Mwila survives the abortion, but her reputation does not. The story spreads and reaches the ears of her parents. Bwalya decides to send her back to the village. However, she drops off the bus and stays in Lusaka rather than face the wrath of her parents back home. She heads for Bwanga's flat, but her stay is shortlived because he is soon after arrested for selling stolen car spares and sentenced to five years with hard labour. Musonda persuades Mwila to stay with her.

At this stage she seriously and desperately begins to look for a job, if only to sustain herself, and it is Kangwa who comes to her rescue. Using his influence and connections, he very easily gets her an immediate job; he also allows her to stay in his fully furnished flat on Church Road, without paying any rentals. His 'generosity' gets her more and more entangled and entrapped.

However, the fact that Kangwa and his wife Chongo have been married for twenty-four years makes it difficult for him to divorce her in order to marry Mwila. Sometimes

Mwila has her doubts about the future of the relationship, and at one point almost gets involved with a young workmate, Nkhata. Despite the Chongo factor, however, Mwila's fortunes continue to rise, through Kangwa's generous help.

Feeling more and more isolated and marginalised, Chongo one day goes to the Roma villa and quarrels with Kangwa and Mwila, whom she considers a prostitute and husband-snatcher. This is a harbinger of worse things to come: when Kangwa collapses and dies, Chongo moves into centre stage and assumes the role of 'proper' wife and therefore gets much of Kangwa's property and money. Humiliated, isolated and unable to fight back, Mwila is only left with the villa in which she lives.

Mwila has to once again begin to get back her dignity and livelihood, for Kangwa had made her stop work on the grounds that he could manage to look after her and she therefore did not need to work for a living. She therefore has to fight her way up from a position of having no money, no job and no breadwinner. Once again, she finds herself vulnerable to powerful men, although this time around she is more mature and better able to handle them. Luckily, she lands a job as a television announcer through the help of her brother Kasongo. Her new employers send her to England for studies, and this opens new doors for her in terms of her career.

However, it is not only her career which is boosted by the opportunity to study in England; her personal life, too, is boosted because, while in England, she meets Hamaundu, the man with whom she falls in love and who eventually marries her upon her return to Zambia. The failed head girl is now a newscaster of national prominence: the former naïve girl is now a mature woman blessed with an abundance of experiential knowledge in terms of relationships with men.

3.4 *The Accusing Finger* - Nyambe Wina

First published by NECZAM in 1987, Nyambe Wina's *The Accusing Finger* was reprinted in 1989 by the Kenneth Kaunda Foundation and in 1992 by ZEPH. The study uses the 1992 version.

The novel's main character, Mosho Mufaya, is male, like the author. This is one respect in which the novel is similar to *Ticklish Sensation*. The other respect in which *The Accusing Finger* is similar to *Ticklish Sensation* is the narrative style – the narration technique is in the first person, and the protagonist is also the narrator. Thus, the story is told solely from and limited to the perspective of Mosho. Also, the narrative style is conversational, as in the case of *Ticklish Sensation*.

There are instances when the narration drifts into the stream-of-consciousness technique, although it is sometimes difficult to tell whether or not the words are the narrator's inner thoughts, or they constitute an intrusion or commentary by the author. For example, on p14, the narrator drifts from the line of narration and says: '*What was wrong with women anyway? You ask them a simple straightforward question and they start acting as if they have been walking barefoot on thorns.*'

The novel is set in the 1980s of Zambia. The action alternates mostly between Lusaka and Mongu. Unlike *Ticklish Sensation* and *Changing Shadows*, the story is not cast in the coming-of-age mold. It focuses on the adventures and misadventures of a young man already through with school and working as a freelance photo-journalist. Thematically the story is centred on women's infidelity and untrustworthiness in relationships. *The Accusing Finger*, while based on the Silozi proverb which advises people not to be too quick to point an accusing finger at others, in effect points an accusing finger at women.

Mosho does his primary school at Kuuli Primary School in Kalabo District, completing when he is fifteen years of age. He performs well enough to be selected to the prestigious Munali Secondary School in Lusaka. While in Grade Eleven, he falls into the twin habits of smoking and drinking, and barely escapes expulsion. Upon completing Grade Twelve, Mosho undertakes a two-year journalism course at the Evelyn Hone College in Lusaka. Later he is employed by the *Daily Star* as a photojournalist. However, due to heavy drinking, he repeatedly gets into trouble with his employers, until he decides to quit before he is fired. Instead of joining another newspaper

company, however, he decides to set up his own photographic studio in the Kamwala trading area of Lusaka.

When the story starts, therefore, Mosho is already running the studio and has a council house in Libala Stage 4B. He undertakes occasional trips to his parents' home in Kalabo. It is on one such trip that he meets Sibeso, a girl with whom he falls in love at first sight.

Later, Mosho is accused of making Sibeso pregnant. He reluctantly accepts responsibility and promises to marry her. About this time, he is visited at his studio by a beautiful, well-to-do young lady called Naomi Sakala, daughter of a powerful former MP called Langan Sakala. She owns the Naomi Beauty Parlour and Boutique and offers him a lucrative job to do a promotional brochure for her business. She later invites him to a party at her father's farm and, from there, the two begin to get intimate. Eventually they start a sexual affair.

However, the relationship cannot go deeper because both of them are already involved – Naomi has a boyfriend, Kelvin, while Mosho is due to marry Sibeso. He eventually pays the *lobola* to Sibeso's parents and officially marries her, but she does not join him immediately. In the intervening period, Naomi and Kelvin break up.

Mosho is now at a crossroads: he is waiting to be joined by his wife, and at the same time he is falling in love with Naomi. The relationship with Naomi, however, runs into problems when Sibeso finally moves to Lusaka to join Mosho as his lawful wife. However, when Sibeso gives birth, the baby is of mixed white and black blood. Sibeso confesses that the real father is Peter Taylor, her fellow teacher at Holy Cross Secondary School.

The birth of the mixed-blood baby is the climax of Mosho's relationship with Sibeso. Despite the fact that he too had been unfaithful to her, sleeping with Naomi before she joined him in Lusaka, he feels betrayed and hurt because she had gambled by pointing the accusing finger at him as the father of the child she was carrying. He realises that he

would have been saddled with the responsibility of bringing up the child had Taylor been black. There is no need for any more pretensions, so Sibeso moves marries Taylor; Mosho rekindles his relationship with Naomi.

In the end, Sibeso marries Taylor, Mosho marries Naomi. However, Mosho continues with his adventures with womanising and wining. From his point of view, the villain is Sibeso. As for him, his adventures only amount to what is expected of a man. Thus, while Jojo and Mwila are changed people at the end of their stories, Mosho is still the same. The only lesson he has learnt, it seems, is that women are not to be trusted.

3.5 *Behind the Closed Door* - Susan Chitabanta

Behind the Closed Door is a woman-authored novel first published in 1988 by the Kenneth Kaunda Foundation. The revised edition, which is the one analysed in this study, was published in 1992 by ZEPH. The story's protagonist is Florence Kasaka, female, and she is also the main narrator. There is, at least in the early part of the story, a male narrator in the name of David Lukasa, a sub-inspector in the police service. The narrative technique is in the first person – limited, first, to Lukasa's experiences; and second and more predominantly, to Florence's experiences.

In terms of time, the story is set in post-independent Zambia – the seventies. Spatially, the setting is mainly Lusaka. Thematically, the story is based on the idea that genuine love can change lives – even the life of a wretch and criminal. Thus, even the worst criminals can change.

While the story revolves around Florence, it ultimately is about how her unconditional love for a criminal, Frederick Musonda – who even rapes her – helps to change his life; transforming him from a criminal to a literature evangelist; from an irresponsible, reckless youth to a responsible, mature husband and father.

Structurally, *Behind the Closed Door* starts with the end – the murder of Fred – then returns to the beginning to show how he ends up dead. Lukasa, the officer assigned to

investigate the murder case, interviews Florence, and the rest of the novel is really her narration of events leading up to the murder: how she met the late Fred five years ago and the consequences of the unfortunate encounter.

Chitabanta's style of narration, of using two 'I'-narrators, Lukasa and Florence, leads to some confusion at the end of the story because she appears to forget that she started the narration with Lukasa. She attempts a narration-within-a-narration, but the technique comes apart at the end because she does not return to narration through the eyes of Lukasa. This is a serious structural flaw which appears not to have been detected by the publishers.

Florence explains that she is the only girl in a family of six – the eldest. Her family, from the Northern Province of Zambia, is well-to-do. Upon being selected to secondary school, she becomes close friends with Martha, the daughter of a pastor in the Seventh-Day Adventist Church (SDA) in Lusaka. Martha's family, unlike Florence's, is from the Southern Province of Zambia.

Due to her acquaintance with Martha, Florence winds up in a church service at Martha's church – and that is the beginning of another dimension of Florence's life which leads to a relationship with Henry, her friend's brother. Martha's father, Pastor Moonga, encourages Florence to continue going to church, and one of the net effects is that her relationship with Henry is strengthened. Eventually he proposes marriage. Initially her family opposes the idea, but later give in to her wishes. She is happy both within and outside the church. In church she gains the confidence of the leaders, who give her more responsibility, while outside the church her relationship with Henry gets stronger. Soon after their engagement, he goes abroad for studies.

In order to ensure that their daughter is ready for marriage, Florence's parents send her to the village to be taught the intricacies of marriage by her grandmother. One day, after her return from the village, while counting the church offering with two boys in the church, she overhears a discussion which later impacts on her life and her worldview.

The discussion is between Pastor Moonga and some elders of the church, who have to agree on a name of the person to replace one of the elders. From the proceedings of the conversation, Florence concludes that the Bible teaches that one should marry the first man or woman they have sex with.

Not long after this experience, Florence is alone at home, in the night, when she is raped by a fugitive criminal, Fred, who somehow has managed to enter her bedroom. He is still in the room when Florence's parents return home. Surprisingly, however, she protects him from her parents and the law by not revealing his presence to her mother. In line with what she overheard in the conversation at church, Florence now believes that, in God's books, when Fred rapes and defiles her, on 13 October 1974, he is registered as her lawful husband.

This religious conviction poses a dilemma for Florence: if indeed she is, in God's sight, married to her defiler Fred, what does she do with Henry, the man to whom she is, at least in the sight of the church and family, engaged to be married? The dilemma comes to a head when, about a month later, she discovers that she is pregnant by Fred. She finds herself in another crisis. What would Henry think? How can she explain the circumstances leading to the pregnancy? Who would believe her story? Meanwhile, she receives a letter from Henry stating that he will come home for the Christmas holiday.

In a strange and unbelievable twist, Florence ends up ditching Henry and marrying Fred. Fred moves in with Florence and slowly changes his lifestyle from that of a criminal to that of a responsible husband and father. His conversion to Christ helps hasten and solidify the transformation. The initial resistance to the marriage exhibited by Florence's parents fades away and, like Florence, they forgive and accept Fred as part of the family.

As the marriage grows, Fred's commitment to the church also grows, and eventually he becomes a literature evangelist, preaching the Word of God through distributing Christian literature. In addition, Florence gives birth to Martin, and this adds the family's joy. Fred works hard and makes use of every opportunity to preach to people

with whom he shared his old sinful life. It is on one such mission, to try and convert an old criminal acquaintance to Christianity, that Fred meets his fate.

3.6 *The Fight for Justice* – Josephine Bwalya Muchelemba

Unlike her fellow woman-writer Susan Chitabanta, Josephine Bwalya Muchelemba, in *The Fight for Justice*, writes on a subject that is close to her heart, having worked in the NGO world for many years. Published in 2003, *The Fight for Justice* is Muchelemba's second published work. However, while the first novel, *Haunted by the Past*, was published by Minerva Press of the United Kingdom in 1996, *The Fight for Justice* is a self-publication. She published it through her own publishing and entertainment company, JBM Innovation, based in Lusaka.

Like the author, the novel's protagonist, Yoko Chimwemwe, is female. The work is an autobiographical novel based on a real-life experience of the author – who was once attacked by a stranger in Lusaka. Thus, most of the story is set in Lusaka, although there is a point at which the action shifts to the Western province, as in the case of *The Accusing Finger*. In terms of time, the story is set in the 1990's.

Muchelemba uses the third person point of view to narrate the story. The writing style is not consistent in that there are times when the novel drifts into verbatim 'reproductions' of workshop reports and interviews. Apart from the propensity for (unnecessary) detail, the novel exhibits a tone of disappointment with the way the fight for women's justice in Zambia has proceeded. Thematically the novel is about the need for perseverance, patience and determination in the fight for women's justice, which includes the campaign against man-on-woman violence.

The theme is explored through the experiences of the protagonist, Yoko, who, in the prelude of the book, has a premonitory dream about the events that later take place on a lonely road near State House in Lusaka. A programme officer with the People's International Development Organisation (PIDO), Yoko, at forty, has been married to Sekeni, the Managing Director of a public manufacturing company based in Lusaka, for

fourteen years. The couple have three children: daughter Chumi, at thirteen the eldest; son, Sekeni Junior, eleven; and another son, Munya, nine.

Soon after her premonitory dream, in which she is confronted by a shadowy figure and rescued by a snake, Yoko undertakes a trip to the Southern Province for some routine work with some colleagues from Lusaka. The four ladies are Janet, Sibeso, Mutinta, and Mary. The women visit two villages in the Gwembe valley – Siamuleya and Kanchindu. At Siamuleya village, the women come face to face with the realities of man-on-woman or domestic violence: Miriam, the leader of the women's club in the village, is beaten to death by her husband; yet no one seems to consider the action a crime because it is 'normal' for husbands to beat their wives. However, the death of Miriam provokes Yoko into serious thinking about domestic violence and society's attitude towards it.

In the evening of the day she returns from the trip, Yoko receives a telephone call from her friend Tazy, an old classmate, who invites her to a get-together event at her home. The following day Sekeni drives her to Tazy's home for the reunion with old friends from the Kasama Girls Secondary School – Lydia, Julia, Susan and Ida. The ladies had all been classmates at the school between 1964 and 1968.

After the get-together, Sekeni picks Yoko from Tazy's place. However, as they drive back home, Yoko decides to get off the car and get a taxi because in her view her husband is driving too fast. He leaves her near State House and drives away. Unable to find a taxi, Yoko decides to walk towards Woodlands down the Independence Avenue. In the process she is attacked by a stranger and is almost killed.

Yoko is rescued by Mike and Martin, from a nearby house. The assailant flees into the dark night. The two young men put her on a wheelbarrow and take her to the Woodlands Police Station, where she does not receive the needed attention and help. When the police indicate their inability to catch the assailant due to lack of helpful evidence, Yoko, upset and disappointed, declares that she will personally fight for justice and not give up or rest until the perpetrator of the crime is brought to book. Upon being taken

home by her husband, she refuses to go to the hospital immediately and instead chooses to sleep.

The following day she is taken to the clinic of the family doctor, Dr Dube, who recommends that she be immediately moved to the University Teaching Hospital. After being admitted to hospital for several weeks, Yoko is discharged, only two days before her fortieth birthday. Her birthday wish is to find the man who assaulted her.

The experience at the police station transforms Yoko into a woman determined to not only get justice for herself but also for other women who suffer violence at the hands of men, both in the privacy of the home and in public. She succeeds in finding her assailant and also joins the small army of women determined to fight the scourge of violence against women in the nation. This wins her national recognition.

3.7 *Picking up the Pieces* - Maliya Mzyece Sililo

Maliya Mzyece Sililo's *Picking up the Pieces* is the third woman-authored novel to be analysed in this study. Like Muchelemba's *The Fight for Justice*, Sililo's novel is self-published. Published in 2003, *Picking up the Pieces*, set in Zambia's Chingola town in the 90's.

The protagonist is Luka Mumba, a business studies graduate who works as branch manager for Cakudza Insurance Company, CICO, in Chingola. He is married to Litiya, a businesswoman. She is Managing Director of her own Afro Look Beauty Parlour. The couple has a daughter, five-year-old Khuziwe.

The story is told from the third person point of view. Thematically the novel deals with the question of how a family can cope with the impact of HIV/AIDS when it is directly affected. It brings to the fore pertinent questions such as: when a couple is found HIV-positive and the woman is pregnant, should the woman abort? Should such a couple tell their children about their HIV status?

Sililo explores these issues through the life of Luka and Litiya. The two are both respectable individuals enjoying the fruit of a happy marriage. The happiness of their marriage, however, is checked when the couple go for two tests at Dr Mazila's clinic: the first, a pregnancy test, which turns out positive; the second, and HIV test for each of them, and the results are positive for both. The couple is faced with the question of whether or not Litiya will transfer her status to the unborn child. Should Litiya undergo an abortion in order to save the baby, or undergo other measures to prevent mother-to-child transmission of the HIV virus?

The idea immediately casts the couple into a conflict situation: while Luka is in favour of an abortion, which he believes can save at least his wife, Litiya, on the other hand, who is Catholic, is totally opposed to the idea and would rather pursue other options which would save both her and the baby. She finds comfort in the fact that Dr Mazila assures the couple that it is medically possible to prevent mother-to-child transmission of the HIV virus. The doctor, who is himself HIV-positive, tries his best to lessen the burden and anxieties of the couple. In addition, the fact that neither Luka nor Litiya knew their HIV status before having Khuziwe means the girl might also be infected. Should they take their daughter for an HIV test?

The other question that haunts the couple is: how did they get infected? Who infected the other? Accusations and counter-accusations spring up. Upon deep reflection, Luka is sure that he is the culprit. How did he get the virus? He acknowledges that he was promiscuous before marrying Litiya, but he is more inclined to believe that he could have got the virus through a casual sexual encounter at a seminar in Lusaka. At the week-long seminar, ironically on HIV/AIDS awareness, and organised by the Concerned Citizens of Zambia (CCZ), Luke is enticed by Mbilia Mutale, nicknamed 'Siren', a seductively beautiful participant at the seminar. Luka is convinced the one-time stand gave him the virus, and he in turn infected his wife.

As the inner turmoil takes its toll, Litiya one day decides to keep away from work and instead visits her cousin, a businesswoman called Monde (Mrs Makono). The purpose of

the visit is to share the latest developments with her cousin, who was in fact the one who first persuaded her to have an HIV test before trying to have another child. Monde has her own share of marital problems and is convinced that, despite not taking an HIV test, she is positive, on the basis of her husband's promiscuous behaviour. Litiya fails to tell Monde about the tests, and returns home to brood over her situation. Her relationship with Luka takes a plunge for the worse, especially when he resurrects the issue of considering an abortion.

Just as Litiya generally considers Monde as her confidante, Luka considers his friend, Dr Titus Banene Nakoyo, as a confidante, although they do not share everything. They are, however, close enough for Nakoyo, who is also dying of AIDS, to ask Luka to help his daughters sort out some family matters once Nakoyo dies. Through interaction and discussions with Nakoyo, and other people such as his workmate Akimu, a young man whose father died of AIDS, Luka realises that his wife needs him more than ever before, and that he should be strong.

The novel digresses from the main story and delves into the life of Dr Nzila Mazila, the HIV positive doctor helping Luka and Litiya. It throws light on how he was fired from his work at a hospital in the UK because of testing HIV positive, and how he returned home a dejected man, having lost his job, income, his English wife Nancy, and his self-esteem. It takes time for him to rebuild his life – and it is at the hospital in Chingola that he has a new start. He marries Yuli, an HIV negative woman who already has a child, Mulenga. Being a discordant couple does not stop the two from marrying and pursuing the possibility of having another child. They decide to become the founding members of the Chingola branch of the PMCT – Prevention of Mother to Child Transmission Intervention. They later persuade the Mumbas to join the group.

Nakoyo dies, but Luka's relationship with his wife improves when she agrees to undertake counselling sessions with Dr Mazila. Joining the PMCT groups also helps the couple to cope with the pressures of the situation and they gather the strength and courage to pick up the pieces and, like Mazila, rebuild their lives and their relationship.

They have the courage and confidence to face the future and the consequences of the pregnancy; they are prepared to nurture the coming baby boy, whether he will be HIV positive or not.

3.8 Summary

There are some similarities and differences among the six main texts analysed. It is however important to note that, of the three male-authored novels, two (*Ticklish Sensation* and *The Accusing Finger*) have both a male protagonist and a male narrator. In fact, the narrator is a subjective one because he is also the protagonist. Only *Changing Shadows* has a female protagonist despite being male-authored. Of the three female-authored novels, one (*Picking up the Pieces*) has a male protagonist while the other two have female ones. While *Behind the Closed Door* has a female narrator, who is also part of the action, the gender of the narrator in *The Fight for Justice* and *Picking up the Pieces* cannot be determined due to the third person narration technique.

CHAPTER FOUR

4.0 ANALYSIS OF MALE-AUTHORED TEXTS

4.1 Introduction

The paratextual, intratextual and intertextual analysis of the male-authored texts reviewed in Chapter Four of this study is the main focus of this chapter. The reason for analysing the male-authored texts on their own is to determine whether or not there are similarities, trends and characteristic features among them, in terms of the paratextual, intertextual and intratextual elements.

4.2 Paratextual Analysis

The titles of the three novels generally tend to have a masculine slant to them. In other words, the titles are generally products of the male perspective. In *Ticklish Sensation*, for example, the 'ticklish sensation' is only experienced by the boys in the story, not the girls. In fact, it is the girls who *cause* the sensation because of what they are and what they have – female sexual appeal as projected by body structure, breasts, hips, eyes, face, mouth, bosom, among others. Thus the title is masculinised.

The title, *Changing Shadows*, focuses on woman as a subject of change induced by interaction with men. The main character, Mwila, has to undergo changes in order to find her place in a male-dominated world. She has to overcome the obstacles laid in her path by the male establishment.

The title of Wina's *The Accusing Finger* is also borne out of the male perspective on the events of the novel. The title is emotionally packed and makes one inclined to feel that the accusation is malicious or unjustified; that the person accused is somehow victimised.

When we read the contents of the novel, it becomes clear that the accusing finger in the title belongs to a woman – that the woman is the accuser while the man is merely the victim of the accusation. In other words, Mosho is a victim of a malicious and

false accusation by Sibeso, a 'good' man who falls prey to the tricks of a 'bad' woman or a 'witch', a destroyer.

The portrayal of Mosho as a victim of Sibeso's unfaithfulness and treachery, which of course is a product of male perception, is fortified by the illustration on the front cover. What immediately greets the eye on the cover is the prominent profile of a man's face in the foreground and, in the background, the face of a baby in a cot. Worth noting, however, is the fact that there is a clear contrast between the two faces. The baby, who is supposed to be the man's son, is too light-skinned to be his.

In fact, the contrast between the man's and the baby's complexions is exaggerated so that it is obvious and unmistakable; save for the Negroid nose, the baby passes for a white one. The contrast therefore makes the accusation even more poignant and unforgivable. Apart from the contrast in skin complexion, there is also a distinct contrast in facial expression. On the one hand we see an innocent-looking baby; on the other we see a shocked and emotionally moved face of a man, goggle-eyed and mouth agape. The pain in the man's face is obvious enough.

It is also worth noting that the illustration does not include the baby's mother. The cover is masculinised: the woman, the false accuser, is not important; it is the man, the 'victim', who is important. The baby must be seen because it is the personification and proof of the woman's false accusation and infidelity.

The baby in the illustration, therefore, is not only proof of Mosho's 'innocence' and 'victim' status, but also of Sibeso's hypocrisy and 'witch' status; it is evidence that she is a woman of loose morals.

The masculinisation of the paratext is generally compounded by the blurb. In *Ticklish Sensation*, the blurb reads thus:

"...Every night, the two Big Brothers, Tondo and Pinto talked about girls... the ticklish sensation. What was it?... I was not going to be fooled anymore. I would find out the truth on my own. Nobody would tell me, but myself..." The novel

humorously unwraps the developments and dominating nature of the ticklish sensation in a young boy's life from puberty to parenthood.'

As the blurb shows, Jojo's troubles start due to the nightly bombardment of 'ticklish sensation' talk by the two Big Brothers, Tondo and Pinto. They are 'big brothers' only in the sense of age and that they have had sexual adventures with girls while Jojo has had none. In other words, sexual conquest and prowess are the twin yardsticks by which, in this society, the boys' 'manhood' is determined and measured. The two boys are part of a privileged, exclusive club into which Jojo is yet to be initiated.

Sexual conquest and prowess and a means of determining whether or not one is a 'real' man is not unique to the Chewa society of which Phiri writes. Neither is it confined to young men.

Jojo does not want to become a laughing-stock among the boys, so he develops an overriding desire to gain first-hand experiential knowledge of the 'truth' about the ticklish sensation. As the publisher notes in the blurb, the ticklish sensation is a 'dominating' force which shapes and haunts Jojo's metamorphosis from puberty to parenthood. He is determined to prove that he too is a 'real man'.

The blurb of *The Accusing Finger* is heavily masculinised, exhibiting double standards in the treatment of female infidelity as against male infidelity. Female infidelity is treated as terrible, dangerous and intolerable; male infidelity is tolerable, almost 'normal' adventure.

'When Mosho Mufaya, a Freelance Photographer is accused of impregnating Sibeso, he is left with no option but to marry her because of pressure from his family. However, Mosho's problem is far from being solved. He has another affair with Naomi Sakala, a business tycoon's daughter who he loves so much despite being warned to lay off by her father. Things come to a head when he discovers that his wife Sibeso gives birth to a coloured child... what is he to do? Who is the father then?'

The blurb is written from the male perspective. In as far as Mosho's relationship with Sibeso is concerned, as the first part of the blurb shows, he is a victim – a man whose problems are caused by being 'accused' of making Sibeso pregnant; then being 'forced' to marry her ('left with no option') due to family pressure. The implication, and this indeed is the case in the main text, is that if Mosho had a choice, he would not marry Sibeso. The second part of the blurb says Mosho 'loves' Naomi despite her father's objections. The wording portrays him in good light: he is a man genuinely in love; so much in love, in fact, that he is ready for confrontation with Naomi's father. In other words, his double-dealing is not a problem. Sibeso is not a victim.

The problem, according to the blurb, comes when he 'discovers' that he is not the father of Sibeso's child. Only then do 'things come to a head'. All of a sudden Mosho's own infidelity is not an issue; Sibeso's is. He can now take the high moral ground and condemn her for the very hypocritical behaviour that he is also guilty of. In fact, his infidelity is worse because Naomi is not the only woman with whom he goes to bed while committed to Sibeso. Yet he is projected as a man in a crisis caused by Sibeso's immoral behaviour. Hence the question, 'What is he to do?'

One of the preliminary pages bears the Silozi proverb from which the novel's title is drawn: '*Mwimbo loti te minyo loti*'. The 'explanatory' English version says: '*The one who points the accusing finger, in awe and desperation, shouting how he is hated, haunted and bewitched, is the sorcerer.*'

The point of the proverb, which is in tandem with the essence of the novel's story, is that the false accuser is like a sorcerer. Thus, Sibeso is compared to a sorcerer basically because she points an accusing finger at an 'innocent' man. Like a boomerang, her own accusation returns to haunt her.

For *Changing Shadows*, the focus of the blurb is on the cultural conflict and change. The blurb describes *Changing Shadows* as '*a story about cultural change*' which

highlights ‘*the dilemma of living between conflicting cultures and contrasting traditions*’: The blurb further states that, in the novel, Mwila ‘*clashes with outdated tradition*’.

Worth noting is the fact that the ‘outdated tradition’ is a product and stronghold of patriarchy; it is a tradition that follows men and maleness. Thus, the fact that the ‘rebel’ is a woman makes the cultural conflict even more interesting. To challenge patriarchal society is to spit in the face of the male establishment.

The illustrations on the covers of *Changing Shadows* and *Ticklish Sensation*, as in the case of *The Accusing Finger*, also contribute to the perpetuation of the masculinisation of the paratext. In *Ticklish Sensation*, the cover is dominated by a painting of two breasts of a woman’s naked upper body. Clearly, the cover design choice is influenced by a male perspective. The two breasts appear to be taut, their nipples erect, as of a woman who is sexually aroused. It is also interesting that the breasts are presented in profile form, rather than from the front view, which would reduce the visual effect on the male beholder. In addition, a necklace of beads runs tantalisingly over and between the two breasts.

The implications of having naked breasts on the cover are worth considering. For the male reader, the breasts are a ‘promise’ of the contents of the novel. In a sense, the breasts are an ‘advert’. To the woman, the message is clear: the breasts are an asset, a wonder to be gazed upon and ‘enjoyed’ by men. Another implication, however, is that only ‘young’ breasts are sexually useful, while ‘old’, flabby ones are not. The subtle message for the woman is that her breasts are among the tools she can use to enhance her sexuality.

Unlike the illustration on the front cover of *Ticklish Sensation*, which is sensational, or the emotion-laden illustration on the front cover of *The Accusing Finger*, the cover illustration of *Changing Shadows* reflects the cultural conflict in the novel.

What immediately strikes one is that the woman's face is a blend of two diametrically opposed worlds; the face epitomises the dual nature of the personality of the protagonist, Mwila. It also represents Mwila's transformation from a backward, laid back, innocent, naïve village girl into a sophisticated, outgoing woman of questionable morals.

The right side of the face represents the old Mwila; the left side represents the new. The old part is dark, the 'new' light skinned. The old Mwila is associated with a simple hairstyle and dress. The dress is plain, with no jewellery; the face has no make-up. By contrast, the new Mwila's face is characterised by make-up, lipstick and chemically treated hair. Also, an ear-ring dangles from the ear. The eyebrow, unlike the one on the right, is trimmed the attire is fancy.

Ironically, the new face of Mwila is associated both with the desirable and with the undesirable. Desirable in the sense of attractiveness and sexual appeal; undesirable in the sense of being culturally and morally corrupted.

To traditional man, the new Mwila, complete with lipstick and make-up, is not good enough for marriage. To the non-traditional man, the new Mwila is cultured and marriageable. The split face also epitomises for Mwila the battle within and the battle without. The battle within is about who wins – the old village girl or the new metropolitan girl. The battle without is between Mwila and her changing environment, or cultural conflict.

4.3 Analysis of Main Texts

4.3.1 Images of Men and Women

Generally, the images of men and women in the three novels are both positive and negative, although women are more associated with negative images than men. For both men and women, however, there are stereotypical images in the three works.

In *Ticklish Sensation*, the women are generally portrayed as gold-diggers, 'witches', seductresses, gossips, petty, weak, subservient to men, men's property, evil,

cantankerous, hypocritical, and unreliable. The main positive image of women is when they are portrayed as beautiful and compared to a flower. However, the 'flower' trope as a positive image of woman is brought into question because, first, the trope is used in the context of women being objects of man's admiration and as sexual objects; second, flowers wither and become undesirable or unattractive.

This perception of women is well-illustrated by Jojo's views: "*To me women are seasonal human flowers. Time rapidly incinerates their beauty, which withers quickly in the same number of years it takes to bloom. It is like gas that evaporates quickly and disappears into thin air, leaving a bucket yawning miserably. All her pride gone, never to return; gone for good*" (Ticklish Sensation, 1994: p3).

Thus, Kinki Salamu, Keterina Dumbo, Lise Chanda, Puna Nyangu and Meeky Banda, the girls with whom Jojo becomes sexually obsessed, are pictures of a flower in its prime – beautiful, attractive, seductive, irresistible, bewitching and desirable. They are, to Jojo, flowers to be touched and explored, if only in order to experience the ticklish sensation.

By contrast, Loliwe Kuzwe, Jojo's grandmother, is a flower withered by the sun of time; no longer attractive. Even her breasts have lost the power to excite young Jojo, who describes her thus: "*She was a gaunt hag, who was slowly taking the shape of a shrivelled monkey. Bones stuck out of her ageing body. I wondered whether there was any flesh between those bones and skin that looked like snake peelings. She had such a squint that made you feel she was not looking at you when she actually was*" (p7).

Jojo's description of Loliwe stands in sharp contrast to his description of Kinki, for example: "*Voluptuous, supposed to have been born on "the day God was happiest". Huge, undulating bust, fat legs, white eyes.... Her buttocks fascinated me most. I always imagined that instead of flesh, there was some sort of jelly under her rear skin. Whenever she walked fast, I feared that her bottom would fall off*" (pp1-2).

Thus, while Jojo chases Kinki around the village just to touch her breasts, he is disappointed with the feel of Loliwe's breasts when the old woman offers him to touch them instead of bothering Kinki. "I've got what you want, my boy," Loliwe says. "I've got breasts, my boy. Come and have them, my boy. Why didn't you come to ask me about them?" (p35). When Jojo fails to experience the ticklish sensation upon touching Loliwe's breasts, he shouts, "A-a-aaa-no-no-no! Those are no breasts at all; not those, no. Who are you trying to fool with those useless skins? They didn't bring any ticklish sensation at all; and you call them breasts. My friends told me breasts must be firm and pointed. Those are mere dangling skins" (p36).

Elena, Jojo's mother, is considered 'the most beautiful girl in Kamphasa village', if for no other reason, then at least because her complexion is 'really light' and her skin 'glittered like copper' (p52). Men fight over her. One of the reasons she initially rejects her eventual husband, Solomon, is because she, like every other girl, wanted a man who would work in the urban areas and thereby not only earn money but take his wife to see the railway line. (p53, par 2). However, when Solomon goes to work in Harare, she changes her attitude and 'loves' him. He is transformed by his sojourn in Harare. "He was a new man," she says, "many friends envied me. He was the proud owner of a new bicycle – a means of transport very few could afford to possess in those days. He was in a grey suit and plunged me and my parents into clothes none of us had ever dreamt about in those days. I clung to him so much that I didn't want him to leave me again" (p62).

It is obvious Elena only married Solomon because he went to work in Harare. She is a gold-digger whose marriage philosophy is reflected in the words of the *chitelele* song sung by the women and girls in Jojo's village:

*I long for men in grey
Or those in striped grey'*

Now that Solomon has a grey suit - literally – she finds him worthy of her hand in marriage. Jojo notes that the words of the song are said ‘to have driven women crazy’ (p27).

The women of *Ticklish Sensation* are not only wealth-seekers, they also fit in the *femme vampire* image. They seduce men and even cause their destruction. Thus, for example, despite his pursuit of the ticklish sensation, Jojo is still portrayed as a victim of seductresses. An example of a seductress is Noli Mbao, a fifteen year-old schoolmate of Jojo’s at the Chewa Upper School. She literally seduces Jojo (pp70-72). The resulting relationship lands both of them in trouble with the school authorities and, refusing to take the punishment, Jojo leaves the school.

Lise Chanda is another girl cast in the same seductress mold as Noli Mbao. She literally stalks Jojo on his way from school. She always waits for him at the stream, saying nothing verbally; only her actions speak (pp100-103). In Jojo’s mind, Lise is a ‘witch’ who almost destroys his life. In fact, he describes her as having a ‘*bewitching smile*’ (p111, par 2).

The ensuing relationship leads Jojo into trouble with Lise’s family, especially her mother. However, as it turns out, Lise is far from being an ‘innocent’ girl. She seems to be following in the footsteps of her mother, who is a prostitute. Lise’s mother is not the only ‘evil’ woman in *Ticklish Sensation*. Nina, the wife to Dan Jere, Jojo’s cousin, is not only cruel but also uncaring toward Jojo. She starves, overworks and frustrates him (pp67-68).

The image of women as men’s property is, interestingly, perpetrated, in part, by Elena, who tells Jojo, her son: “*God willed that women were to be men’s property*” (p 59). Chief Kandodo, who is beaten to Elena’s hand in marriage by Solomon, expresses anger and bitterness because, to him, Elena is his ‘*valuable property*’ (p60).

In the world of *Ticklish Sensation*, therefore, the man has his own place; the woman her own. The grown woman has no significance of her own except in the context of a marriage. She is more dignified as a man's property than as a woman without and independent of a man. Every woman's goal and wish is to be a mother and a wife – 'owned' by a man. In African society in general, marriage, for a woman, is considered a status symbol.

In *Ticklish Sensation*, images of men are generally those which portray them as superior to women, more powerful and authoritative, more respected, and self-centered. If a woman is man's property, then the man controls the woman. A man has authority, both as husband and as father.

Thus, for example, Jojo's father is a strict disciplinarian who loses no opportunity to exercise his authority over his wife and children. He uses his authority in an overbearing and sometimes even unreasonable manner. Jojo says of his father: "*Father was not the talking type. But when he did talk, he was a terror none could contend with. We called him 'Thunderbolt'. When we made mistakes, it was instant justice. No questions or explanations were entertained*" (p3). Similarly, Jere gives his wife Nina a vicious beating because he does not expect her to challenge his authority. She is his property and must therefore do the bidding of the 'owner' (p66).

If women are men's property, then they are also men's sexual objects. In *Ticklish Sensation*, men are portrayed as sexual animals whose lust for women and sex is insatiable. In the Chewa society of which Phiri writes, the idea of men as sexual animals is reflected in satirical performances during the initiation ceremony for girls, known as *Chinamwali*. Women warn the initiate to be wary of men whose appetite for women, especially young girls, is similar to the hyena's lust for meat. From the male point of view, however, men's lust for sex is perceived as 'normal'. Being a man means being a 'conqueror' of women.

Thus, from their teens, the young men in Jojo's village prepare for manhood, which is also measured in terms of sexual prowess, while the girls and women wear beads to enhance their capacity to sexually satisfy men, the boys use herbs to enhance their sexual prowess. Jojo says of the Big Brothers, Tondo and Pinto: *'Their allies always gave them roots and other herbs which they put in bottles of water. After a while they gulped the gruesome concoctions whose strength they talked much about; strength that gave manly power'* (p23). In a society where sexuality is a measure of one's manliness, Jojo's sexual naivety and ignorance make him feel inferior to the Big Brothers. Compared to the Big Brothers, Jojo is 'not a man'. Even Loliwe, Jojo's grandmother, compares him to a 'toothless hound' because of his senseless pursuit of Kinki. She accuses him of crying for food he can neither bite nor chew (p42).

In *Ticklish Sensation*, the married man is portrayed as the provider for his family. Thus, for example, Solomon, Jojo's father, works extremely hard on his fields in order to provide for his wife and children (pp9-10).

The men in *Ticklish Sensation* are associated with bravery, courage and adventure. Thus, for example, Nkhuku Kwela, the bus driver, drives in a rough manner (pp83-4). Later, after Nkhuku causes an accident, it is the women and children among the passengers who weep and wail 'madly' while the men control their emotions (p84, par 5). Whereas the women drum their chests and cry 'hysterically', the men still have the courage to rescue Nkhuku Kwela (p86).

Jojo's belief that a man should be adventurous drives him into doing crazy things in pursuit of the ticklish sensation. He is, for instance, ready to take risks in order to strengthen his relationship with Puna Nyangu:

'... I made up my mind to go ahead with the mad adventure, all the time reinforcing my will by telling myself that the laissez faire policy would shape the trend of events in the way it wished. I realised that a practical experiment paid more than a theoretical one, that a man could not know a road unless he walked through it' (p174).

As in *Ticklish Sensation*, the women in *The Accusing Finger* are generally portrayed in negative light compared to the men. In man-woman relations, the man is superior to the woman and has greater social and economic status; man is the dominant force in the binary pair. Woman's significance is mainly in terms of her relationship with man – as a wife or mother of the man's children.

Where the narrator 'appreciates' women, it is generally in connection with their sexuality, and they are therefore portrayed as men's sexual objects. Thus, for example, Mosho says of Sibeso: '*All the male eyes were feasting on her*' (*The Accusing Finger*, 1992: p31). As in *Ticklish Sensation*, the woman's body is presented as though it is her most important asset; everything else, in this male-dominated and male-driven world, is peripheral and merely an appendage.

In fact, women in *The Accusing Finger*'s world - a man's world of illicit affairs, beer, pleasure, infidelity and sex – are perceived as a man's source of pleasure; they are meant for a man's satisfaction in the same way as his favorite food. Significantly, therefore, Captain Mumba, one of the male characters, in explaining why Mongu town is such a great place to live, says to Mosho, who is a Lusaka resident: "*Comrade, this is a town and a half!... Here in Mongu we are alive. We have fish, cattle, milk and Marias... What more can a comrade want? And the beer ... you just keep on quaffing!*" (1992: p12).

Captain Mumba equates women, whom he refers to as 'Marias', with consumables such as fish, cattle, milk and beer. Women, in other words, are to be 'consumed', 'feasted upon' and 'enjoyed' in much the same way as a man enjoys fish, meat, milk or beer.

The 'Marias', however, are generally presented as easy-to-get, loose and as prostitutes. The ultimate epitome of a prostitute, hardened by experience, is Enesi, the Kasai woman (pp50-52). Tom, while having a discussion in a bar with Mosho and John, says of the girls in the bar: "*What can the girls do anyway? They cannot*

find work because they are not qualified to do anything apart from spreading their thighs – so they do just that” (p139).

Enesi, who causes Mosho to be beaten by Kasai men, is molded in the *femme vampire* image – a woman who destroys ‘good’ men. She, like Sibeso and Naomi, and like Kinki Salamu and Puna Nyangu of *Ticklish Sensation*, is a ‘witch’ whose bewitching power only leads to men’s destruction.

Likando says to Mosho: “... *get a tip from me. You have to be tough with women and know how to handle them otherwise they will be the major cause of your problems and misery throughout your life” (p72).* Mosho receives similar ‘advice’ from his father: “*There is a lesson you’ll have to learn if you have not yet done so. Women, if you are not careful, can turn you into a fool. They have the magic touch of turning stone-hearted men into jelly, they can tame the most violent man. At the same time a weakling becomes a roaring bull when he is defending his woman” (p93).*

Thus, despite himself, Mosho is ‘*hopelessly drawn*’ to Naomi (p101). It is as though he is a victim of some power beyond his control and should therefore not be blamed for double-crossing Sibeso. In fact, of Naomi he says: ‘*No man could resist her ...*’ (p103), as if to justify his infidelity. The witch image comes out clearly when Mosho says, ‘*Naomi had me by the balls. The girl had completely bewitched me. Day in and day out I was preoccupied with her. I did not spare a thought for my dear wife in Mongu who was carrying my baby’ (p105, emphasis mine).*

So powerful and overwhelming is Naomi’s impact on Mosho that it is like a witch’s spell. In the scheme of things, Mosho is the marionette, Naomi the puppeteer. Unlike Sibeso and other women who are controlled by men especially due to their economic and social status, Naomi combines beauty and financial muscle to exercise some measure of power over men. This is Mosho’s reconstruction of his relationship with her:

'Even though I had made love to her, she still remained a mystery to me. She was one of the very few liberated women I had ever met. She chose and picked her own men and did away with them as and when it suited her. I suppose having money did that to people. Naomi could have had any man from the top brass without any problems, she had everything going for her. She had beauty and money. For a moment she had me as her favourite pet. It was too good to last and I knew it. For the moment could I not enjoy it? For I was sure she may just be using me to satisfy her passion' (p104).

While Mosho's reasons for asserting that Naomi is '*one of the very few liberated women*' might be debatable, it is clear that Naomi represents a different image of woman compared to what generally obtains in *The Accusing Finger*. The typical Nyambe Wina woman is subservient, submissive to and dependent on a man. A good example is Clare Sianga, wife of Mosho's uncle, who is resigned to her husband's drinking habits and other forms of misbehavior. To her it is 'normal' for men to behave like that.

Naomi is thus hailed as '*an exemplary young lady who must be emulated*' by other women in Zambia (p144). However, her positive image as a liberated woman whose business success is a model is tainted by her picture as a woman who, despite being able to woo any man, still stoops low enough to have an affair with a married woman. Her moral standing, therefore, is far from exemplary. In fact, by sleeping with Mosho, she double-crosses her boyfriend, Kelvin Sitina. Like Sibeso, therefore, she is a double-crosser, guilty of adultery. Her image is further damaged by Mosho's portrayal of her as a 'seductress'. He says, '*[She] had expertly seduced me in her flat. I felt dejected and used*' (p114).

Mosho's experience with Sibeso worsens his perception of women. Sibeso, to him, is '*treacherous*' and a deceiver (p118). He perceives women as '*poison*' (p23); Mumba perceives them as '*snakes*' (p159). As far as Mosho is concerned 'the female race', as he derogatorily refers to women (p126), are essentially the same – petty, possessive selfish, and destroyers of men. Of Naomi, he says: '*Of late she had assumed more powers of what I should do or should not. I wondered who had given her those powers. Women were the same throughout*' (p163, my emphasis).

Despite his negative perception of women, Mosho does not seem to see anything wrong with the predominant images of men in the novel as womanisers, pleasure-seekers, adulterers, drunks and adventurers. The man's world, in *The Accusing Finger*, is dominated by beer, sex, women, dance and infidelity. The men of *The Accusing Finger* sexually exploit and abuse women. They see women as sexual objects, as items designed and intended for their sexual gratification. Generally, the men of the novel perceive women only in sexual terms – and a man's sexuality is a measure of his manhood.

Thus, for example, when Mosho has lunch with Naomi, he only looks at her in sexual terms. All his eyes see is a sexual object:

'For a moment my eyes were glued to that narrow waist and those rounded hips. I shifted my eyes to the pouting mouth, dimpled cheeks and amused eyes. I regarded her oval face and once more I could not help admiring her. To divert my mind from desiring her, I lit a cigarette and inhaled slowly' (p56).

If men are portrayed as more powerful than woman economically and otherwise, they are weak when confronted with women's sexual appeal. For indeed, as in *Ticklish Sensation*, about the only power the women of *The Accusing Finger* can exercise over men lies in their sexuality and their sexual organs.

The dilemma of men like Mosho, therefore, is that, despite their negative perceptions of women as destroyers, cheats, exploiters, manipulators and gold diggers, they still find themselves helplessly weak when faced with the lure of sex with a woman. Thus, when Mosho recovers from his hospital ordeal, which he blames on a woman, he fails to keep away from sex or women. While at Moyo Bar he looks at waitresses lustfully: *'I looked at the waitresses with their behinds in tight uniforms and smiled'* (p129).

To captain Mumba, men are hopelessly given to sex, whether married or single. He says to Mosho, *"Even holy men who are married can screw"* (p90). The men's sexual weakness accounts for the high number of prostitutes in *The Accusing Finger*,

epitomised by Enesi. While men like Mosho exploit prostitutes for sexual gratification, the likes of Gumbo, the pimp (p51), exploit them for economic gain.

Not only do the men of *The Accusing Finger* exploit women, they also have little regard for them as equal human beings. They feel superior to women, whom they perceive as petty. It is as if the only thing these men appreciate about women is sex. Mosho says of women: '*What was wrong with women anyway? You ask them a simple straightforward question and they start acting as if they have been walking barefoot on thorns*' (p 14).

Even in marriage, the men of *The Accusing Finger* have little, if any, respect for their wives, who are no better than the men's property at home; and like the property, they must stay in the house while the men pursue adventure and excitement abroad. The women's status in marriage is determined, reflected and symbolised by *lobola* or bride's price, which Mosho is asked to pay for Sibeso. To some men, paying *lobola* means owning the woman in the same way as their personal property such as furniture. She has little say, as is the case with Sianga's wife, who cannot do anything about her husband's bad behaviour; not even when he comes home in the small hours of the morning. Yet she is expected to fulfil her obligations as a wife, which include servicing the husband sexually.

To the average man in *The Accusing Finger*, therefore, sex should not tie a man to a woman, be it within or outside the conjugal bedroom. What happens between Mosho and Sibeso when she falls pregnant appears to be the norm: the woman points the 'accusing finger'; the man usually denies responsibility for the pregnancy. The denial is either sustained or is later reversed into a grudging admission. It is as if young men accused of making girls pregnant, whether correctly or falsely, follow a script - deny first and see if the accusation will die off.

This tendency is symptomatic of the men's perception of sex as a self-gratification trip. Women, according to Wina's men, are there to provide sexual gratification for

lustful men, not to provide unwanted children. In other words, the sex is not prompted by love, but lust on the man's part. Thus, women may be casually and heartlessly dumped when they get pregnant outside marriage. Hence Likando tells Mosho that a man '*can't afford to be emotionally involved with every woman he screws*' (p 64).

Changing Shadows generally exhibits the same biases in terms of images of women and men. In the novel, the women are generally portrayed as weaker physically, emotionally, intellectually and economically. The women of *Changing Shadows* are associated with gossip and inability to co-exist. After being expelled from school Mwila is worried about the village 'gossiping women' picking up the story (*Changing Shadows*, 1994: p13). Not even the old women of the village are free of gossip (p30). At a party in Chipoma Village, a poignant contrast is drawn between the nature of the discussions among the men and that among the women (p45):

'The men talked among themselves. They talked mostly about freedom under the new black government ...The women, grouped in one section, gossiped uninterruptedly.'

The contrast cannot be clearer: men *talk*, women *gossip*; men discuss issues such as political freedom, women discuss other people; they feast on trivialities. Thus, the women of *Changing Shadows* are divisive and divided, quarrelling over men and things. For example, Mwila and Musonda cannot share a home without quarrelling (p122); Mwila and Chongo fight over Kangwa and his property and are only restrained at his funeral (p232-3). This prompts one woman mourner to label the two rivals '*petty*' (p233). Women's rivalry is demonstrated at its worst towards the end of the novel when two rival groups of women demonstrators clash over cultural issues (p299).

The women of Musenge's world as projected in *Changing Shadows* are naïve, untrustworthy and associated with irresponsible behaviour. Their naivety makes it easy for them to be manipulated. Mwila, for example, is easily manipulated and

abused by Bwanga and Kangwa because of her naivety. For example, it takes some time before she realises that the favours from Kangwa are not without strings.

The women of *Changing Shadows* are vulnerable to the dangers of cultural erosion and man's machinations and schemes. This vulnerability finds its greatest expression in the life of Mwila as she adjusts to the changes in her life and environment. Lustful men take advantage of her vulnerability.

Mwila, however, is also vulnerable to manipulation by the likes of Musonda, a bad influence in the mold of the *femme fatale*. If Kangwa is the man most responsible for corrupting Mwila, Musonda is the woman whose influence drives Mwila into Kangwa's snare.

Mwila is transformed from a simple village girl into a sophisticated city woman with no claim to high moral ground. She joins the ranks of women who fit the bill of the untrustworthy. To Bwanga, no man should invest trust in a woman, "*Woman should be loved,*" he says, "*but not trusted!*" (p79).

The women of *Changing Shadows*, as epitomised by Mwila, are dependent on men for their economic and social survival. If Mwila and Chongo fight over Kangwa, it is because they both depend on and want his wealth. From the story we learn that Mwila '*knew that she owed her dramatic elevation in social status to none other than Kangwa*' (p206).

Mwila's interest in Kangwa's wealth and possessions gives her the image of a gold-digger. Mary, whom Bwanga dates for a while, also fits the gold-digger description. He considers her "*the most demanding materialistic girl*" (p108).

One of the reasons why the men of *Changing Shadows*, like those of *The Accusing Finger*, do not trust women is because they perceive them as double-crossers. Mwila is, like Sibeso, a double-crosser, at one time dating both Kangwa, a married man,

and Nkhata, an eligible bachelor. Ngoma perceives Musonda as a double-crosser (p211).

Women are also portrayed and perceived as emotionally weak. For example, women are perceived as more easily prone to weeping in a crisis or problem than men. Mwila and Chongo throw themselves to the ground in mourning Kangwa – something grieving men are not expected to do (p234). This is similar to what happens in *Ticklish Sensation* after the accident on the road from Chipata to Lusaka as Jojo and other passengers travel by bus. The women, like the children, exhibit emotional and physical weakness, leaving the leadership and solutions to the men folk.

As in *Ticklish Sensation* and *The Accusing Finger*, the greatest power the women of *Changing Shadows* hold over men is their sexual appeal. In this regard, Mwila falls in the *femme vampire* mold. She is a ‘witch’ who casts such a strong spell on Kangwa that he abandons his matrimonial home. She is like Tina of *Song of Lawino*, who destroys the marriage between Lawino and Ocol.

Mama Changa, the traditional healer in *Changing Shadows*, is an intimidating presence even to men (p195). Unlike the case in *Ticklish Sensation*, however, women are at the top of the school hierarchy of Kalonga Girls’ school which Mwila attends before expulsion. The two nuns, Sister Mary and Sister Theresa, wield a lot of authority, especially the latter, who is the Principal. However, the two women’s achievement somewhat diminishes in light of the fact that the school is a convent and therefore only nuns can run it. Perhaps, if it was not a girls’ Catholic school, they would not have run it. Mwila, as school head girl, also wields some degree of authority, but it is subject to the nuns, as is well demonstrated by the fact that they expel her.

Thus when Mwila is expelled and returns to the village community, her lowly and inconspicuous position in the pyramid of authority becomes evident. In the

patriarchal village, real authority and power are associated with men; weakness and subservience with women. To have power is to be a man, and vice versa. Thus, the village is run by a headman; women are subject to the authority and power of their husbands and, if unmarried, their brothers and fathers.

It is worth noting for example, that, when Mwila returns home after being expelled from school, Mulenga, her mother, is the first to know about the development. Yet, in recognition of her husband's place and authority, she says to Mwila, "*You'll tell me all about it when your father comes.*" Tradition demands that the father, as the head of the home, should be there when Mwila tells her full story.

Headmanship and fatherhood are not the only means by which men gain authority and power. Kangwa epitomises men whose wealth and status earns them power and authority. He also epitomises the image of the typical sugar daddy and manipulator of the female species. While Sister Theresa could be said to have abused her authority by wrongly expelling Mwila, men like Kangwa abuse their office and authority with impunity. Kangwa is regarded as '*a big-city bluffer, who grossly abused his position to cheat and exploit young girls*' (p70). Indeed Mwila falls prey to this cheating and exploitation.

Kangwa is also the ultimate image of men's lust. In this regard the men of *Changing Shadows* are no different from those of *Ticklish Sensation* and *The Accusing Finger*. If *Ticklish Sensation* explores men's lust, *The Accusing Finger* tolerates and glorifies it. Kangwa's ill-fated 'marriage' to Mwila is almost justified by the novel. If Mwila is portrayed as a gold-digger and husband grabber, Kangwa is a man driven by lust, like the men of *The Accusing Finger*. Thus, when he meets Mwila at the party, his eyes move '*down her neck on to her rounded and pointed breasts*' (p70).

Another man who, like Kangwa, uses his power and status to manipulate or exploit women is Simuchimba. He tries to use a job offer to draw Mwila into an illicit affair. However, when she refuses to have an affair with him, he does not give her

the job (pp 117-8). Male lust, however, is not the preserve of the moneyed and powerful, as is evident in *Ticklish Sensation* and *The Accusing Finger*. In *Changing Shadows*, Nkhata, who works in the personnel department of the Zambia Coffee Company, gets attracted to Mwila. He is not rich, although he is a 'tall young handsome man' (p134). Alone with Mwila in his house, he tries 'all the schoolboy tricks' to take Mwila to bed (p158).

As in *Ticklish Sensation* and *The Accusing Finger*, in cases where a man is left alone with a woman, except for cases where such woman is a relation, the man usually makes sexual advances. This is indeed the case between Bwanga and Mwila, and between Kangwa and Mwila. Bwanga's 'persistent passion' leads to sex with her (p86).

Men, in their role as husbands, are associated with authority and power over their wives. The man is expected to control the woman, to make decisions without being challenged by his wife. This explains why Kangwa's relatives cannot understand why Kangwa has to 'beg' for divorce from his wife, Chongo, in order to marry Mwila (p214). Driven by jealousy, Kangwa makes Mwila stop her work as a personal secretary (p215). Kangwa, it appears, knows the male species well enough to fear losing Mwila to another man. One woman, who is part of the crowd that witnesses the confrontation involving Kangwa, Chongo and Mwila, shouts, 'men are devils' (p230). Men are devils because they exploit and abuse women – that is the thrust of the statement. Men use women to satisfy their own selfish lust. Just like Moshu, Bwanga first denies being responsible for Mwila's pregnancy (p101). Then he shifts his stance to that of persuading her to abort the pregnancy (p103). Like Moshu, Bwanga wants sex, but is not prepared for any pregnancy resulting from the sexual act.

4.3.2 Gender Roles and Stereotypes

Gender roles in the three novels, *Ticklish Sensation*, *The Accusing Finger* and *Changing Shadows*, generally follow the same pattern as with the images. The roles

of male characters are generally superior to those of female characters. This is compounded by the fact that the three novels are weaved around male establishments which favour males over females.

The world of *Ticklish Sensation* is a patriarchal one, it is dichotomised on the basis of gender roles. It is a world in which the woman is inferior to the man and the inferiority is reflected in the gender roles. The roles are largely determined by what the man is and what he *has*; also, by what the woman *is* and what she *lacks*.

While there is a faint line of distinction of gender roles among children of both sexes, the differences become emphasised and conspicuous when the children grow into teenagers. For example, while young boys can share sleeping quarters with girls, when they become teenagers they can only share sleeping quarters with fellow teenage boys. The geographical separation also translates into gender terms. By spending more time with age mates of one's own gender, one begins to learn, absorb and live what is expected of one's gender.

Thus, for example, upon becoming a teenager Jojo moves into the 'House of wisdom' - a ramshackle hut he shares with three other boys, including the two Big Brothers, Tondo Jaulani and Pinto Bauleni, who are older and therefore more experienced than him. Through them, Jojo learns that the relationship between boys and girls is one of 'conqueror' and 'conquered', that the boy's or man's role in the relationship with girls or women is that of sexually 'enjoying' and 'conquering'.

The man's or boy's superior role extends to matters of physical strength and authority. For instance, Jojo is infuriated by the fact that Kinki, instead of submitting to him and giving him the 'ticklish sensation', slaps him and calls him a swine. '*How could a woman reduce my dignity like that?*' he asks.

In the marriage context, the man is expected to control and lead the woman as a wife and mother. He orders, she obeys; he demands, she submits. It is therefore a

husband's duty to ensure that his wife is obedient and submissive. For example, when Dan Jere, Jojo's cousin, discovers that his wife is mistreating Jojo, he beats her (p68).

As in Achebe's novel, however, the man in *Ticklish Sensation* has the duty of feeding his family. Thus, in the world of *Ticklish Sensation* manhood is measured not only in terms of sexual prowess and material possessions, but also in terms of ability to control the women folk and to provide for one's wife or wives and children. The man's control or authority also extends to his children. It is his duty to discipline them. For example, Solomon is expected, by the village and Jojo himself, to discipline Jojo for fighting with Kinki over her breasts. Solomon's strictness as a disciplinarian earns him the nickname 'Thunderbolt' from his children.

However, it is also the father's role to ensure a good future for his children especially in terms of providing an education. Solomon does everything within his means to ensure that Jojo, despite being wayward, gets a good education. So concerned is he that, despite his toughness and roughness, he literally goes on his knees to convince Tenthani Mulilo, the Headmaster of the Chewa Upper School, to give a place to Jojo (p69).

In *Ticklish Sensation*, men are also expected to 'protect' the women folk. Women folk in this case may be wives, sisters, mothers, or children. When Kaponga, Lise's brother, thinks there is a thief on the premises, he feels duty bound to go out and deal with the situation (p118).

In the actual Chewa society, which is matrilineal, the men on the mother's side (maternal uncle, brothers, nephews, etc) are supposed to play the role of the 'responsible relative' (*nkhoswe*) by guarding their females.

In the context of the novel, in any difficult, intimidating or dangerous situation, men are expected to have the courage and strength to rise to the occasion. The man has a duty to remain calm and brave. For instance, when Jojo and other passengers on Nkhuku Kwela's bus find themselves in a precarious situation, it is the men's role to make the women and children feel protected; it is their duty to take control of the situation.

Generally, women in *Ticklish Sensation* play subservient and 'inferior' roles to those of men: they stand back and let the men take the leading roles; while men's societal roles are generally visible and significant, women's are generally passive, less significant and in some cases even invisible.

Roles of women in *Ticklish Sensation* include carrying out of the day-to-day household chores such as cooking for the family and for their husbands (p13). Thus, this is a role they play both as wives and mothers. It is a chore they learn to do even before they marry. Another chore women learn when they are still young is that of pounding maize to make mealie meal for cooking *nshima*. For example, on the day Jojo has his fight with Kinki, he sees girls 'pounding corn in mortars, their pestles rising and sinking alternately like rods of those drilling machines which bore wells' (p26). Pounding maize is a skill which has to be acquired from older women.

The women of *Ticklish Sensation* are also associated with the daily chore of drawing water from the well – as is the case with Keterina Dumbo (p45). This is another duty they have to carry out both as wives and mothers. As mothers, their primary role is that of nurturing the children and ensuring that they grow according to expectation. This explains why Jojo's mother gets concerned when she realises he is 'mad' about the ticklish sensation. When he goes to the extent of lusting after Keterina, Stefano's wife, she intervenes and advises him (pp51-2). Similarly, when Tinto, Jojo's younger brother, develops an insatiable appetite for food, she gets concerned and reports his conduct to Solomon (p13).

When the woman of *Ticklish Sensation* grows old and is unable to cut wood, pound maize, or draw water, her role becomes advisory. (In Chewa society, an old woman is fondly referred to as 'agogo' or 'ambuya') She is perceived as a reservoir of experience and wisdom. Loliwe Kuzwe, Jojo's grandmother, plays the role of advisor and mentor (p7), which is why when he fights with Kinki because of her refusal to allow him to touch her breasts, Loliwe intervenes to defuse the tension. She has no inhibitions about offering him her breasts.

Some of the gender roles in the novel are stereotypes of what is expected of males and females. For example, drawing water and pounding maize, in the world of *Ticklish Sensation*, cannot be expected to be done by a male.

However, the stereotypical approach to the treatment of gender roles by the author is even reflected in the fact that the author, in some cases, does not even bother to mention or show the gender of a character. The occupation is mentioned, the gender is only implied. In other words, the author or narrator assumes that the reader or audience 'knows' the gender of the character. Normally, this assumption derives from what obtains in real life because of gender role stereotyping.

Thus, for instance, after the bus accident caused by Nkhuku Kwela, law enforcement officers, variously referred to as 'the police' and 'police officers' arrive on the scene and ask questions, after which they leave (pp89-90). We are not told whether they are male or female officers, yet it is obvious that the narrator assumes that we, the audience, 'know' they are male. The narrator assumes that 'police officers' are male; that, if a female police officer is involved, the term would be qualified to read 'female police officer'. As it is, the police force, in *Ticklish Sensation*, is associated with men.

Similarly, the job of bus driver is associated with men. Thus, while we are clearly told that Nkhuku Kwela is male, we are not told the gender of two other bus drivers (p76 and p96) who come after the accident. Again, the narrator assumes we know

the drivers are men. In the world of *Ticklish Sensation*, it is difficult to imagine a woman as a bus driver.

The situation is not different in Nyambe Wina's *The Accusing Finger*, which is built around a male dominated world in which women generally play inferior, subservient and insignificant roles; in some cases their roles are 'invisible' and go unacknowledged.

One of the more visible, yet negative, roles of women in Wina's world of sex, infidelity and pleasure-seeking is that of satisfying the sexual lust of men. This is the case not only when the woman is a sex worker, but also when she is not. Thus, Sibeso, Naomi and a host of other non-prostitutes, in this regard, play the same role as Enesi and other prostitutes. As in the case of *Ticklish Sensation*, the women of *The Accusing Finger* only find their ultimate 'honourable' roles in the context of marriage, when they become wives and mothers. As wives, they are dependent and subservient to their husbands. As mothers they have to do their best to supplement their husband's role as breadwinner. Thus, for example, Mosho says his grandmother, 'like the other women in the village', has a *sitapa* or garden where she 'mostly grew maize, sweet potatoes and cassava' (p16).

Every married woman is expected to (know how to) cook for her husband and children. Men may learn how to cook because of the circumstances of bachelorhood, as is the case with Mosho (p42), but, as soon as they marry, that role is taken up exclusively by their wives. Despite her sophistication and 'liberated' status, Naomi believes every woman should know how to cook. Thus, when Mosho tells her he had never associated her with cooking, Naomi's answer is quite revealing. 'Oh dear! Next you'll say that I am not a woman. Any woman should know how to cook in our society. There're some men who prefer their wives rather than servants to cook for them you know' (p78). Naomi knows that if she is to fulfill her role as wife, she needs to know how to cook.

A woman also needs to know how to look after her children, right from the time they are babies. For this reason, when Naomi gives birth, she stays at her parents' farm for a while so that, as expected by tradition, her mother can help her learn how to take care of the baby (p164).

In *Ticklish Sensation*, therefore, being a mother is an important role. However, the novel also introduces the 'mother' trope. During the discussion of Sibeso's pregnancy case Mosho's uncle refers to Sibeso as "*our mother*" (p19). Motherhood, in this case, is figurative, not literal. It is a show of respect.

Being a husband and a father, on the other hand, implies having 'superior', significant and more visible roles. This is because the two roles carry with them a lot of authority and power. The husband controls his wife; the father, equally, controls his children. It is precisely because of fatherly authority that Langani Sakala, Naomi's father, tries to stop her relationship with Mosho, whom he considers unfit to marry his daughter. Similarly, Mosho describes his father as having an '*authoritative voice*' (p27). Even his grandfather, playing the guardian's role, exercises his authority by means of a whip (p17).

Fatherhood, in the context of the novel, however, also entails being a provider. Hence Langani Sakala helps his daughter, Naomi, to develop her business (pp58-9). Similarly, Molly manages to obtain a master's degree in psychology because of being sponsored for studies in England by her lawyer father (p62). In other words, fathers are supposed to be concerned about the welfare and development of their children. Which is why Mosho's father, concerned and 'anxious' about his son's bachelorhood, takes it upon himself to pay the *lobola* to Sibeso's family (p86).

Not only is a man expected to provide for his children and secure their future, he is, in the first place, expected to prove his manhood by fathering them. If a man's role, in the marriage, is to ensure that he makes his wife pregnant, he is expected to prove himself sexually. Mosho tells Naomi that he had a relationship with Sibeso merely

because he wanted to prove his manhood: *“I wanted to show that I was not useless. I wanted to show them that like most people I was also important and could make a human being and take care of him”* (p132). The man’s ultimate role, therefore is, in the context of marriage, as a husband and father. To Ted’s father, therefore, *“a man hasn’t grown or experienced life unless he has married”* (p63).

Once married, a man is expected to run his home and family according to expectation. He must be seen to be in charge. This is the advice Mosho’s father gives his son as part of preparing him for marriage – right on the eve of his marriage to Sibeso: *“Tomorrow you close a chapter of your life and begin a new one. The whole family will await to see how you fare. No man worth his name must fail to run and put his house in order”* (p93). A man should bravely face difficulties because being a man, as Mosho reasons, *‘is not easy’* (p83).

Part of the responsibility of running the home means that the man must keep his woman in her rightful place - looking after the kids, cooking or gardening. As Molly puts it: *“... the husband can always say your place is with your children and in the home and the poor woman would oblige. So she stays home and goes to the market so that she can prepare a delicious dinner for the husband who is busy swallowing litres of Mosi. He comes home, eats and makes love to his wife and the pattern is repeated the following day. Why can’t the man’s place be with the kids and the kitchen or the garden?”* (p63). Generally speaking, then, the man is expected to be outdoors in the night, while the woman is expected to be indoors.

This agrees with Mosho’s observation: *‘It seemed the men were now used to staying away from their homes and families. Monday to Friday the men flocked to the offices and put in an 8-hour day of work. Over the weekend when they were supposed to stay with their families they preferred to stay away. They gathered in one place and clutched glasses of beer firmly in their hands as if they were their lovers’* (p 10). Thus, Sianga’s wife complains that Sianga spends more time socialising with his army friends than he does with her (p11).

One of the stereotyped gender roles in *The Accusing Finger* is that of the nursing profession, which is associated with being a woman. The reader is expected to 'know' that a nurse is a woman, even without the use of a gender-marker. This is the case when the narrator talks about his ordeal in hospital.

'The nurses were sympathetic towards me because my story had spread like wild fire all over the hospital. I was like a museum piece which everyone was eager to see. Nurses asked me what I was going to do about my wife. I told them I was not going to do anything apart from asking for a divorce.

"You know, we're not all like that," one nurse consoled me. "All women are not bad." I looked at her and said nothing. I was too tired to care about the female race' (pp125-6).

When the narrator uses the terms 'nurse' and 'nurses', he does not gender-mark them. As it turns out, he assumes we know the terms refer to women. This is because he refers to the nurse as 'her'. Therefore, the nurses are women.

This conclusion becomes even more justified when we compare the use of the term 'nurse' to the use of the terms 'waiter' and 'waitress'. Whenever 'waiter' is used it refers to a man (pp 55, 57); but whenever 'waitress' is used, it refers to a woman. The two terms, unlike 'nurse', are gender-marked. However, nursing is, even in real life, generally associated with the image of a woman.

In Musenge's *Changing Shadows*, the situation is not different from what obtains in *Ticklish Sensation* and *The Accusing Finger*. In fact, in the context of Mwila's village, gender roles are spelt out from an early age through an elaborate system of social engineering. Both men and women know their lot; males and females know their roles. Grown men, for example, discuss issues in the *nsaka*, 'a village shelter made of a few wooden poles, with a grass-thatched roof' (p14). Girls and women, like all children below the age of nine, are not allowed in the *nsaka*. After the age of nine, however, boys are allowed to eat from the *nsaka* and learn from the men. The *nsaka* is also the place for 'nurturing and initiating the youngsters to manhood' (p14). The sex divisions are only broken in such cases as during the village dances

(p46). One of the roles of men in the village is to develop boys into men. Fatherhood also entails ability to run one's home.

In the village, boys and girls generally have different chores. Thus, for example, while boys pluck off the feathers of chickens (p17), girls, like women, draw water from the village, clean their homes and cook. They also help harvest crops (p18). Male children, especially the first born, are perceived as the hope of every family. In other words, a male child, once grown, is expected to play the role of provider for the family. Girls like Mwila are not expected to play such a role because they can get married. Thus, Kasongo, Mwila's brother, is the family's only hope (p20). Educating a boy is an investment, educating a girl a waste of money. In fact, there is even a view that educated girls are '*immoral*' (p 24).

A woman is expected to get married and bear children. Thus, when Mwila is expelled from school, her mother, Mulenga, begins to push for her to get married, especially because the girl has the ability to work – to cook, sew and above all bear children (p 31). It is only Chansa's authority as husband and father that saves Mwila from marrying Chisunka (pp 29-31). The intervention of Kasongo, her brother, also helps (p 30).

As a wife, a woman is also expected to be a very good cook – essentially because she has to please her husband. Thus, one of the key roles of a married woman, apart from bearing children, is to make sure her husband enjoys her food. Thus, for example, Mwenya Mwila's aunt believes that the way to her husband's heart is '*through his stomach and not by kisses*' (p 55). Motherhood is a highly exalted status. Thus, a woman in a mother's role is under pressure to meet societal expectations. A mother nurtures and cares for her children – and in this sense gains respect, if she brings them up satisfactorily.

The 'mother' trope, however, is also present in *Changing Shadows*. Chansa refers to Mwila, his daughter, as 'mother', for two reasons: first because she is named after

his mother (pp 15, 16); second, as ‘*a traditional sign of respect*’ (p 14). Also, Bwalya admonishes Kasongo to treat his new wife, Mumbi, as his ‘*new mother*’ (p 191). There is also a ‘father’ trope: Mwila’s mother refuses to ride on the same vehicle with Kangwa, whom she regards as her ‘*father*’ (p 219). As a husband, a man is expected to use his authority to keep his wife under control. A good wife is expected to be ‘*obedient to her husband*’ (p 190), as Mukasa says at the wedding of Mumbi, his daughter, and Kasongo. Despite being Mumbi’s father, Mukasa presents Kasongo with a whip – a symbol, in effect, of a husband’s power and authority over his wife. “*Brook no nonsense from your woman,*” he says to Kasongo. “*Correct her when she goes out of line*” (p 190).

It is interesting that a father would literally give his daughter’s husband the licence to beat his wife – for that is what it means to ‘correct’ her. However, in reality husbands generally carry a ‘whip’ with which to correct their wives when they fall ‘out of line’. Mukasa was only frank and open enough; crude, perhaps, but truthful in as far as marriage is concerned, in a general sense.

If being a wife and mother is the ultimate role of a woman, being a husband and father is the ultimate role of a man. Thus, by marrying, Kasongo is considered to have reached his ‘*full maturity*’ in society (p 191).

Mutati’s funeral provides us with a vista through which to see gender roles in *Changing Shadows*. Upon her death ‘*strong young men*’ are dispatched on bicycles to spread the news to neighbouring villages (p 197). Also, the young men fetch firewood. All the men sit outside the funeral house, while the women mourn inside the house. There is a clear contrast between the mood outside and the one inside (p 199). Women are expected to mourn and sing songs; men are expected to sit and chat:

‘The men were casually cracking jokes and relating old tales as if nothing had happened. It crossed Kasongo’s mind that whereas men were brave and responsible, women were emotional and caring. He remembered the old saying

"Women will break down at your funeral while men crack jokes outside"
(p199).

Only elderly women attend to Mutati's corpse, and it is them who lead the mourning. However, her coffin is made by specially selected men with the guidance of the village carpenter. Also, it is the men who dig the grave (p 2000). Elderly women have a role to play, especially when they are also grandmothers. As mothers, however, they are expected to help their daughters nurture their first baby. Thus, Mwila's mother moves in with her when she delivers her first child (p 219); similarly, Naomi is helped by her mother in *The Accusing Finger*. And when Mwila's baby is born, an old woman buries the umbilical cord in a secret place (pp 222-3) as part of tradition.

Village life in *Changing Shadows* is filled with tradition. However, since the tradition is man-centred, it generally works to the disadvantage of women. Thus, for example, in order to go to the United Kingdom for studies, Mwila first has to be 'cleansed' and permitted by Kangwa's family, being his widow (p246 ff). She is eventually allowed to go after obstacles are cleared. On the other hand, Chongo, Kangwa's other widow, agrees to marry Bwembya, Kangwa's brother – if only to remain in possession of the deceased's wealth (pp 269-70).

As in the other two novels, there are some assumptions on gender roles in *Changing Shadows*. The narrator's perspectives on the nursing and driver's professions are interesting, as illustrated by the following:

'Six months later Kasongo arrived at the village. He came in a government Land-Rover and was escorted by the driver and a male nurse from the hospital'
(p 22).

It is worth noting that 'driver' has no gender-marker whereas 'nurse' does. In other words, the narrator assumes that the audience *knows* that drivers are male, or that this particular one is male. On the other hand, 'male nurse' presupposes that nurses are generally female – hence the gender marker. The following passage is also of interest:

'... the driver was caught at a police road-block near Serenje and he was taken back to Lusaka. When the police forced the case open they found several bundles of cannabis and dagga stuck in old clothes' (p 113).

As elsewhere in the novel 'driver' has no gender marker, so we *know* the character is a man. The passage also demonstrates the narrator's assumption that the reader need not be told that the 'police' in this case are male.

4.3.3 Language and Gender

Being a social product and a social instrument of communication, language plays a vital role in the determination of matters of gender.

In *Ticklish Sensation*, the author's writing style betrays a male perspective. This is most pronounced in the expressions and words used by the author when describing characters of either sex. Generally, the description of male characters focuses on the unpleasant and musculature, while the description of female characters focuses on their sexuality or sexual appeal.

Below are some descriptions of male characters in *Ticklish Sensation*.

(a) *'I had never seen this man walking straight. His head was always in front. His mouth carried thick lips which we thought weighed more than several blocks of lead. We said he was not able to walk upright owing to this burden. Some people said he ate too much human flesh that fattened his month. He had a very large nose that appeared out of place...'* (p38).

(b) *'The driver of the bus, a short, sturdy man with a pleasant face but ferocious looking eyes, leapt down ...'* (p93).

Clearly, these two descriptions do not portray male characters in good light. There is nothing desirable about the two characters thus described, and because the author and narrators are both male, they have no interest in the erotic appeal of the characters.

This style of characterisation stands in sharp contrast to the style applied when describing key female characters – especially those, who, in the context of the

'flower' trope, are still fresh and attractive. The description tends to be sensual, betraying a male perspective. In other words, the style is epitomic of the way males generally perceive women – as sex objects to be admired, evaluated and 'enjoyed'.

There are a number of examples:

'And then that girl. I shall not forget her. They called her Kinki Salamu. Voluptuous, supposed to have been born on "the day God was happiest". Huge, undulating bust, fat legs, white eyes. Those were the whitest eyes I had ever seen. Rumour had it that one could draw milk from them, that instead of tears, milk poured down her cheeks when she cried ... Her buttocks fascinated me most. I always imagined that instead of flesh, there was some sort of jelly under her rear skin. Whenever she walked fast, I feared that her bottom would fall off' (pp1-2).

Jojo's interest in Kinki's body is clearly limited to sexual fantasy and conquest. Apart from her bust, eyes and buttocks, he is interested in her breasts, which he describes as *'swollen like large boils'* (p3). He also describes Kinki as *'a heap of exquisite flesh'* (p29). Of course Jojo's preoccupation with the sexuality and sexual appeal of a woman's body is acquired due to his association with the two Big Brothers in the House of Wisdom. Every night Tondo and Pinto share stories and experiences regarding their conquests. They talk *'about breasts, about buttocks, about legs, about eyes, about beads, about lips ... ticklish sensation...'* (p22). Jojo describes Lise thus:

'She was tallish, light-skinned and shy. Her face was something that was neither pretty nor ugly. Her shy smile sometimes made me feel she was an imbecile and also a normal person at the same time. But, strangely enough, as time went on I began to think she was attractive. I liked her large bust, well-concealed under her blue uniform, the hem-line of which went far below her knees and hide half her well-built legs...' (p101).

Watching 'pretty girls' come to the bridge over the Kiore stream, Jojo says of them: *'I always got delighted in staring at their protruding torsos as they bent down, picking up pebbles and rocks. Their firm-looking breasts were like immature conical hillocks placed side by side on their chests'* (p139).

Jojo also describes Meeky Banda as a *'plump'* girl and as *'desirable and unresisting'* (p162).

Wina's *The Accusing Finger*, like *Ticklish Sensation*, betrays a male perspective in the use of language, particularly the description of male and female characters. As in *Ticklish Sensation*, for example, the author's (narrator's) focus in describing female characters is on their sexuality, whereas for male characters the focus is on the masculinity.

The descriptions of Sianga and Naomi illustrate this point. Sianga is described thus by Mosho:

'He was a big man with a broad chest but because of his weight he did not look very tall. Actually we were almost the same height of 1.87 metres. The only difference is I am very slim and at times I have been called skinny by some people' (pp 6-7).

Naomi's description, by contrast, goes like this:

'She was a stunning young woman, a bit on the tall side, narrow of waist and real rounded hips that left a lump at the bottom of your gut because you thought you were not going to get anywhere near those hips and legs. Her face was oval with a rather pouting mouth and dimpled cheeks. Her eyes were ... rather amused as if she was laughing at you all the time. It was her nose however that was dominant. It was not so large or anything, rather, it was a proud one. Right from the start I could tell that the girl was class. No wonder John had come rushing in the dark-room. She wore a blue silk dress with a slit at the side that showed enough of her left thigh just to send you dreaming again. Her breasts stood out jutting right in front of you and you could tell that they were firm under that dress' (p39).

It is clear the two descriptions are from the male perspective – little interest in the man, more interest in the woman. The musculature of the man sticks out; for Naomi, it is her sexual appeal that sticks out. The only common element in the two descriptions is the height – both Sianga and Naomi are tall.

The description of Naomi, apart from being more elaborate than Sianga's, is similar in areas of interest to the description of Kinki Salamu, in *Ticklish Sensation*. The

narrator in *The Accusing Finger*, like the narrator in *Ticklish Sensation*, is preoccupied with women's face, breasts, nose, mouth, thighs, legs and hips. These are also the areas of interest of the male characters in the two novels especially the protagonists, Jojo and Mosho.

Deeper analysis of Naomi's description reveals that the description is not only from a male perspective but also shaped by male perception. It is also obvious that the description is for the benefit of the male ego and sexual inclinations.

The last part of Naomi's description elegantly illustrates this fact: '*...showed enough of her left thigh just to send you dreaming again. Her breasts stood out jutting in front of you and you could tell ...*' The picture is clear: 'you' refers to a man. Naomi is an object for the pleasure of the man's eyes. The assumption is that any man who looks at Naomi would be sexually captivated: '*... left a lump at the bottom of your gut because you thought you were not going to get anywhere near those hips and legs...*' Again, the woman is reduced to the same level as a 'consumable' item.

Sibeso like Naomi is perceived as a consumable – in the sexual sense – going by how Mosho describes her: "*You have such a beautiful ... profile ... really you are beautiful*" (p 2). This description sounds 'normal', probably because the words are spoken directly to Sibeso. However, when Mosho describes her later, to the reader, he says:

'She opened her mouth very little when she spoke but her voice came out loud and clear. She was tall and dark in complexion. Her face was oval and she was quite good-looking if not pretty. Her dress was simple and it clung to her body like a second skin. She was one of those girls you had to look at twice just to make sure you were not dreaming' (p 14).

The narrator is more drawn toward Naomi, as illustrated by the fact that he is more generous in his physical description of her. Elsewhere, when he visits Naomi's home, he says of her: '*She was still the same cheerful self. The pouting mouth, dimpled cheeks, amused eyes and those hips... she looked simple and pleasant but desirable at the same time ...*' (p76). She is 'desirable', like a consumable. The

narrator only departs from the sensual description when describing a woman of no sexual significance or one who falls in the mold of the 'withered flower' trope. For example, Patricia is thus described: '*She was a tall woman, light in complexion and heavy boned*' (p136). Enesi the prostitute, whom Mosho meets after many years, is now 'finished' – a withered flower without the original attractiveness and lustre. Mosho describes her thus:

'Her bosom was heavier and the breasts just looked shapeless like a bag of sugar lying horizontally so that you could not see the division between the two breasts. Her waistline had become thicker so that fat spread to the sides of her buttocks as she sat on the chair. I looked at her younger companions and wondered what I was doing with a washed-out prostitute who had nearly caused my death.' (p142).

Male characters are not described in the 'consumable' mold although musculature can make a man 'desirable' to women. To a male narrator writing from the male perspective, however, the man's sexual appeal is not an issue. For example, Mosho's description of his father, though emphasising his masculinity, does not portray him as sexually desirable:

'My father had an aura of strength about him. I do not know whether this had anything to do with his being a policeman or not. He was not a very strongly built man like uncle Sianga. He was tall and rather thin but he carried himself extremely well and with the agility of a leopard ready to pounce at an opponent any time. He was dark in complexion and had wrinkles of the world before him. However, he was not an unkind man. You soon came to notice this with his easy smile that relaxes his face' (p92).

In *Changing Shadows*, tallness is generally associated with beauty in women and handsomeness in men. As in *Ticklish Sensation*, however, a light skin is associated with beauty and sexuality in women. For example, Mwila is described by the narrator as 'tall, light-skinned and naturally beautiful' (p 3). Elsewhere she is described as 'the tall dark-haired Mwila' (p 78). Mulenga, Mwila's mother, is more a picture of a 'withering flower'. The narrator says of her: 'At fifty-eight, Mulenga still looked beautiful even though her physique was now more prominent' (p 43).

The male perspective, however, also sticks out in some character descriptions. For example: '*He held both her hands and pulled her gently towards himself. His lips*

met hers – they were medium sized and well shaped and before she realised what was happening, they were kissing fervently' (p 84).

The description of the lips is from a male perspective – how a man would look at a woman. Who would be interested in the size of a woman's lips if not a man about to kiss her? And who but a man would be interested in whether or not the woman's lips are 'well shaped'? Bwanga, like the boys in *Ticklish Sensation* and the men in *The Accusing Finger*, sees a woman's lips as sexual objects. Like Jojo, he is interested in a woman's eyes. He says to Mwila during the encounter described above: '*You have such lovely large brown eyes; they shine like a morning star*' (p 78).

There is also a case of male perspective intrusion in the way the narrator describes a singer in a social club to which Kangwa and Mwila go for entertainment while in London:

'After having eaten a delicious meal, and mellowed by the smooth red wine, Mwila became very excited in anticipation of the unexpected entertainment. She clapped easily as a brunette appeared on the stage, but gasped at the sight of her nakedness, for the singer was wearing a most revealing dress. It was very tight and emphasised her good figure. The voice of the singer was quite low and rather husky, which in itself was very sexy. Her hair was dark and long and a few strands fell suggestively across her bosom. Her shoulders were bare and her dress was held up by the mere trace of a strap over them. The singer's movements were graceful and sexually suggestive.' (p 226)

The passage is supposed to reflect Mwila's perspective – as a woman watching another woman. However, expressions such as '*emphasised her good figure*' betray a male perspective intruding in a female perspective. This is possibly because the author, being male, narrates the story from the perspective of a male narrator. A woman's dressing can only be 'suggestive' – that is, sexually – to a male beholder.

On the other hand, the narrator's description of male characters shows no hint of female sexual perspective. There is no interest in the male characters' sexual appeal. The following examples illustrate the point:

- *The boy was Kunda, tall and handsome* (p 40).
- *... a fat and smartly dressed man* (p 41).
- *A tall slim man* (p 59).
- *An elderly but smartly dressed bald-headed gentleman ... He was tall and carried his pot belly happily* (p 69).
- *... a tall handsome man* (p 76).
- *He was fat and strongly built* (p 81).
- *... a thin, tall policeman* (p 81).
- *...ugly fat waiter* (p 93).

There is no mention, in all these descriptions, of a ‘good figure’, ‘good shape’, ‘well shaped lips’, colour or beauty of eyes, shape or size of hips, appearance of thighs. We mostly read of height, musculature, body size, among others.

4.3.4 Gender Stratification

An analysis of the gender stratification in the three novels further confirms the findings of the analyses of the portrayal of men and women as well as the gender roles – that men have a more privileged position than women.

Ticklish Sensation creates a male-dominated world, which to a large extent reflects the facts of life as it was in Zambia during the period covered by the story. The number of male characters is much more than that of the female characters. The novel is heavily populated with male characters.

Generally speaking the males have higher social status and are better off economically than the females. Granted, because of the fact that a lot of the action takes place in the school context, there are quite a number of school children, both male and female.

In the school hierarchies, however, the highest position a woman holds is that of teacher. All the principals and head teachers in the novel are male: Tenthani Mulilo,

- *The boy was Kunda, tall and handsome* (p 40).
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Chewa Upper School (p27); Grey Haamwanza, Mazabuka Upper School (p99); Principal Chizongwe Secondary School (p166); Walela School head teacher (p176). Lona Gumbo of the Chewa Upper School is the only woman character among the teachers (p72).

In the village hierarchy, the only chief mentioned in the novel, Kandodo, is male (p52). As husbands and fathers, men are ranked above women, whose significance is only in terms of being wives and mothers. Housewives include Elena, Jojo's mother and Keterina Dumbo. There are housewives living in the town such as Nina Jere, wife to Dan Jere, Jojo's cousin (p67). The main occupation of the village men is that of peasant; but they have more power and authority than their women.

There are those among the peasants who once worked in town or in the mines in Harare; one such character is Solomon. Jojo, on the other hand, grows from a mere village school boy to an information officer, a Government position at Fort Jameson. Although there is an implication that Ten Phiri and Dan Jere work, we are not told the nature of their work.

However, we are told what other men do for their work: James Bowa is a teacher (p76), but all the drivers are men (Nkhuku Kwela, p81; another bus driver, p93); the bus conductor is a man (p83). Similarly, the traffic officers are men (p94), as is the preacher in the Seventh Day Adventist Church (p190). Thus, among all the women characters, only Lona Gumbo earns a steady income as a teacher. The only other woman who 'earns' a living is Na-Mulenga, Lise's mother, who is in fact a 'sex worker' (p 120).

As in *Ticklish Sensation*, the men in *The Accusing Finger* are generally of higher social and economic status than women; they generally are more associated with positions of authority than the women. The uppermost bracket of the rich and powerful has men such as Langani Sakala, Naomi's father, a farmer and businessman; Ronald Munga, Minister of Industry and Trade (p144). Like his

father, Zumbo Sakala, Naomi's brother, is an influential and well-to-do person. By virtue of being Langani's daughter, Naomi is the only woman in the novel who comes anywhere close to the high and mighty. Behind her success in business, however, is her father's looming figure.

There are a number of middle class men, including Chimfwembe, Editor-in-Chief of the *Daily Star* (p147), a doctor at the University Teaching Hospital (p116); the Headmaster of Munali Secondary School (p28); army captains Lubinda and Mumba (p11); Mongu Chief Inspector of Police, Gilbert Pumulo (p3); Mongu Provincial Agricultural Officer Julian Sianga (p5); Assistant Accountant Patrick Mufaya (p27); expatriate teacher Peter Taylor and freelance journalist Mosho.

Like Taylor, Sibeso is a secondary school teacher and therefore part of the middle class. Other middle class women include Clare Sianga, a nurse; Mabel Kalinda, a journalist; Cecilia Banda and other nurses at UTH (pp116-7), *inter alia*. However, there are more male characters in the middle class category than female. At the base of the pyramid can be found women such as waitresses in bars, marketeers such as Patricia, Tom's wife (p136), dancing queens for a band, sex workers, cashiers, school girls such as the sisters to Naomi and Sibeso; Rhoda Sitali the maid, and Grace Mwiya the typist (p15).

On the male characters' side, the lower rungs have a fisherman (p1), barman, *Mishanga* boys (p30), taxi drivers and waiters; John Tembo the studio assistant, schoolboys and Isaac Lungu, Mosho's house servant (p142).

In *Changing Shadows*, the highest positions are the preserve of male characters; most low-profile characters are female. In other words, from the economic point of view, the novel is reflective of the realities of Zambian society: men have the economic power. Thus, for example, in *Changing Shadows* it is men like Kangwa who hold the economic and social power. As Under Secretary at the Ministry of Science and Technology, and later Full Permanent Secretary, Kangwa is a highly

paid high profile civil servant. Other male characters on the higher side of the social-economic pyramid include the Police Commissioner; Banda, Personnel Manager for a manufacturing company based in Kafue; Chungu, a member of the Main Committee; Mwila's brother Kasongo, among others.

On the side of female characters, only women like Sister Theresa, Principal of Kalonga Girls' School, can be said to be on the 'high' side of the social ladder, although, as a nun, she is economically insignificant. While Chongo, Kangwa's wife, can be said to have some degree of economic power because she is a businesswoman, it is prudent to note that her 'high' status is, in essence, an appendage of and dependent on Kangwa's status. If she is wealthy, it is only because of Kangwa - which explains why, after his death, she desperately fights to get the lion's share of his wealth and property.

With so many men in positions of power and authority, a male establishment is created which has the capacity to control, manipulate and frustrate women. Thus, generally speaking, women need men to rise in the midst of the establishment. Women are generally there to oil the male establishment. They are secretaries of powerful men, for example – and Mwila herself, as personal secretary, suits the bill. In fact, Mwila gets her first job courtesy of Kangwa's connections within the male establishment. Kangwa is so powerful and so well-placed that a phone call to Banda is enough to get Mwila a job.

Women in *Changing Shadows*, therefore, as in real life, are generally dependent on and vulnerable to the male establishment. Thus powerful men find it easy to sexually exploit women in need. They can offer them jobs or money in exchange for sexual, and often illicit, affairs. This is precisely the situation in which Mwila finds herself. With little education, she is vulnerable to the lustful manipulation of Kangwa, who not only finds her a job and a home, but also transforms her from a village girl to a sophisticated metropolitan woman. Only after he dies and she loses

her possessions does Mwila realise that she needs to arm herself with a good education if she is to have any chance of survival in a male-dominated society.

4.3.5 Race and Gender

Race adds a new dimension to the question of women's role as well as relations between man and woman. In the pre-colonial period, being a white woman entailed being superior to both men and women from the black African populace. Thus, while the African man, as demonstrated above, was superior to and controlled his wife, he was considered inferior to white people, including white woman. In *Ticklish Sensation*, when Solomon takes his family to Salisbury to work, he is subjected to the injustices of the colonial system of institutionalised racism (pp65-6). As an African man he is emasculated by racism and can exercise no authority over a white woman the way he does over an African woman. On the contrary, the white woman has power over him.

CHAPTER FIVE

5.0 ANALYSIS OF FEMALE-AUTHORED TEXTS

5.1 Introduction

This chapter will focus on the analysis of the three female-authored works reviewed in Chapter Four: *Behind the Closed Door* by Susan Chitabanta, *The Fight for Justice* by Josephine Bwalya Muchelemba and *Picking up the Pieces* by Maliya Mzyece Sililo. Through paratextual, intratextual and intertextual analysis, similarities and differences among the three novels will be identified.

5.2 Paratextual Analysis

Unlike the male-authored texts, the female-authored texts cannot all be said to project the male perspective, at least in terms of the cover illustrations and the titles. While the cover illustration for *Behind the Closed Door* is male-centred, the cover illustration for *The Fight for Justice* is female-centred, and that for *Picking up the Pieces* focuses on both male and female.

Like *Changing Shadows* Chitabanta's *Behind the Closed Door* has a female protagonist, Florence. Unlike *Changing Shadows*, however, the cover of *Behind the Closed Door* is dominated by the profile of a male face. It is safe to assume that the face reflects the experience or fate of Frederick Musonda, Florence's husband, who is murdered under bizarre circumstances. When the police find his corpse, the lips and nose are missing – cut off by the killer. The lips of the face on the cover are cut off.

Thus, while the protagonist of *Behind the Closed Door* is Florence, Fred's role is so prominent that he sometimes appears to be a co-protagonist. The front cover is therefore masculinised, as if Fred's story is more important than Florence's.

Indeed, upon reading the story, one is left feeling that the more interesting life is Fred's and not Florence's. In Fred we see the story of a young man who outgrows his animal self to become a loving husband and father; he is transformed, through Florence's timely

intervention, from a reckless, irresponsible, godless gangster into a responsible, god-fearing literature evangelist.

In the blurb, an attempt is made to focus the reader's attention on Florence:

'Florence is an innocent devout Christian. She gets formally engaged to Henry, a handsome young man and son of a pastor, who shortly afterwards leaves for further studies abroad. Soon after his departure, Florence is raped by a runaway thief. She keeps it a secret but later realises that she is pregnant. Faced with this predicament Florence has to make a choice. Before her are three alternatives, abortion, confess to the fiancé and ask for forgiveness or get married to the rapist to fulfil the scriptures.'

However, the picture painted of Florence in the blurb is not impressive. The young woman presented to us in the blurb is naïve, weak and at the mercy of men. As in the main text, she is stupid and silly.

Granted, Florence is a 'devout Christian'. However, it is a psychological falsity to suggest that any normal woman would treat rape at the hands of a criminal as a 'secret'. Women have been known to hide or not act on rape cases involving a close relative, boyfriend, or powerful individuals. But which sane women would hide the fact that she has been raped by a man who is not only a total stranger but a criminal as well?

The 'predicament' – as the blurb calls it - in which Florence finds herself is self-created; it is a product of her own stupid reaction to her rape. One of her three choices in dealing with the predicament, as the blurb states, is to 'confess' to the fiancé and 'ask for forgiveness'. What is she supposed to confess? The fact that she is raped or that she fails to tell Henry about the rape? Or the fact that she is pregnant? It is almost as if it is 'wrong' for her to be raped; as if the real victim of the rape is Henry, not Florence; as if he suffers more trauma than her. What should Henry forgive her for? Allowing herself to be raped? Getting pregnant? Hiding information about the rape? Not telling him about the pregnancy?

Thus, while Frederick's story is about positive transformation, Florence's is about immaturity in decision-making. As a tragic piece, *Behind the Closed Door* is about

Frederick's tragedy, not Florence's. As a coming-of-age-story, it is tilted in favour of Fred. The glory is not in the fact that Florence marries the man who rapes her; it is in the transformation of the rapist. Florence does not deserve accolades for letting a rapist get away. Fred, on the other hand, wins our sympathy and admiration for overcoming the odds of his past and present to become a good citizen and a faithful, fearless servant of God.

It is also worth noting that, like Florence, Susan Chitabanta is described, on the novel's back cover, as a 'devout Christian'. Does Chitabanta use Florence's life to project her beliefs?

If the back cover makes a clear spiritual statement about Chitabanta, the front cover makes a clear gender statement. For while the biodata gives her full names as Susan Hope Chapoloko Chitabanta, the front cover refers to her merely as Susan Chitabanta, leaving out her maiden name, Chapoloko. Despite being brief, in fact, the biodata refers to her, twice, as 'Mrs Chitabanta'. This stands in contrast to Muchelemba and Mzyece, both of whom use their maiden names on the front cover and elsewhere where the author's name is mentioned. Chitabanta's identity is therefore defined by her status as a wife rather than as a woman.

The situation is different in the case of *The Fight for Justice*, whose title foreshadows the main thrust of the story – women's fight for justice in a world where they are victims of men's violence. The title also presupposes a conflict. In this case the conflict is between men as oppressors and women as victims. In the novel, the fight starts at an individual level and grows to the national level as Yoko pursues justice for herself and other oppressed women.

The title's message is reflected in and fortified by the face of the young woman on the front cover. The teary, swollen face embodies and epitomises the oppression of women by men. However, the picture only presents woman as victim – as if there is no hope –

whereas, in the novel, Yoko personifies hope, perseverance, resilience and eventual triumph over injustice. The bruised face is in effect an indictment against men.

Like Maliya Mzyece Sililo, Muchelemba uses her maiden name, Bwalya. This presupposes gender awareness on her part. However, the main character, by contrast, is presented to the reader without the maiden name; we only know her by her forename, Yoko, and her husband's name, Chimwemwe. This is similar to the case of Litiya Mumba: Sililo does not tell us her maiden name, though the author herself consistently uses her maiden name Mzyece.

The author's biodata on the back cover says a lot about why the author handles the subject matter in the manner she does. An economics graduate with a master's degree, Muchelemba is exposed both nationally and internationally in terms of the plight of women. She 'has taken a keen interest in gender issues' – and this is reflected in the novel. It is no coincidence, therefore, that the main character, Yoko, is, like the author, familiar with the work of women's NGOs in women's empowerment programmes. The similarities between the author and the protagonist are, to a large extent, due to the fact that the story is essentially based on the author's personal experience.

Muchelemba is committed to the fight for women's empowerment both personally and professionally. Thus she dedicates her novel to 'all women of Zambia' and women in 'the world at large'. The fight for women's liberation is for all women, and the battle continues: 'ALUTA CONTINUA!' she writes. The novel is therefore a mouthpiece through which Muchelemba expresses some of her key views on the subject of women's liberation from oppression by men. In addition, the novel is part of Muchelemba's personal efforts to contribute to the fight against the injustices perpetrated by men and the male establishment against women.

The personal touch in the story is also reflected in the blurb, which describes the novel as 'a powerful exposure of violence against women, a personal case study of one

woman's fight for justice'. The rest of the blurb is presented in such a way that woman is the victim; man is the oppressor or perpetrator of the violence:

'Yoko Chimwemwe was attacked and nearly strangled by a male stranger in Lusaka the capital city of Zambia. She miraculously escaped death and went to the police station in search of justice. The police abused and humiliated her, refusing her aid. She staunchly declared that she would find the culprit...'

The blurb makes it clear that the perpetrator of the violence is not just a stranger, but a 'male' stranger. Although the blurb does not mention the gender of the police officers who abuse and humiliate the victim, the assumption is that they are male. Therefore, the blurb, like the front cover, is feminised – written from the point of view of the victim, the female.

According to this point of view, the violence is not just physical but psychological as well. It is not only perpetrated and orchestrated by individual men but also by the male establishment and male-dominated institutions such as the police force. Hence the need, as the novel suggests, for women to fight for themselves rather than depend on the male-dominated society for protection and justice.

Like Josephine Bwalya Muchelemba, the author of *Picking up the Pieces*, Maliya Mzyece Sililo, retains her maiden name on the cover and the preliminary pages of her novel. She would rather be called Maliya Mzyece Sililo than merely Maliya Sililo.

As Pastor Samuel Makayi's observation on the back cover suggests, the central thrust of the novel is to throw '*a ray of light to those infected and affected by HIV/AIDS*'. In other words, Sililo is more concerned about the subject of coping with the impact of HIV/AIDS than with gender issues, in the same way that Chitabanta was more concerned with church doctrine than issues of gender.

The title, *Picking up the Pieces*, presupposes a fall from a position of joy or stability to one of instability and sorrow. Indeed that is what the HIV/AIDS pandemic does in the novel: it ruins the family's foundation and destroys the sense of security; instead it introduces fear, worry, uncertainty and even despair. Sililo, to her credit, does not blame

a particular gender for the spread of HIV/AIDS; she apportions the blame equally on both men and women.

The main thrust of *Picking up the Pieces* therefore, is the fact that men and women, boys and girls, are equally affected by the impact of HIV/AIDS. When families fall apart, both male and female members are affected. As the novel suggests, the solution to HIV/AIDS lies with both men and women. The 'pieces' can only be picked up by both male and female. Thus, working together, and while consulting each other, Luka and Litiya pick up the pieces of their individual and family lives. The same can be said of Mazila and Yuli.

The cover design of *Picking up the Pieces* appears to foreshadow and to some extent summarise the central message of the story. In the foreground of the picture, an apparently happy couple – man and woman – walk down a gravel road in what appears to be a rural setting. In the background hangs a beautiful rainbow – suggesting the calm after the storm; or peace after the rain, as in the biblical story of Genesis, when the rainbow came over the sky after God destroyed the earth with a flood of rain water.

While the story evolves around the need for men and women to work and walk together on the dusty road of the fight against HIV/AIDS, Sililo projects Luka, a male, as the main character, going by what the 'synopsis' in the paratext says. Thus, although Litiya is as important as Luka, it is worth noting that Luka gets the spotlight. The synopsis reads, in part:

'The main character, Luka Mumba, is raising a lovely family. He is a promising junior executive with an Insurance Company. Litiya, his wife, is an intelligent beautiful businesswoman. They have a vibrant five year old daughter, Khuziwe.

Everything is going well for this young family when Luka and Litiya find out that they are infected with the HIV virus and Litiya is pregnant.

Luka, full of guilt and remorse, wants Litiya to have an abortion under the illusion that it would save his wife from getting full-blown AIDS. Litiya, who feels indignant and a victim of circumstances, won't hear of it on moral grounds...'

The synopsis makes Litiya look like a mere appendage of Luka's life and experiences, it says Luka 'is raising a lovely family' as if he is doing it singlehandedly without Litiya's input. The other implication of the phrase is that Litiya, like Khuziwe, is being *raised* by Luka, the only one without whom the family cannot survive. In the synopsis, Litiya is only described in relation to Luka – as 'his wife', as if she does not have any independent existence. This reduces her significance, as does the attempt to classify her together with Khuziwe as part of the family being 'raised' by Luka.

To equate Litiya with Khuziwe is to strip her of any authority in the home. Like Khuziwe, Litiya is subject to the power, authority and wishes of Luka; like her daughter she needs protection from Luka and may be disciplined by him if he so wishes. Like Khuziwe, Litiya is expected to depend on Luka as the provider in the home. Consciously or unconsciously, then, Sililo, in the synopsis, perpetuates woman's marginalisation and man's superiority over woman.

5.3 Analysis of Main Texts

5.3.1 Images of Men and Women

Like the male-authored texts, the female-authored texts have both positive and negative images of men and women. However, as is the case with the male-authored texts, there are more negative images of women in the female-authored texts than of men. Also, some of the stereotypical images of men and women found in the male-authored texts are also found in the female-authored ones.

In *Behind the Closed Door*, as in the male-authored texts, women's images project weakness – both physical and mental, indecisiveness, economic and social dependency, and lack of initiative. The men, on the other hand, are generally portrayed better than women; they are associated with power and authority, courage, decisiveness and toughness, among others. The only conspicuous negative image of men is their association with crime. It is not far-fetched to surmise that Chitabanta's perception of such qualities as toughness and bravery is masculinised.

This is evident right from the beginning of the novel. Dave, the cop, is projected as the model crime-busting tough cop tasked with the difficult cases; but he is male. The heavy burden of solving Frederick's murder sits on his shoulders.

The murder scene in the first chapter eloquently and poignantly illustrates just how much Chitabanta associates adventure, toughness and bravery with maleness. By implication, femaleness and toughness do not go together. Men commit crimes, but it takes 'men' to deal with the crimes.

Thus it is men who are at the forefront of solving the murder. David Lukasa, as sub-inspector in charge of the case, reports to, and is tasked by, Inspector Zulu, also male. At the crime scene, Lukasa finds Zulu and two plain clothes policemen '*standing near the blanket covered body*' (*Behind the Closed Door*, 1992, p2). The police photographer on the scene is also male (p 3). The corpse of the murdered man is first spotted by a 'group of boys' out to trap mice (p3). Inspector Chongo first learns of the corpse through an officer called Chongo who, needless to say, is also male.

In other words, the police force, as portrayed in *Behind the Closed Door*, has a male face. Similarly, the crime has a male face, as is evident from the fact that, despite not having the empirical evidence, the officers dealing with the crime all assume the perpetrator is male. Lukasa certainly bases his investigation on the profile of a male perpetrator:

'I only had to solve this and the other case. It was the same man; same ruthlessness, same style, same cruelty and the same impact on me. First he had caught a very young couple in the bush, right in the middle of lovemaking. He had used some heavy object to bash the young man's head in...' (p5).

If there are any women on the scene, they are certainly not among the cops. The presence of women is only *implied* when Lukasa states that upon arrival on the scene he finds a '*group of onlookers*' (p2). If there are any women on the scene, therefore, they are insignificant onlookers; peripheral to the centre of attraction; an appendage to a male dominated event.

The image of woman as insignificant or silent onlooker, both literally and figuratively, typifies the place of some women in Chitabanta's novel as well as in the other three novels already analysed. In *Ticklish Sensation*, for example, when the bus on which Jojo rides on his way to Lusaka gets involved in an accident, it is the men who throw themselves to the frontline of solving the problem. The women, like the children, are mere onlookers; they depend on the men to solve the crisis.

In *Behind the Closed Door*, Florence's father is associated with leadership and courage in the face of a crisis; women are associated with weakness. When Lukasa first meets Florence to tell her about her husband's death, she breaks down, as does her mother. By contrast, when Kasaka, Florence's father, appears on the scene from the mortuary, he is projected to us as a tough, self-controlled and self-confident man exuding confidence. Thus, against a background of two emotionally weak women, we read of Kasaka:

'Just then a car slid to a stop outside and a middle aged man got out. He pushed open the gate and got to the door in two long strides.

He didn't even bother to knock. He pushed open the door, his face stiff. He looked at the sobbing woman then at me.

"I suppose he has already told you," he said jerking his thumb at me. I got to my feet and started to introduce myself. "Thank you inspector. I have been to the mortuary and I have seen the body. It's him all right," said the newcomer' (p 8).

Seen through Kasaka's eyes, the women are emotionally weak; in fact, too emotionally weak to even have the capacity to come face to face with Frederick's corpse. He initially refuses to allow Florence and her mother to see the corpse at the mortuary. "You shut up and pack up," he says to his wife. "You think you will walk out of there alive if you saw him? Possessed as you are, you won't" (p 9). Seen through Lukasa's eyes, the picture is no better. He says of the visit to the hospital morgue:

'We found it there all right. Florence's mother stormed out as soon as she glanced at what was left of the poor boy. Her husband followed her, muttering to himself, but it was not her or the brother I was worrying about, it was the young innocent lady who had met with such a misfortune at such a tender age. I was careful not to say anything, but I stood as close behind her as I could. The poor thing stood like she was made of wax; you would never think she had ever moved before. For all I knew she could be dying standing there in front of her wrecked husband. Then I became aware of her muttering... that was as far as

she went, her form still as a statue started falling back. I had been waiting for that. She fell in my arms and I carried her outside...' (pp 9-10).

Clearly, Lukasa, like Kasaka, has a stereotypical view of women. Thus, the reaction of Florence's mother does not surprise Lukasa; neither does Florence's fall. In fact, as he states, he *expects* her to fall upon seeing the corpse. Even when Kasaka's wife rolls on the ground, wailing, Lukasa is not alarmed. Neither is Kasaka; both men consider it 'normal' for the woman to roll and wail. Kasaka is only concerned that the little boy strapped on his wife's back may get hurt, so he frees the boy and allows the woman to continue 'undisturbed' with her wailing and rolling. Holding the boy to his chest, Kasaka sheds tears. However, there is something 'dignified' about his mourning: he does not wail, neither does he roll on the ground. Similarly, Florence's brother vomits, but it is 'understandable' because he is still young.

The women of *Behind the Closed Door* are associated with trivialities such as gossip. On his way to Florence's home in Kabwata Estates, Lukasa sees a group of women gossiping (p 16). However, as in all the other novels already analysed, women are projected as sex objects and 'consumable' items. Henry, for example, says to Florence, "You look sweet enough to eat" (p 40). Not surprisingly, when he gets a chance to be alone with Florence, Henry can only think of having sex with her.

Thus, as in the other works analysed earlier, in *Behind the Closed Door* men are associated with lust. For example, when Frederick rapes Florence, it is the ultimate demonstration of uncontrollable lust. Henry, however, is not spared association with this image. In fact, Florence does not see any difference between Henry and Frederick in terms of lust. She describes her rape ordeal thus:

'He stood like a wild cat ready to attack, his legs slightly apart, his arms forward. We regarded each other, not saying anything. His wild look changed, his eyes slid down from my face down to my body. At first I saw Henry's eyes in him, that's when I understood why Henry's first look made me so uneasy in front of his family, they had a terrible lust in them. The eyes were stripping me naked. A cold fear gripped my heart, my blood ran cold then hot as I watched him run his tongue over his thick black lips. He started advancing, his lusty eyes full of meaning, his knife falling out of his hand to the floor...' (p 72).

Apart from portraying Frederick as lustful the passage also draws attention to the image of man as being weak when confronted with a woman's sexual appeal. Florence's beauty and sexual appeal disarms Frederick, literally, when he drops his knife in order to rape her.

According to Florence's mother, it is typical for men to only want premarital sex from women or girls and then deny responsibility or run away when the woman or girl falls pregnant. She therefore warns Florence to be careful with Henry (pp 46-7). "*That boy will disappear from sight as soon as he makes you pregnant...*" Similarly, Bwanga's and Mosho's reaction to accusations of being responsible for the pregnancy of Mwila and Sibeso respectively is that of initially denying.

It would appear that, both within and outside marriage, the woman is there to please the man. When Florence indicates her intention to marry Henry, her parents decide to send her to the village in Kasama so that her grandmother would teach her '*how to behave as a married woman*' (p 59). This includes respect for the husband, cooking for him, bearing him children, bringing up the children, and, of course, ability to sexually satisfy the husband. Hence Florence is meticulously prepared for the wedding night (p 61).

What is worth noting is that, although Henry is as inexperienced about marriage as Florence, unlike her he is neither sent to the village nor assigned someone to teach him how to behave as a married man. It is as if as a man he is naturally disposed to know how to handle marriage.

In *Behind the Closed Door*, however, Chitabanta uses what we would refer to as the convention of the idealised woman. Chitabanta idealises Florence to harmonise her behavior with the doctrine that a woman or man should marry the first person with whom they have sexual union.

The doctrine on marriage, as advocated in the novel, is as idealised as Florence's character:

“God looks and records your first marriage until one of you dies. That means as a man the first woman you take to bed is your wife under God’s eyes, for such is a marriage, isn’t it? For a woman it is very much the same, the first man to touch your nakedness is your husband in God’s presence, he records that marriage, child or no child” (pp64-5).

In order to make Florence fulfil the idealised marriage terms, which in reality are unworkable and even ridiculous, Chitabanta ends up creating a woman with an unrealistic personality. To fit the requirements of the ‘ideal’ woman, Florence behaves in a silly, naïve, stupid and incredible manner, particularly with regard to the rape. To Chitabanta, as a ‘devout Christian’ - the ideal woman of God – Florence has the capacity to endure rape, protect the perpetrator, forgive him and, to crown it all, enter into marital union with him. But is there a sane woman who would behave like this?

In trying to do justice to the marriage doctrine propagated in the novel, Chitabanta does not do justice to Florence’s character. However, Chitabanta denies advocating a doctrine of the Seventh Day Adventist Church. In fact, she says it is not the doctrine of the church; neither is it hers.¹

In *The Fight for Justice*, the most prominent and pervasive images are those of men as oppressors and women as victims of men, both within the home as wives, and outside the home, as part of the broader society. The image of women suffering violence at the hands of their husband is most graphically illustrated by the experience of Mirriam Sibeelu, leader of the women’s club of Siamuleya village, who is battered to death by her husband (pp 14-5). What is even more disheartening is that none of the villagers pursue the conviction of Mirriam’s husband for murder. This is because, in the context of the patriarchal system of Siamuleya village, a husband has the right to beat his wife. Thus, wife battering and murder have remained ‘*a hidden crime*’ (p 113). Another example of a woman who suffers domestic violence at the hands of her husband is Beauty Halwiindi, who is constantly battered by Sam, her husband (pp 128-131). Some women such as Alice accept wife-battering as a sign of love on the part of the husband (p 73).

A number of stories in the short story collection *Heart of a Woman* have incidents of man-on-woman violence – women are abused by their husbands or boyfriends. In ‘Free of Shame’, Mwamba abuses his wife Pauline, while Ben, in *No More Pain*, also abuses Carol. In ‘Family Ties’, Chipso gets involved with a man who batters her whenever he is intoxicated, which seems to be all the time.³

However, there are cases where women suffer violence in their homes, but at the hands of strangers. An example of this kind of man-on-woman violence is contained in a newspaper story recounted by the narrator of *The Fight for Justice*. According to the story, a gang of six heavily armed men attacks a home in Lusaka’s Ibex Hill. In addition to robbing the family, the bandits rape the housewife repeatedly before the eyes of her husband and three children aged six, nine and thirteen (pp 122-3).

Yoko and other women are angered by the insensitive manner in which the story is covered by the paper. A commentary in one of the newspapers reads: “*Can you imagine the mental pain the man went through while his wife was being raped as he watched helplessly*” (p 123). What is at issue, to Yoko and the other women at the workshop, is that the commentary is written from a male perspective - focusing on the husband’s feelings rather than those of the wife, who suffers the humiliating physical abuse. Not even the trauma the children go through is mentioned. This confirms the assertion that violence against women cannot be curbed as long as society remains heavily patriarchal or treats men as the centre of attention and women as Other; men as the centre and women as the periphery.

Public violence against women, on the streets and elsewhere, is best illustrated by the life and experience of Yoko, whose near-rape at the hands of a male stranger on a dark Lusaka street constitutes the foundation on which the story is built. The essence of the story is about how Yoko, determined and unwavering, pursues justice for herself after the attack.

Thus, Yoko is a victim, but not a helpless one. She has the determination to attain justice for herself and other women; she embodies the image of the resisting woman, although the resistance is not violent. However, this stands in contrast to the image of the woman who resists with physical violence – meeting violence with violence. The key advocate of women’s use of physical violence as self-defence is Melanie, a karate black belt holder from the USA. She owns a school in the USA for training women in self-defence techniques (p136).

Some women, however, take the concept of physical resistance to extremes. One such woman is Beauty Halwiindi, who, after suffering years of abuse at the hands of her husband Sam, kills him by pouring a pot of hot cooking oil on him (p 131). Another woman in this mold is Irene Chibesa who, unable to take any more physical and mental abuse from her husband, kills him with his own pistol while he is asleep (p 132).

From the victim’s point of view, the men do not deserve sympathy; in fact, they only get what they deserve. Men who abuse women, both within and outside the home, are generally heartless. How else does one explain the behaviour exhibited by Yoko’s assailant, Lunku, or by Mirriam Sibeelu’s husband? Can Sam’s behaviour be justified?

It is worth noting, however, that members of Mirriam’s family do nothing about the crime committed by her husband. They do nothing about her abuse when she is alive; they do nothing when she is killed.

The reality in Zambian society is not far from the picture presented in the works of fiction. A report by the Central Statistical Office, for example, reveals that, despite sensitisation on gender violence, most Zambian women believe that wife battery is acceptable. The report states:

‘Surprisingly, the highest percentage of women who think a man is justified in beating his wife for refusing to have sex is found among divorced, widowed and separated women at 52 percent and among married women at 51 percent... Among older women aged 45-49, 57 percent believe a man is justified in beating his wife for refusing to have sex, compared to 42 percent among young women aged 15-19 years.’²

The report adds that males are the main perpetrators of violence against women, husbands being mentioned by 63 percent of women and former boyfriends or live-in partners mentioned by 19 percent of women.

Not all men in the *The Fight for Justice* are abusers of women, however. Sekeni is an epitome of a loving, caring husband, as is evidenced by the way he relates to his wife (pp 22-4). He does not subject her to physical violence, though they have their occasional differences. Sekeni is projected as his wife's comforter and protector, especially during the crisis period in her life.

Thus, for example, when Yoko has a nightmare and is scared, Sekeni assures her of his care, support and protection. His first reaction to her nightmare is to attempt 'to encircle her in his arms, protectively' (p4, emphasis mine). Even Yoko herself considers him her best protector and comforter: '...being in the arms of her first love and husband, Sekeni Chimwemwe, was comforting and she sighed with relief' (pp 4-5).

The assumption – and this is what is projected in the story – is that the man is stronger than the woman; therefore, the man has to protect his woman. Thus, throughout her long ordeal emanating from the attack by the stranger, Sekeni never loses an opportunity to encourage his wife. This also explains why, when Yoko thinks of writing a book on her ordeal, she travels with Sekeni for moral support (p 187). The fact that Yoko and Jo consult their husbands about the trip to Livingstone in order to write the book also underlines the fact that husbands are associated with authority in the family context. In other words, Yoko and Jo cannot confirm the trip until after consulting their husbands (p 188). While it is the women who work on the book, the men, Sekeni and Ben, Jo's husband, provide advice on some aspects of the book such as the title (p 194). However, the men's involvement goes beyond merely advising to 'endorsing': after discussion with their wives, they endorse the original title, 'The Fight for Justice', which Yoko had earlier suggested to Jo (p 194).

Nevertheless, educated women are generally better off than the uneducated ones in the villages. They are more enlightened than their colleagues in the villages, who fit the description of 'silent onlookers'. For example, when Yoko and her colleagues from government ministries present the subject of family planning to the residents of Kanchindu village, they meet stiff resistance from the men, who argue that contraceptives are an 'interference in God's work of creation' (p 17).

The men further argue that access to contraceptives would make their wives promiscuous. In the end, the men 'instruct' Yoko to delete the family planning component from the draft project proposal (p 17). While the men take their stance, the women of the village, to the surprise of Yoko's team, just keep quiet 'without expressing their own views on family planning' (p 17). As silent onlookers, the women let the men decide their fate, even when they know that access to contraceptives does not necessarily make a wife promiscuous.

If the women of Siamuleya and Kanchindu villages epitomise the silent onlooker, Yoko and other women of her breed embody the ideal picture of a 'liberated woman'. Indeed, after the sentencing of Lunku by the courts of law, superintendent Mhango of the police addresses Yoko as '*a truly liberated woman*' (p 184). Yoko is considered 'liberated' because she does not allow the male establishment and other bastions of male-orchestrated social engineering to discourage or stop her from achieving her goal of attaining justice for herself.

Also fitting the description of 'liberated woman' are the other women from the USA and Zambia at the forefront of organising the inter-cultural public forum for women in the United States of America and Zambia. The resource persons from Zambia include Yoko, Stella and Jo. Other Zambian women involved are Eva Kasonde as Chairperson of the forum, and Juliet Chishinga as guest of honour, in her capacity as Minister for Community Development and Women Affairs. The American resource persons include three female professors, Vanessa, Denise and Melanie (p 112).

It is evident that, generally, being a liberated woman is associated with being well-educated. Only when women have a good education can they understand the heart and real causes of issues affecting them; only then can they challenge the male establishment and the unfavourable traditions; only then can they be empowered to mitigate the effects of patriarchal social engineering.

Educational and academic attainment, therefore, like ignorance, has an effect on gender perceptions and how members of the opposite sex relate to each other in society. While the likes of Mirriam are passive because of ignorance and lack of education, the likes of Yoko are proactive because of being enlightened and exposed to the ideas of women's liberation and feminism. Thus, education is a liberating force for women. In *Changing Shadows* it is the attainment of better education that makes Mwila better equipped to throw off the shackles of male domination and to exorcise herself of Kangwa's ghost.

Picking up the Pieces, on the other hand, focuses on how positive living enables two couples, Luka and Litiya, Mazila and Yuli – to overcome the psychological and mental torture brought about by being infected by the HIV/AIDS virus, particularly in the family context. There are both positive and negative images about males and females in the story, but in the end it is only the man and woman who work together that succeed in the struggle against the impact of HIV/AIDS. Some of the key images of men and women in the novel are developed in relation to their reaction when confronted with the AIDS crisis. Generally, the men, in this case Luka and Mazila, seem more prepared for the AIDS test than Litiya and Yuli.

Sililo, however, does not suggest that men are too tough to be broken by the effects of AIDS. Luka sheds tears on several occasions. For example when Luka goes to see Dr Mazila after knowing the results of the HIV test, the physical and mental toll of the bad news is visible to the doctor:

'The man who stood before him was very different from the elegant tall man he had seen the previous day and his shoulders were drooping making him look shorter than his normal height. His eyes were puffy from crying and he looked as if he had not slept a wink' (p 13).

Thus, the dichotomy of men as tough and women as weak is absent in *Picking up the Pieces*. What seems to be present, however, is a feeble and thinly veiled attempt by Luka to appear strong in the eyes of his 'weak' wife; and especially in the eyes of Khuziwe. Perhaps he realises that someone in the family has to bear the torch of hope.

The apparent contrast in behaviour between Luka and Litiya as they wait for the results of the HIV test can be misleading if not analysed in the broader context of the entire story. Luka paces the floor impatiently, but Litiya is a picture of 'anxiety' – she sits with her hands on her lap, twisting her fingers or working on her cuticles (p 1). When he notices her anxiety, Luka stops pacing and holds hands with her, if only to strengthen her.

Luka is projected as the protector of his family, as well as their comforter in difficult times. Mazila, on the other hand, completely loses his bearings after being found HIV positive in the UK. Upon returning to Zambia, broken and frustrated, Mazila almost loses the will to live. Unlike Luka, he has no reason to play tough and it takes Yuli to lift him up again and give him a reason to live (p 11).

Both men and women are associated with the spread of the HIV virus and the consequences. Men are generally portrayed as promiscuous and lustful as epitomised by Dr Titus Banene Nakoyo and Makono the truck driver. Luka's father, too, is not far behind the duo, neither is Mackintosh who, due to uncontrollable lust, rapes Tisa Phiri. In this regard, then, Mackintosh is no different from Yuli's teacher, who rapes her; nor from Fred in *Behind the Closed Door*.

Among women, promiscuous behaviour is especially associated with Mbilila and Maureen. The former, especially, is epitomic of a *femme fatale*; a witch with the capacity to 'bewitch' men with her beauty and sexual appeal. At the workshop in Lusaka, she sleeps with a chain of men - starting with Nakoyo on the first day and winding up with Luka on the last. She fits the description of a nymphomaniac. Both

men and women are at once perpetrators and victims of the HIV/AIDS pandemic, in terms of the story line of *Picking up the Pieces*.

While Sililo does not appear to subscribe to the idea that men are the main cause of the spread of HIV/AIDS, she nonetheless subscribes to the idea of the man as the head of the home or family. Thus Luka, Mazila, Yelesani and Macintosh are all portrayed as heads of their homes. However, the 'ideal' wife, in *Picking up the Pieces*, does not blindly or unquestioningly obey her husband. With the exception of Tisa Phiri, the other wives appear to have some room to be themselves and to speak their mind. Thus, for example, Litiya stubbornly and unapologetically objects to Luka's suggestion that she undergoes an abortion to save herself from lapsing into full-blown AIDS, as well as to save the unborn baby from contracting the disease. Similarly, even a less educated woman like Monde takes a firm stand and forces her promiscuous husband to use a condom each time he has sex with her (p 32).

Be that as it may, authority, in the story, is still associated with men. In the case of Titus Banene Nakoyo, or 'TBN', the authority extends even to the grave. Neither his daughter Choongo nor his mother dare disobey his written instructions regarding how his funeral should be conducted. Before his death Nakoyo writes instructions to the effect that he is not in favour of a prolonged funeral; neither does he want anyone to be 'dirty' on the burial day. This leads to an argument between Choongo and Nakoyo's mother, whose wish is to go barefoot and bare-breasted in line with the Tonga tradition. However, the old lady, not wanting to 'disobey' her son, later bends to his wish:

'...the thought of disobeying her dead son made the old lady think twice about the issue at hand. Her son was obstinate in life and might react violently in death if he were to be disobeyed. Moreover, she did not want to be the one to lead her granddaughter astray and invoke the anger of her father's spirits ...' (p112).

While men are to be respected, obeyed and served by women, however, they are not to be trusted; they are not expected to be faithful to their wives. They are generally associated with the womaniser image: Nakoyo, Yelesani Mumba, Makono, Luka, Mackintosh and Mbilial Mutale's husband. Thus, while some women such as Maureen

Kayeye fit the 'husband-grabber' and 'gold-digger' image, one is better off trusting women than men. Monde puts the point across quite poignantly: "*Experience has taught me never to trust a man,*" she says to Litiya.

However, the image of the 'evil' woman is not absent from the story. Mbilia may be considered 'evil' in her own right, due to her sexual madness. Nancy's mother also qualifies to wear the 'evil woman' tag - only in her case it is because of racial prejudices against Nancy's husband, Mazila, whom she derogatorily refers to as "*the African*" (p 72). To Mazila, she is a "*disgusting, insensitive witch*" (p 72).

Mbilia Mutale is a 'witch', but of a different mold – bewitching men with her sexual appeal; but as a carrier of the HIV virus she fits the *femme vampire* image. The first time she is introduced in the story, she immediately steals the limelight, drawing the attention of both men and women at the workshop (p 19).

Mbilia is a 'flower' – '*a sight for sore eyes*' (p 20). By the end of the story, however, she is a 'withered flower', no longer desirable, particularly because of the effects of AIDS. Thus, when Luka meets her at Nakoyo's funeral, she is '*a ghost of her old self*'.

'He had first noticed a familiar figure. Her walk hadn't changed and that air of self-importance and self worth was still there. She had walked towards him at the cemetery after everything was over. She smiled. He wished she hadn't done that for her beautiful even set of teeth were a distorted mess. The gums seemed to have worn out and had lost their lovely dark shade and the teeth were standing out bare like a rabbit's. Her thin pale lips stretched out over the teeth as if someone was stretching them over her face. It was clear from the way her hat sat on her head that the thick mane of hair she used to keep so well groomed was no longer there. He did not dare examine her legs for he was afraid of what he would find. They exchanged a few pleasantries and parted company. He had known then that sight would haunt him for the rest of his days.' (p 114).

When Mbilia makes her grand entry at the workshop in Lusaka she arouses lust in the men and petty discomfort in the women. Thus, women are associated with petty jealousies. According to the story, '*the women looked uncomfortable in their seats*' (p 19), presumably because they were unable to compete with Mbilia.

Apart from petty jealousy, gossip is also associated with women, as in almost all the other works analysed. Despite being well-educated, Litiya engages in ‘juicy ...gossip’ with Monde (p 34). Similarly, as in the other works analysed, the kitchen is generally associated with women. For example, Litiya prepares meals for her family (p 24), as does Yuli (pp 91-2). Although Mulenga helps Yuli prepare the meal (p 92), it is obviously because she needs time to finish discussing with her husband. Luka, on the other hand, prepares evening tea (p 55). Similarly, when Luka bathes and dresses Khuziwe, it appears to be due to the need to leave early for dinner; thus he does this while Litiya applies make-up. It seems to be the exception rather than the rule (p 97).

Generally speaking, the women of *Picking up the Pieces* do not exhibit absolute economic dependence on their husbands. Despite being uneducated and unemployed, for example, Tisa Phiri, Luka’s mother, works hard to provide for her children in the village – with some support from her wayward husband and his father (p 132). Monde, similarly, works hard and develops both her business and social status. She is in the trading business, buying items from Lusaka and selling them in Chingola at double the price (p 27). Litiya and Yuli, more educated than Tisa and Monde, are not economically dependent on their husbands either. Litiya is Managing Director of the Afro Look Beauty Parlour while Yuli is a teacher.

5.3.2 Gender Roles and Stereotypes

In the three female-authored texts, gender roles generally follow the same pattern as in the male-authored texts, and generally reflect the disadvantaged position of women compared to men.

However, in *Behind the Closed Door*, there is evidence of not only the ‘mother’ trope, but also the ‘father’ trope. Lukasa, for example, refers to Florence’s mother as “mother” (p 25), obviously as a show of respect. This is similar to what obtains in *Changing Shadows*, where Mwila’s father refers to her as “mother”. The mother trope is also used by Florence with reference to her aunt, who she says is traditionally her “mother” (p 103), though biologically an aunt.

In the view of Florence's mother, when a man and woman marry, the man takes on the role of 'father' to his wife, while she takes on the role of 'mother' to her husband. Although the 'father' trope is not clearly mentioned in the other three novels already analysed, the behavior of husbands, especially in traditional marriages, projects them as a father figure to their wives.

As a father, a man is expected to provide for, control and protect his family. Thus, for example, Florence's father takes charge of the funeral arrangements of the late Frederick. He even decides, without even consulting Florence or his wife, to take the funeral to his farm house. When his daughter and Frederick fall onto hard times before the murder, Kasaka finds a flat for them in Kabwata Estates.

The father, as demonstrated in *Behind the Closed Door* and the other novels, holds a supreme place in the family's pyramid of authority. Hence he plays roles superior to those of any other member of the family. For example, the woman is not expected to challenge her husband's authority, and he has to have the final say on important issues. This explains why, when Florence informs her mother about her intention to marry, the mother makes it clear that the father has to give his permission (p 51). Similarly, the father is the ultimate custodian of discipline in the family. Thus, when Florence's mother fails to discipline her, she refers the issue to the father (pp 113-5). When the father's intervention fails to change Florence's mind, there is no recourse to a higher authority, and she is branded a rebel, almost an outcast.

When Frederick marries Florence, he does not lose an opportunity to put her 'in her place'. In an argument with Florence, he declares: "... *no woman is going to tell me what to do*" (p 138); and this he says despite the fact that he is in the wrong, having brought stolen property home. Florence refuses to accept the stolen goods just as she refuses to go ahead with the marriage to Henry despite her parents' insistence. This 'rebellious' attitude, however, must be looked at in the context of Florence's religious beliefs: as a 'devout Christian' she cannot accept stolen goods; she only 'defies' her

father because she has to 'obey' the 'scriptures' – that is, marry the man who first has sex with her. Florence still acknowledges Fred as the head of their home. For example, she cannot force him to go to church with her; all she can do is *persuade* him (p 143).

It is worth noting, however, that Fred only steals because he feels obligated as the man of the house to provide for the home. *'There were times when we were hard up,'* Florence says, *'when we had no relish and nothing for breakfast. Fred would sneak back into his old life to come back with packed sausages and various types of cooked food'* (p 145). As far as Fred is concerned, it is his responsibility to provide for the home. This comes out clearly when she rejects his stolen contribution to the home, that is, furniture:

"But don't you like it, Flo?"

"I know it has been stolen and it's going back."

"What do you mean it has been stolen?"

"Well, did you buy them?" I asked, looking at him.

He looked away, not able to meet my eyes. "I am a man, you know."

"I have no doubt about that."

"Then why do you question my contribution to the house" (p 137).

Fred is troubled by his inability to provide for the home, or at least to make a meaningful contribution. Being a man, in his view, means being able to provide for the family. When Florence disapproves of his idea of preparing the meals in the home, Fred responds: *"Both of us know that you are the man of this house. You go out to work, I stay here. I have no qualifications for work anywhere and I am too old to go back to school..."* (p 140).

In as far as Fred is concerned, a man does not stay home and do nothing; he goes out to work in order to provide for his family. If he cannot do this, then he is no longer a man but a 'woman'. Hence Fred sees a reversal of roles in the home: Florence is the provider and bread-winner, so she is the 'man' of the house; he has nothing to offer, like a woman waiting for her husband to provide. Thus it is only fitting and right that he cooks for Florence.

Florence, on the other hand, refuses to eat his food because, obviously, she does not think it normal for a man to take charge of the kitchen. In as far as she is concerned, preparing meals falls within a woman's domain. "I don't want you to try and impress me with anything," she says. "You don't have to do anything in this house. I am your wife and not your girlfriend or call-girl. God brought us together and God is never wrong. I am prepared to respect and perform all the duties of a good wife" (p 142). To Florence, the duties of a good wife include cooking, respect for one's husband, cleaning the home, supporting the husband financially, morally and spiritually, and sexual submissiveness. This conviction is evident in the way she relates to Fred.

Behind the Closed Door does not just reflect the role of woman as a wife, but also as a mother. As is evidenced by the life of Florence's relationship with her mother, one of the key responsibilities of a mother is to bring up the children, particularly the girls, in a 'cultured' or acceptable manner. If the girl child fails to perform according to expected standards in her marriage, the mother takes the blame. Thus, Florence's mother, like Mwila's in *Changing Shadows*, is keen to see that her daughter's behaviour meets societal expectations. This is why, when Florence indicates her change of mind about marrying Henry, her mother worries about the consequences.

Florence's mother, however, is more than a guide and educator: she is also the daughter's confidante. In other words, Florence confides in her before she talks to her father on some key issues. Thus the mother is the first to know when Florence decides to marry Henry, and when she decides to break off the engagement. However, the roles of advisor and confidante are also played by grandmothers. Hence Florence is sent to the village to be 'taught' by the grandmother – but it is the mother who ensures that this is done. In fact, Florence's mother acknowledges being taught by her mother (p 101). Florence's mother also teaches her how to take care of her pregnancy and the baby (pp 189, 216).

As is the case with all the other novels analysed so far, the style of *Behind the Closed Door* exhibits the author's assumptions about the gender of some characters. The text of *Behind the Closed Door* has two interesting cases.

In the first case, the narrator, Lukasa, talks of a doctor coming to examine the corpse of Frederick Musonda. There are only two references to the doctor, but none of them specifies the doctor's gender. In the first one, Lukasa says: "*Nodding at the doctor who had just arrived, I walked over to where the inspector stood*" (p 3). In the second reference, he says, "*The doctor told me I would have a full report in a few hours time*" (p 4).

It would appear the author and narrator expect us to assume the doctor is male. It is safe to assume that, if the doctor was female, the term used would be 'female doctor'. The doctor's profession appears to be associated with maleness. There is a reference to a Dr Davies (p 118) and another to a Dr Larrynsin (p 116), which has a gender marker, 'he'. There is no reason to believe Dr Davies is female, just like there is no reason to believe the doctor visited by Fred is female (p 165). Going by the general trend in the writer's style, therefore, it is justified to assume that, unless qualified with the gender-marker 'female', every reference to a doctor is a reference to a man. This is a typical case of gender-role stereotyping.

Another interesting case is when Florence talks of overhearing 'two people' at church gossip about her and Fred (pp143-4). Florence does not state the gender of the two people. However, gossip, in *Behind the Closed Door*, as in the other novels, is so associated with women that one is inclined to assume the 'two people' are female. For example, when Lukasa goes to Florence's flat to investigate Fred's murder, he walks down a street where women stand gossiping (p 16). After catching the 'two people' gossiping, Florence overhears two girls gossiping in the church toilet (p 144).

Being more gender-sensitive than Chitabanta, Muchelemba, in *The Fight for Justice*, appears to make a deliberate effort to portray women in better light than is the case with

many female-authored works, whose authors unconsciously follow the writing patterns and tendencies of male authors. Thus, for example, Muchelemba draws the reader's attention to the fact that Yoko is a 'liberated woman'.

If Yoko is a liberated woman, then Sekeni is 'liberated' from the biases of stereotypical gender roles as espoused by traditional social engineering. He does not observe prescribed, rigid gender roles expected of a husband and wife. Thus, despite being the man of the house, he performs duties which, to the typical conservative man, are only supposed to be handled by women. He prepares meals for his family and, after dinner, helps clear and clean the dishes: '*Yoko was washing the dishes while Sekeni dried and packed them in their rightful places*' (p 23). He helps make the matrimonial bed and clean the house. Sekeni even offers to do the household shopping on Yoko's behalf (p 25).

Sekeni, however, like any other responsible husband and father, also plays his role as provider for his family. Also, he does his best to do what is expected of him as protector of his family in general and wife in particular. Indeed in *The Fight for Justice* a husband is the fortress to which a wife should run for protection and comfort in times of trouble. Of Sekeni, the story says:

- '*...tried to encircle his arms around her protectively ...*' (p 4)
- '*...he encircled his arms around her protectively...*' (p 189)

Yoko, despite being a 'liberated woman', recognises the role of her husband as a protector. To some extent she blames herself for the attack on the Lusaka street: '*... she had run away from the protection of her husband and the safety of their family car into the dangerous streets of Lusaka*' (p 195).

In a way, Yoko's attack is the price she pays for being a 'liberated' woman. Since she cannot afford to be a silent onlooker, she challenges her husband's 'dangerous' driving. She refuses to submit to his leadership and decides to get off the car, despite the fact that it is late and dangerous. In fact, she does not request him to stop the car; she 'orders'

him to stop (p 33): *"I'd rather walk home than die in a deliberate motor road accident,"* she says (p 33). Such behavior, in the context of a marriage in Siamuleya or Kanchindu village, is unthinkable; no wife would dare challenge or oppose her husband in such a manner. However, it is Yoko's stubborn and insubmissive stance that leads to the attack. The attacker finds her walking alone, without male 'protection', and seizes his opportunity. Hence even the police officers, to whom she turns for help, prove unhelpful because, in their stereotypical biased thinking, no woman should walk the streets so late at night without male company. Thus, they suspect her of being a prostitute.

However, there is no evidence to suggest that Yoko is insubordinate or insubmissive in her role as wife; or that, as a mother, she abdicates on her responsibilities because she is 'liberated'. Thus, she still cooks, does the household shopping, and cleans the house.

It is worth noting that, despite being 'liberated', she plays her role of ensuring that her husband is sexually satisfied, except at the time when she quarrels with him (p 62). On the morning after her return from the trip to Kanchindu and Siamuleya villages, Yoko wakes up around 04:30 am in order to work on some reports, leaving Sekeni in bed. However, he gets out of bed and follows her in the study. Their conversation proceeds like this:

"Whatever you're doing can wait, I want you back with me in bed."

"Is that a command or a request?" Yoko asked.

"Yes, it's a command," replied Sekeni.

"Do you know that to command and to harass a woman could be two sides of the same coin?"

"Is that the latest slogan in the feminist camp?"

"Yes," replied Yoko.

"It seems your slogans are endless. I think time has come for us men to start a resistance movement to defend and protect our interests" (p 24).

Although to some extent the conversation involves some joking, it still reflects the fact that Sekeni expects Yoko to stop whatever she is doing in order for him to have sex with her. It does not matter that she has important reports to write. She has no choice but to perform her 'duty'; he literally lifts her out of the chair and into the bedroom.

Sekeni's action is similar to what Fred does to Florence in *Behind the Closed Door*, forcing her to have sex with him even when she is not in the mood. This raises the question of whether or not this should be considered as marital rape. However, despite having feminist inclinations, Yoko does not protest when Sekeni carries her to the bedroom.

Thus, being a liberated woman does not necessarily mean total independence from men, especially for married women. Neither does it mean total economic self-reliance. In *Picking up the Pieces*, despite the fact that some women contribute to the upkeep of their families either as business people or as professional workers, men are still expected to play the role of breadwinner in the family. In addition, the men play the role of head of the family. In times of crisis, the men, as husbands and fathers, are expected to lead the way.

For example, when Luka's family is confronted with the crisis of HIV infection, he is expected, from the family and societal viewpoint, to provide direction and leadership. This explains why, despite being as affected by the impact of the crisis as Litiya, he tries his best to retain at least a semblance of courage and resilience.

However, the HIV/AIDS pandemic, like joblessness on the part of a husband, has the capacity to disturb gender roles as prescribed by a society's social engineering. Frederick, in *Behind the Closed Door*, suffers mental emasculation due to being jobless. His life becomes a contradiction: on the one hand he demands respect and obedience from Florence as he is the husband; on the other hand he tells her she is the *man* of the house because she works. His role, he argues, is to clean the house and cook for her. In *Picking up the Pieces*, Yelesani Mumba and Nakoyo become mentally emasculated by the impact of AIDS: they can no longer play the role of breadwinner or leader effectively. Tisa takes over the role of head of the family from her husband Yelesani; Choongo, similarly, takes over headship from her bedridden father, Nakoyo. He makes her his executor with full power of attorney (pp 111-2).

Thus, by default, Choongo and Tisa play roles which, in the context of Zambia's social engineering, are the 'preserve' or duty of men. In other words, the experience of the two women throws light on the phenomenon of female-headed households and child-headed households. The two phenomena have taken on frightening proportions in Zambia because of the advent of HIV/AIDS. Choongo is only a teenager, yet she finds herself shouldering the responsibilities of a father. In this sense, then, maleness and femaleness, as determiners of gender roles, become less significant.

As in the other works analysed, a woman's roles can be viewed in various contexts – as a woman, a wife and mother. As can be seen in the lives of Litiya, Yuli and Monde, as wives women have a role to play in the lives of their husbands which no other woman can play. They have to ensure that their husband is happy. Even when wives discover that their husbands have a mistress, they do not automatically abdicate their responsibility towards their husbands. For example, Monde, despite obtaining irrefutable evidence of Makono's infidelity, does not file for divorce. She says: "... *I had no intentions of giving up my man because of that prostitute [Maureen Kayeye]*" (p 32). Monde does not even deny her husband sex because of his promiscuity. All she does is demand that he uses condoms – to which he obliges after a week of resistance.

Tisa's case is even more interesting. Despite her husband's waywardness – womanising and enjoying the pleasures of Lusaka while she struggles to bring up the children in the village – she still receives him as the submissive and loyal wife when he returns to the village a dying man: '*Tisa had nursed her estranged husband with the help of his mother and he died within two weeks of his arrival*' (p 133). Tisa does not complain, neither does she mistreat her husband. She is an epitome of thousands of wives who are abandoned by their husbands and yet, when the men get infected with AIDS, it is the wives who are still expected to nurse the men to their grave. Furthermore, the women are expected to mourn their husbands when they die. Of Tisa, we read: '*She had mourned the father to her children as befitted tradition...*' (p 133).

Like Tisa and Monde, Mbilia does not divorce her promiscuous husband; and like them, she continues to cook for him and play her other wife's roles. However, unlike the other women, Mbilia's response to the infidelity of her husband, 'a notorious womaniser', is an extreme one: she decides to find comfort in 'other men's arms' (p 44). Therefore, instead of denying sex to her husband or, like Monde, demanding the use of condoms, Mbilia continues to have sex with him alongside other men. Hers is more of a tit-for-tat response.

It is evident from the story that the wives in *Picking up the Pieces* are generally at the mercy of their husbands, to whom they are expected to be submissive. In the understanding of Makono, therefore, a wife is not supposed to deny sex to her husband, despite his promiscuity. It is partly because of this conviction that he initially resists when Monde demands that he uses a condom when having sex with her. In a word, a husband is entitled to sex with his wife; she is obligated to satisfy him sexually.

As mothers women play an important role in the family, especially with regard to the upbringing of the children. Thus, even in the absence of Yelesani, Tisa continues to look after the children. A mother is expected to be the first line of defence against her children's indiscipline, as is seen even in *Behind the Closed Door* and *Ticklish Sensation*, when the father only gets involved in disciplining a child after the mother fails. Jojo's mother is the first to attempt to correct him, just like Florence's mother makes the first attempts at correcting her. The mother's role as a disciplinarian is best summarised by a saying in *Picking up the Pieces*: 'Vitimbo va make mwana siviwawa koma va anthu a caje' – 'a mother's beating does not hurt like that of a stranger' (p 67).

Mothers still feel obligated to play the caring role even when their children have grown up. Thus, for example, when Nakoyo gets bedridden, his mother comes from the village to help take care of him and the children, since his wife is dead. Similarly, Luka's mother, Tisa, travels to Chingola to help him and Litiya when they have a baby. She plays the same role, in this regard, as Florence's mother; and as Naomi Sakala's mother. In fact, the women, in this context, play the dual role of mother and grandmother.

In *Picking up the Pieces*, as in the other novels analysed, a doctor has a man's face while a nurse has a woman's face. The passage below illustrates this:

'He was just going through the appointments for the day when there came a knock on the door.

"Come in." A young nurse walked into the surgery.

"Good morning Doctor."

"Good morning nurse," he answered.

"Mr. Mumba is here to see you. I told him that he has to make an appointment but he insists."

"I don't mind seeing him since my appointments start at ten hours. Don't allow anybody after eight thirty. I will be going to the wards to see my patients."

"As you say Doctor." The nurse disappeared. "Mr. Mumba, the doctor will see you now"' (p 13).

The term 'doctor' in the passage has a gender-marker 'he' referring to Dr Mazila. However, there is no gender-marker for the nurse. The narrator, or author, assumes we 'know' the nurse is female, especially that 'nurse' is not qualified. In other words, we assume that, if the nurse were male, the passage would have said 'male nurse'.

5.3.3 Language and Gender as Reflected in Women's Novels

Unlike *Ticklish Sensation*, *The Accusing Finger* and *Changing Shadows*, Chitabanta's *Behind the Closed Door* does not exhibit a tendency to describe female characters in a sensual manner. This could be attributable to three main factors: first, Chitabanta's style does not involve a tendency to describe physical features of the characters; second, Chitabanta's Christian stance, which obviously affects the style and diction; third, the narration is mainly done by a female character, Florence. In a verbal interview, Chitabanta responded thus to the question of what the purpose of writing the novel was:

"My aim was to achieve two goals. The first was to write a novel that promoted Christian living. At that time, in school girls used to read more novels than boys, and usually it was novels such as the ones by James Hadley Chase. The novels did not promote good morals and so as girls we became 'women' faster. Our class work and dressing were among the things affected by reading the novels. Instead of studying we would spend time reading the novels. The Chase novels did not show the consequences of immoral behaviour. Thus, as a Christian I prayed to God to give me an idea to write about, and He did. I have never been raped, but I found someone who had been raped. The second goal was to develop

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and share the story of the girl I met who had been raped and later married.” (op cit)

Even when Florence describes her first impressions of Henry, there is no direct reference to his sexual appeal:

‘We were just starting the meal when the door burst open and a tall young man walked in. I just glanced at him once and looked back at my side plate ... It was while they were talking that I decided to look up at him again. I knew before I was told that he was the eldest son in that house. He looked like his mother. He was tall, about six feet. He looked modern. His black bellbottomed trousers suited him perfectly. He had a pink shirt on with a navy blue checked coat over it. He had a thin well trimmed moustache, his sideboards [sic] were neat and well trimmed, his hair shone with cleanliness.’ (Behind the Closed Door, p 32).

Elsewhere, Florence describes Henry thus: *‘He stood so tall, so immaculate, so neat...’*(p 95)

The only time that Florence gets close to a sexually suggestive description of a man is when she says of Fred: *‘He wore his blue and gray striped trousers with a sky blue shirt. His three top buttons half open revealing his broad hairy chest’* (p 184). One has to be careful not to read too much into this, however, especially that it is not the only reference to the hairiness of Fred’s body. When Dave Lukasa sees the body of the deceased Fred, he says of the experience: *‘On his dark hairy tummy lay a big black book and on it lay his missing parts’* (p3). It would appear the hairy chest has no more significance for Florence than the hairy tummy has for Lukasa.

Muchelemba differs significantly from Chitabanta in terms of language use. Her preoccupation with gender issues affects her diction and style. Yoko the character and Muchelemba the author have one thing in common: they are both exposed to feminist ideas. To a large extent Yoko is Muchelemba’s mouthpiece, particularly on gender-related matters.

The style of narration and choice of language not only reflect her knowledge of the subject matter she deals with, but also the care she takes to choose words and phrases that are politically correct.

For example, Muchelemba prefers to use the gender-neutral term 'Chairperson' rather than 'Chairman' or 'Chairlady' (pp 17, 112, 115). She also uses other terms which reflect knowledge of gender-related issues. The following are examples: '*liberated woman*' (pp 66, 184), '*domestic violence*' (pp 16, 118), '*patriarchal societies*' (p 114), '*women's empowerment*' (p 114), '*violence against women*' (p 19, 99), '*Women in Development*' (p 98), '*gender planning*' (p 98), and '*women victims of violence*' (p 117).

To her credit, Muchelemba does not fall prey to the male perspective intrusion in the description of female characters. This is how the main character, Yoko, is described: '*... of medium built body, always dressed in elegant outfits which accentuate her natural beauty*' (p 6). The description is neither sexually suggestive nor derogatory. Yoko's description however, sharply differs from the description of the chauvinistic male police officer, constable Bukali. He is described thus:

'He must have been in his late forties. He had large and protruding red eyes, an even larger nose and thick black lips. When he opened his mouth, Yoko noticed that he had spaced, uneven yellow teeth which stuck out making him look like a creature out of a Stephen King book.' (p 39).

On the other hand, the description of Supt. Mhango is more positive: '*He was Supt. Mhango and was fairly good-looking, walked and talked with an air of authority. His voice was soft, but powerful*' (p 42). Yoko describes her assailant thus: '*... medium height and on the fat side, was wearing dark clothes and a pair of huge dark glasses*' (p 44).

None of the female characters is described in such a way as to portray her as an object of male sexual consumption. Neither are any of the male characters portrayed as a woman's sexual object. However, the central thrust of the novel is that women are victims of male violence; such violence manifests itself as domestic, public, sexual, psychological and physical. In other words, men's animal lust is a key factor in sexual violence.

Thus, the general assumption is that men are associated with violence while women are associated with being victims; men are oppressors, women are the oppressed. Women's violence against men is generally reactive rather than preemptive.

There are, however, some other assumptions about male and female characters. When Yoko interviews three people for the job of private investigator, we are not immediately told the gender of the '*three people*' interviewed (p 75). However, we are later told the 'best of the three candidates' is Victor Mulenga, and he is picked. It is safe to assume that the other two candidates, who are not named, are also male, like Mulenga. It is as if the job of investigating violent male-perpetrated crimes should be left to male investigators, as is the case with the investigation of Fred's murder in *Behind the Closed Door*.

Similarly, we are not told the police officers who arrest Yoko and Tazyia at the scene of Yoko's assault are male. However, it is safe to assume they are male because of their behavior and judgmental attitude towards the two ladies, whom they accuse of being prostitutes. A female police officer would probably be more understanding and less judgmental.

In terms of female characters, there are cases where the gender of a nurse is not mentioned but assumed, as in most of the other novels analysed: '*She moved from the bed and stood aside, while a nurse made the bed*' (p 50); '*One nurse had whispered to Yoko that her roommate had been assaulted by her in-laws following the death of her husband*' (p 52). In all probability, the nurse in each case is female.

However, the general style on the part of Muchelemba, unlike all the other writers, is to indicate the gender of a character, either immediately by using an adjective which also serves as a gender marker; other times, the gender of the character is indicated a little later, using a gender-marking pronoun, 'he' or 'she'. In other cases the word itself indicates the gender.

In the first case, which is more prominently utilised, the following serve as examples:

- ‘...female lawyer...’ (p 60)
- ‘...female professors...’ (p112)
- ‘...women vendors...’ (p 133)
- ‘...female motorist...’ (p 133)
- ‘...male tourist...’ (p 156)
- ‘...female soldier...’ (p 132)
- ‘...female parliamentarian...’ (p 146)
- ‘...male sympathisers...’ (p 147).

An example of the second case occurs during the narration of the trip to Western Province undertaken by Yoko and Stefan:

‘Fortunately, Yoko and Stefan didn’t have to stop at the beginning of the Kafue Bridge because they had been signalled to proceed. However, they were stopped at the other end by a soldier. “Good afternoon.”

“Good afternoon sir,” replied Yoko and Stefan together.

“Where are you coming from and where are you going?” the soldier asked.

“We’re coming from Lusaka,” replied Stefan. “We’re going to Mongu and then tomorrow morning proceed to Nangweshi on the west bank. We are going to attend an official meeting.”

“Do you have any reading material?” the soldier asked again.

Yoko gave him a set of newspapers and magazines...’ (p 163).

As the evidence shows, it is the pronoun ‘him’ used in the course of the narration of the encounter with the soldier that confirms the soldier’s gender. Before that, all we have are references to the character starting with ‘a soldier’ and graduating to the more definite ‘the soldier’. However, unlike elsewhere, Muchelemba does not use ‘male soldier’ (p 132). As the narration progresses, as readers we develop a suspicion that the soldier is male – and the use of ‘him’ confirms the suspicion.

In the third case, examples are when the terms ‘policemen’ (pp 39, 40, 72) and ‘police woman’ (pp 43, 133) are used. The terms immediately specify the gender, unlike ‘police officers’ or merely ‘police’, as used especially when narrating the events surrounding the murder scene in the first chapter of *Behind the Closed Door*.

In *Picking up the Pieces*, as already noted, Sililo, despite being female, gives greater significance to Luka, the male character, than to Litiya, the female character. The author's inclination to give more prominence to the male character, a characteristic one associates with the male perspective in writing, is evident from the very outset of the story. An analysis of the first two paragraphs of *Picking up the Pieces* eloquently attests to this fact:

'Luka Mumba looked at his watch. They still had a whole ten minutes of waiting before their appointment, scheduled for fourteen thirty hours. He was not an impatient man by nature but this particular incident would play havoc on anyone's nerves. He stood up and started pacing the floor of the waiting room while his wife sat with her hands on her lap, twisting her fingers and then she would change to working on her cuticles. Sensing her anxiety, he stopped his pacing and went to sit by her side taking both her hands in his. They smiled at the same time; each one trying to encourage the other.'

The Mumbas were a strikingly handsome couple. Nobody entering the room could fail to notice the tall, light complexioned man, good looking in a rugged sort of way. His wife, Litiya, was an equally tall, dark complexioned woman with a stylish body and a face that looked as if it is from "The Face of Africa" competition' (p 2).

The two paragraphs have between them a total of nine sentences. While Luka is mentioned by name in the very first sentence, Litiya's name is only mentioned in the last. Yet they are both in the same situation: waiting to be called by the doctor to know the results of the HIV and pregnancy tests. Moreover, even when Litiya's name is mentioned, it is only as a *wife* to Luka, who is clearly the point of focus. It is as if Litiya's significance in the story is only due to being Luka's wife; she is his appendage. In fact, the very first reference to Litiya is as a wife – in the fourth sentence: *'He stood up and started pacing the floor of the waiting room while his wife ...'*

What is building up, in effect, is a picture of Luka. We know he is waiting for an appointment and is impatient; we also know he is nervous – but a new piece of information is added: he has a wife. However, because the wife is not as important as him, we need not immediately know her name. Litiya's presence in the waiting room is first only *implied* in the second sentence: *'They still had...'* In this case, 'they' refers to Luka and *his wife*, as it does in the phrase, 'they smiled at the same time...' It would

have been possible to start the second sentence in this manner: ‘He and Litiya, his wife, still had a whole ten minutes ...’, or simply, ‘He and Litiya still had a whole ten minutes...’

The point is that the masculinisation of the two paragraphs is due as much to male perspective intrusion as to authorial choice of style and diction. Luka is the subject of most of the nine sentences. Even when both Luka and Litiya are the subject, she is covered under the marriage umbrella. Hence the use of the pronoun ‘they’. Even when ‘they’ is replaced by a noun, the couple are referred to as ‘the Mumbas’ (sentence no. 7). It is worth noting that, despite the fact that the author ensures that we know her maiden name (Mzyece), she never lets us know Litiya’s maiden name. While we know that Tisa is originally a Phiri, we always know Litiya as Mrs Mumba.

The fourth sentence, which goes a step further than the second one in the reference to Litiya, only mentions her in the dependent clause of the sentence while Luka is mentioned in the main clause, emphasising the fact that he is the main subject of the sentence:

- (a) *He stood up and started pacing the floor of the waiting room...*
- (b) *...while his wife sat with her hands on her lap, twisting her fingers and then she would change to working on her cuticles.*

Even the next sentence betrays the same style:

- (a) *Sensing her anxiety...*
- (b) *...he stopped his pacing and went to sit by her side taking both her hands in his.*

The subject is of course Luka, not Litiya. In part (a) of the sentence, what is important is not Litiya’s anxiety, but the fact that Luka *senses* it. Part (b) only shows the consequence of sensing the anxiety; that is, how Luka acts.

Sililo falls prey to the male perspective intrusion even in the language used to describe some of the female characters. The passage quoted above, for example, says of Litiya:

'His wife, Litia, was an equally tall, dark complexioned woman with a stylish body and a face that looked as if it is from "The Face of Africa" competition.' What is meant by 'stylish'? From whose perspective is the body 'stylish'? A man's or a woman's? The same problem is posed by the use of the expression 'The Face of Africa'. What does it mean in this context? Sililo also falls into the same trap of presenting women as objects of men's consumption; a feast for men's eyes. This is how she describes Tisa, at the time the woman meets Yelesani, her husband: *'She was tall and curvaceous, she wore a white cloth wrapped up to her armpits with a "nyakula" top. He was mesmerised by her shy smile that revealed an even set of white teeth and dark gums. Her large eyes were expressive and seemed to light up with her smile'* (p 130).

By contrast, the narrator describes Njamba, Luka's former boss at CICO, in this manner:

'... a short stocky man of about one point four metres tall, with a face that seemed to tilt upwards. This could be due to his short height, as he seemed to spend most of his life straining his neck so that he could look people in the eye when talking. At the age of forty-nine, this had become a habit even when he did not need to. He was at that age when men's hair lines receded and waist lines thickened. Mr. Njamba was not exempt from this affliction. He cut a comic figure in his favourite old-fashioned striped suit with a matching tie' (p 17).

There is nothing in the description of Njamba to suggest he is an object of 'consumption' by women's eyes. On the other hand, Luka's sexual appeal is only *implied*, but it would appear his distinct light complexion and height make him more easily noticeable. He is described as a *'tall, light complexioned man, good looking in a rugged sort of way'* (p 1). The narrator says: *'Nobody entering the room could fail to notice'* Luka (p 1). The narrator also says Luka and Litiya constitute *'a strikingly handsome couple'* (p 1). Elsewhere the narrator states that Luka has an effect on 'the fair sex' (p 18), adding: *'Whenever a woman entered the communal office, her eyes would inevitably rest on him and would linger a moment longer than necessary'* (p 18).

Thus, Luka is presented as the opposite number of an attractive woman. Sililo and the narrator present Luka from the female perspective. He is handsome – in the eyes of any woman – and, apparently, also has sexual appeal, unlike Njamba. Luka is projected as

an object to be feasted upon by women's eyes. In terms of desirability, Luka is to women what Mbilia is to men.

By a stroke of fate, the two cross each other's paths at the seminar in Lusaka. While Luka considers Mbilia as one of the many women who pay him undue attention, she has a design on him right from day one. He ignores her '*suggestive looks*' (p 20), but in the end he falls prey to her scheme. On the last day of the seminar, when he least expects, she knocks on the door of his room. When the door opens, the sight before him sweeps him off his feet:

'The door opened to reveal Miss Sleek, dressed in a flimsy dress that clung to her body, showing all the nice curves in the right places. Luka was transfixed, goggling at her. She was a sight for sore eyes and she couldn't have timed it better!' (p 20).

The description of Mbilia further underlines the intrusion of the male perspective. What is meant by the phrase, '*showing all the nice curves in the right places*'? Who determines whether or not the curves are in the 'right places'? Mbilia perfectly fits the bill of an object for men's eyes and lust.

In fact, Mbilia's initial entry into the seminar room is as dramatic as her introduction into the story by the narrator and author. The style of writing changes just to introduce Mbilia:

'Then, she came into the conference room! Rather late, but one could tell that she had planned a grand entrance. The effect this maneuver had on the gathering gave her a secret inner glow which heightened her confidence. She was smartly dressed in an immaculate black suit and a red top just showing under the jacket. A gold chain was around her neck with a pair of matching earrings dangling delicately from her well shaped ears enhancing the beauty of her long neck. On her head was a crown of thick long black hair, which looked like a wig... Her face was not that pretty, but whatever she lacked in facial beauty, she made up with a perfect body. Below the short skirt was a pair of perfect legs shod in black high-heeled shoes. Her walk was sleek and so were her manners. Wearing a Mona Lisa smile, she made a beeline for the man chairing the meeting and after she had purred her excuses, walked majestically to her seat. The men shifted uneasily in their chairs, while the women looked uncomfortable in their seats' (p 19).

Like the seminar participants, we cannot help noticing the grand entry of Mbilia into the picture, thanks to the narrator's sudden shift in style. Mbilia's sexual appeal is projected in no uncertain terms, provoking lust in the men and jealousy in the women.

5.3.4 Gender Stratification

An analysis of gender stratification in the the female-authored novels reveals similar trends to what obtains in the case of the male-authored novels.

Behind the Closed Door, for example, is a man's world, a reflection of the dominance of the male establishment. The female characters of the novel are heavily outnumbered by the male ones. It is worth noting that, despite being a female-authored work, *Behind the Closed Door* is slow to introduce female characters into the mainstream of the story.

This is evident when we read the novel's first chapter. On the first five pages of the story, no female character is introduced, although a number of male characters are introduced. On page 5, there is a mere mention of Florence Musonda, only because her name appears along with her deceased husband's on the second page of Fred's Bible. The first female character to be introduced is Florence's mother. Shortly after the main character, Florence, is introduced. She is introduced at the point when the story is already heavily populated with male characters. Thus, Florence is an almost unexpected entrant on the stage of the man's world painted in the first five pages.

The women of *Behind the Closed Door*, therefore, struggle to find their feet in the male establishment, as does Mwila and other women in *Changing Shadows*. Both within and outside their homes, the women of *Behind the Closed Door* find themselves controlled and dominated by men. It is the men who, within and outside the family, hold the positions of power. They control the economic structures.

Virtually all the top positions in the story are held by men. In the family context, Florence's father is an epitome of a husband and father in total control of his family; he is the head. Similarly, Inspector Zulu is the story's top cop and he is male, while the

church is headed by a man, Pastor Moonga. The father of the young girl rescued from murderers by Frederick is a headmaster of a school. When Florence lands her first job, she works for an institution owned by a Dr Larrynsin, a man.

Granted, not all men are in high positions in the story. Some men are thieves; there are cops, a barman, a police photographer, a schoolboy, graveyard caretaker, driver, house servant, a blind beggar, national registration officer, taxi driver, among others. However, the female characters in the story are presented mostly in relation to men – as wives or daughters of men. If they work, it is only because men have given them the job. Aside from men, the women have no real significance.

Despite being written by a more enlightened and gender-sensitive woman, *The Fight for Justice*, like *Behind the Closed Door*, presents male characters who are economically better off than the female characters – and that in spite of the fact that the text includes well-educated women characters. Even in the village context, women characters are at the base of the economic pyramid.

In the urban context, the male characters are generally in higher social, political and economic positions than the female characters, a scenario similar to what obtains in the other five novels. Thus, for example, high-profile male characters include James Bwalya - the judge in Yoko's case (p179); Col. Moloti (p 173); Stanley Maamba, Deputy Minister of Community Development and Women Affairs (p 136); the President (p 75); the Minister for Law and Order (p 74); Dr Lazarous Mooka, University of Zambia Senior Lecturer (p 81); police Supt. Mhango (p 42); Dr Clement Dube (p 48); Stefan Viser, PIDO Field Officer (p 9); and Sekeni, Managing Director of a manufacturing company (p 6).

There are more high-profile women in *The Fight for Justice* than in any of the other five novels. Apart from Yoko, a human rights activist as well as programme officer for PIDO, there are three women professors from the USA – Vanessa, Denise and Melanie;

there is also a parliamentarian (p 146), and Juliet Chishinga, another parliamentarian and Minister for Community Development and Women Affairs (p 112).

Among both male and female characters, there are also some people low on the social ladder. There are loafers and peasants on both sides, as well as individuals with low-paying jobs such as soldiers, police officers, teachers, among others.

Gender stratification in *Picking up the Pieces* generally follows the same trends as in the other novels, with male characters being generally more economically advantaged and better placed than female ones. While Litiya is the only female Managing Director of a business – her own business, for that matter – a number of male characters are in positions of influence and power. Luka is manager of his company's branch, as is Njamba. Mazila is a qualified doctor with some authority, while Yuli's brother is a Chief Medical Officer. Even in the case of the hospital in the UK where Mazila works, the authority lies in the hands of Mr. Right, the hospital administrator. Nakoyo is a highly educated university don.

Below the top bracket of male characters there is Akimu Sichula, junior salesman at Cakudza Insurance Company; Makono, a driver; teachers such as Kaniki and Chola, the science teacher who rapes Yuli; Kalukangu, a general worker at CICO. On the side of female characters, there are nurses; Mrs Ngoza, Luka's secretary; teachers (Masela and Yuli); Monde, a businesswoman; Donna, Luka's maid. Although the profession of Mbilia Mutale is not stated, one assumes she has a middle class job.

To a large extent, the gender stratification in the three female-authored novels, as is the case with the male-authored novels, generally reflects the Zambian socio-economic reality. In fact, as King observes, poverty 'does bear down especially hard on women' who are '*seldom as well-educated as men*'.³ ZARD are more specific on the Zambian situation: '*The labour market in Zambia is structured by credentials. Since most women lack the education and skills required in the labour market, their employability is constrained*'.⁴

5.3.5 Gender Identity

In *Behind the Closed Door*, Fred, despite taking the role of his wife in the kitchen, does not enjoy the work, which he ‘knows’ is for women, or wives. Amos, one of his associates during his criminal past, however, is an interesting case. Biologically male, Amos is a transvestite. He feels more comfortable functioning as a female. This leads to a homosexual encounter between Amos and Fred. “*There are times when I wish I had been made differently, you know,*” he says to Fred later. “*I adore being a woman... I am a happy woman behind this cold blooded male mask I possess*” (pp 172-3).

5.3.6 The Question of Marital Rape

Behind the Closed Door brings to the fore the question of whether or not rape can take place in the context of marriage. In the novel, the place of the man in the marital relationship is supreme, as are his decisions. Fred, who thinks a husband’s decisions should not be challenged by his wife, appears to be of the view that a wife should be sexually submissive to her husband regardless of whether or not she feels like having sex. The passage below illustrates this:

“I might take a few minutes, a day or two days, still I want you. It is quiet. I love you more under the natural kind of light, God given, than in man made light.” He paused. “Now, do you come voluntarily or do I have to carry you?”
“I am not in the right mood Fred.”
“Not that I expect you to be in such a mood. I am in the mood for you and that’s all that matters. Are you coming or do I carry you across?”
I remained silent. I wished he would see things my way. He pushed back the chair and getting up he walked towards me saying, “I see now you want to be carried”” (p 223).

As far as Fred is concerned, it does not matter whether or not Florence is in the mood for sex; what matters is that he is in the mood. As his wife, she is obligated to submit to him whenever he wants sex.

Interestingly, though, Florence neither resists nor protests when Fred forcibly carries her to the bedroom. Fred, on the other hand, does not apologise for his action which could pass for marital rape. It has been argued, however, that it is not possible for rape to

occur on the matrimonial bed because a husband is entitled to sex with his wife. She must therefore submit to him whenever he needs sexual satisfaction.

5.3.7 'Father' Trope

In *The Fight for Justice*, there is one case in which 'father' is used as a trope (p 153). The petition by the women to the President with regard to violence against women says, in part:

"Mr. President, we need your protection and the time is now. We therefore, from this very moment, entrust our lives individually and collectively into your hands, as the father of this nation. Thank you for according us this opportunity to present our petition" (p 153).

In the petition, the President, who of course is male, is perceived to play the same role as that of a father in the family. A father is essentially a leader of the family, a provider and protector. In this context, since the petition says, 'we need your protection', the President is considered to be the protector of his 'children', the citizens of the nation, particularly the oppressed women.

5.3.8 Womanhood Versus Motherhood

As already noted, a woman's significance, in most of the works analysed, is with respect to her roles as mother and or wife; yet she is a woman first and a wife or mother second. The tendency to exalt motherhood above womanhood manifests itself in the President's laconic response to the women's petition in *The Fight for Justice*:

"I feel greatly saddened by what I have heard here today because violence is a violation of human rights. My Government will therefore do everything in its powers to protect the present and future mothers of this nation. On behalf of my government and indeed on my own behalf, I thank all of you for bringing these unspeakable crimes to my attention. May God bless you all" (p 154).

Worthy of note is the fact that, while the women's petition is about violence against women, the president's response pledges protection to *mothers*. Where does this leave the single women, or married women with no children? Does a woman have to be a mother to deserve government protection? The other implication of the presidential pledge is that it is more interested in domestic violence because wives are promised protection from violent husbands. Thus, it seems the response is more inclined toward

addressing domestic violence while ‘forgetting’ public violence. On the other hand, the pledge implies that the government would protect mothers or wives who are attacked in their homes by criminals.

End Notes

1. Verbal interview conducted with the author, Susan Chitabanta
2. *The Post*, 25 June 2004
3. E M King, *Women's Education in Developing Countries*, 1993, p108
4. ZARD, *An Annotated Bibliography of Research on Zambian Women*, 1985, p30

CHAPTER SIX

6.0 FINAL SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

6.1 Introduction

The conclusions drawn from the analyses of the texts to a large extent reflect and are symptomatic of what obtains in Zambian society in terms of gender stratification, gender roles, feminisation of poverty, language use, male perceptions of the female, and vice versa, among other factors. Literature generally reflects and exposes the social realities of the society which produces it. There is truth in Ngugi wa Thiong'o's words delivered as part of a speech entitled 'Petals of Blood' at the official launch of his novel *Petals of Blood* in July 1977 in Nairobi, Ngugi wa Thiong'o said: "*Literature, as part of culture, is really a reflection of the material reality under which we live.*"

While it is true to say that culture affects and determines gender issues in any society, it is also true to say that language is a carrier of culture – and by extension this also affects and shapes gender issues in any society. Again, Ngugi's words reflect this fact: "*Language carries culture, and culture carries, particularly through orature and literature, the entire body of values by which we come to perceive ourselves and our place in the world.*"¹

It is therefore correct to say there is largely correlation between the extratextual, intratextual, intertextual and paratextual findings of this study. This chapter draws conclusions on the common denominators among women writers, as well as among both male and female writers.

6.2 Archetypes of Female Experience

Stratton's 'shallow grave' archetype, referred to in Chapter Two, is one of the threads that run through the works of the six female writers. The concept is based on two works by Buchi Emecheta – *The Slave Girl* and *The Joys of Motherhood*. In these two novels, Emecheta infuses the story of a nameless slave woman in the story-line. According to the story, the slave woman is ordained by Igbo tradition to be buried alive with her deceased mistress in order to serve her in the afterlife. However, the slave woman rebels,

determined to live. Hence she entreats the chief, who is both her owner and husband of the deceased, to spare her life. With determination she fights for her survival, struggling to get out of the shallow grave into which she has been pushed. Her spirited resistance amuses and offends the male mourners.

There are slight differences in the versions of the two novels. In the version of *The Joys of Motherhood*, the son of her dead mistress deals her crushing blow to the head to silence her but she is not immediately killed. However, before her death she thanks the chief for condemning the son's brutality and promises to show her gratitude by being reborn as a member of the chief's family. She is then dealt a final decisive blow. However, in the version of *The Slave Girl* the slave woman is only silenced by the damp earth piled on her and the dead mistress.

To Stratton, it is not only the shallow grave that provides an archetype; even the two women buried in the grave are archetypes of female experience as expressed in the writings of African women writers. The slave woman represents the women who fight but are eventually silenced by blows, either physical or psychological, which force them to submit to the necessity of conforming to the requirements imposed on them by the patriarchal societies. The slave woman also represents women who react to male oppression with ambivalence: they have a desire to both accept and reject their condition, as is illustrated by the fact that the slave woman expresses gratitude to the chief for rebuking his son while at the same time fighting to survive. The dead mistress, on the other hand, represents the women who, because of personal ambition, 'become active agents of patriarchy, perpetuating female enslavement – possibly into eternity' (*op cit.*, p147). Few women manage to struggle out of the shallow grave.

The image of a living death in a shallow grave is noticeable in the female works studied. In *Behind the Closed Door*, Florence is enclosed in the shallow grave of her humiliating rape. She is forced down by the soil of guilt, fear and insecurity. To Florence, escape can only come through the doorway of religion; forgiving and marrying the man who, along with her authoritarian father, is responsible for burying her in a shallow grave. For Litiya

in *Picking up the Pieces*, entrapment is in the form of her fear, uncertainty and insecurity brought about by Luka's infidelity. In the end, deliverance comes, but only through joint effort with her husband.

On the other hand, Tisa Phiri represents the woman who has received enough blows to remain forever silent and accept the shallow grave lifestyle. Despite the humiliation she suffers at the hands of her wayward husband, she accepts her condition and receives him with both hands when, like the biblical prodigal son, he finally returns to her to be nursed to his grave. Monde is another interesting woman. She resists having sex with her promiscuous husband, but agrees when he accepts to use condoms. Thus, she continues to live with him and carries out her roles as mother and wife despite the fact that he does not stop his philandering. She is schizophrenic, at once rejecting and accepting her condition.

Only in *The Fight for Justice* do we find 'liberated' women, epitomised by the life and experience of Yoko, who fights her way out of the shallow grave of male oppression to obtain a conviction for her tormentor. However, there are numerous women in the novel whose testimonies reflect, if nothing else, the fact that they are trapped in shallow graves dug by the shovel of male oppression and domination.

6.3 Archetypes of Male and Female Writing in Zambia

Despite the fact that Zambian women writers generally exhibit signs of falling within the tradition of other women writers, it can be said of them that, to some extent, they are also influenced by the male perspective in terms of style, and their projection of gender images and roles.

This is not peculiar to Zambian female writers, as the words of Mary Anne Ferguson (1973), a literary critic, attest: '*We must remember in discussing the history of images of women in literature that they reflect the masculine vision; masculine images have established our literary tradition and have controlled both male and female authors.*

Even among female authors – who have no distinctively feminine tradition – male attitudes persist...’²

According to the Fergusonian view, women who write outside the ‘male’ convention have been shunned: *‘Even such admittedly great writers as Emily Brontë and Emily Dickinson have been viewed condescendingly both by their contemporaries and by male critics today because they wrote like women’* (*ibid.*, p62).

One of the offshoots of the tendency by female writers to conform to the ‘conventional’ forms of writing, which are essentially forged by male perceptions and preferences, is that both male- and female-authored texts generally contain better images of men than of women. Among the prevalent negative images of women are: the gold digger, gossip, *femme vampire*, husband-grabber, silent onlooker, sex object. Compared to the men, the women are generally powerless, voiceless and passive. As sex objects, women are like flowers whose beauty fades. Even in the social, religious, economic and political hierarchy, female characters are on the lower end of the pyramid.

The image of woman as a source of destruction, however, has a long history in the human experience as well as in literature. In religion, for example, woman has been associated with being the source of destruction. Christianity and Judaism have Eve, while Greek religion has Pandora. In addition, Greek mythology has bequeathed world literature with Helen of Troy – lovable, self-indulgent, and irresponsible – a universal symbol of woman’s destructiveness; Circe, the woman with the power to bewitch and destroy men; Clytemnestra, devious and murderous. Mbilia Mutale of *Picking up the Pieces* and Naomi Sakala of *The Accusing Finger* join the league of women whose captivating and bewitching beauty leads to the downfall of many a man.

On the other hand, men are generally portrayed as powerful, authoritative, courageous, and adventurous, although even their philandering and immoral behaviour generally passes as adventurousness or ‘normal’ behaviour. Male characters are part of a powerful male establishment that controls economic, political and social trends.

Male sexuality features prominently in Zambian works of literature, particularly those written in English. Thus, the phallus is almost synonymous with male power and superiority. Some characters could even be said to ‘think’ with their phallus: when they see a woman, they can only see her as an object of their sexual lust. The phallus is a symbol of maleness and male power. In *Behind the Closed Door*, for example, Fred uses his sexual organ to assert his power over Florence – that is, by raping her. In *Ticklish Sensation*, the phallus is not only the means of experiencing the ticklish sensation in its fullness, but also a yardstick with which to measure the degree to which a man is a ‘real man’.

The six texts contain interesting archetypes of the relationship between male and female characters. The relationship is a dichotomy of binary opposites – of oppressor and oppressed, dominant class and subdominant, privileged and underprivileged, centre and periphery, man as the centre of focus, woman as Other. A former University of Zambia female professor once described the relationship between man and woman in Zambian society as being akin to that between ‘*the horse and the rider*’.³

The question is: why are women writers influenced by the male perspective in their writings? One reason is that female writers imitate male writers, whose works dominate the literary market in Zambia. Women writers ‘inherit’ the stereotype images of men and women already prevalent in Zambian literature and ‘pass them on’ to the next reader, and to the next women writer, without even thinking about them.

Ferguson (1973) argues that for centuries writing has been a male-dominated field, almost the preserve of men. Thus, the images of men in women in literature, according to Fergusonian view, are largely masculinised:

“We must remember in discussing the history of images of women in literature that they reflect the masculine vision; masculine images have established our literary tradition and have controlled both male and female authors. Even among female authors – who have no distinctively feminine tradition – male attitudes persist.”
(p82)

It has also been argued, with some degree of justification, that the preponderance of the male in Western literature has spilled over into African literature, hence the imbalance between male and female writers. In addition, it took long for African women writers to register their presence on the African literary scene. As Kenneth W Harrow (1998) observes, African women's writing 'was still in its earliest stages as late as the late 1980s'.⁴

Supporting the argument of the role of the colonial legacy, Mineke Schipper (1996) comments:

*'The fact that written literature in Africa mainly emerged from colonial times onwards has undoubtedly influenced the way in which it has portrayed men and women. This is as true for colonial literature written by Europeans and set in Africa as for African literature itself. Originally, it was mostly produced and dominated by male authors, because of dominant colonial and pre-colonial gender views in education matters ... Right up to the eighties, African literature and literary criticism has mainly been the province of male authors. So the question naturally arises whether, and to what extent, this has affected the way images of men and women are constructed, since literature by its very nature contributes to this process.'*⁵

The issues raised by Schipper are relevant to the study of gender in Zambian literature, since Zambia was a British colony and inherited a British educational system. The British or western legacy is evident in Zambian literature, not only in terms of the syllabuses for English language and literature, but also in terms of the images of male and female in the texts of the earlier post-independence years.

For instance, a 1984 UNESCO-sponsored survey by Tembo on gender stereotypes in lower secondary and primary school textbooks arrived at eyebrow-raising results:

*'The methodology was simple: the number of occurrences of male and female characters were tallied and their activities and characteristics noted. The results were instructive. The books contained many more male than female characters, and those female characters who appeared did so primarily in domestic roles and were presented as passive, stupid, and ignorant. Men's activities were admired, women's ignored.'*⁶

Harrow's assertion that women writers were latecomers on the African literary scene is also true of Zambia. The first indigenous Zambian woman writer of fiction to be published, Susan Chitabanta, only managed to have her work produced in the 80s. This

is partly attributable to the fact that, as demonstrated in Chapter Two, the educational system favoured boys over girls, and partly because of insensitivity on the part of publishers. According to one of Africa's best-known women writers, Ama Ata Aidoo, the attitudes of publishers and other elements of the book industry share some of the blame for the near-invisibility of women writers on the African scene.⁷ Being latecomers on the Zambian literary scene, women have not been able to exert as much influence on Zambian writing trends as the men. Much of what passes for models of writing in Zambian literature is male-generated. Women writers, therefore, unconsciously imitate male writers and their writing conventions.

One distinct area of difference between Zambian literary works in English authored by men and those authored by women is at the level of language and gender. Generally, male authors tend to describe female characters using sexually suggestive expressions or words, while female authors tend to use neutral or objective expressions. However, there are also, among female authors, cases of male perspective intrusion.

The relationship between the written works and the Zambian social realities is also obvious. In this regard, works of fiction can not only serve as a mirror of social reality but also as a perpetrator or opponent of gender imbalances and stereotypes. Thus, to a large extent the six novels mirror the reality of Zambian society in terms of gender issues. For example, the gender role stereotypes largely represent the true picture of what obtains in real life. Similarly, the gender gaps and gender imbalances portrayed in the six novels are to a large extent a true reflection of the situation in Zambian society. The feminisation of poverty so poignantly exposed by the analysis of the gender stratification in the six novels is a social reality. Along with children, women have to bear the brunt of the poverty situation in Zambia.⁸

Lower levels of literacy among women have worked to their disadvantage. Of the 44 per cent of the adult population who are unable to read and write, two-thirds are women, according to Zambia's National Gender Policy.⁹ The Gender Policy says of the feminisation of poverty:

*'Less educated persons have higher levels of poverty compared to their more educated counterparts. Moreover emphasis in education of women and girls was on enhancing their family and community roles. Similarly, in employment, women were treated as minors who could not do certain jobs or own certain assets without the consent of fathers, husbands or uncles. Employment opportunities were limited for women, given their education background and the lack of supportive legislation and gender sensitive policies.'*¹⁰

Despite being fewer than women in the Zambian population, men dominate women economically, politically, and socially. In 1996 Zambia's population was estimated to be at 9.5 million, with about 51 per cent being female. Yet the females' numbers do not translate into gender equality with males. In works of fiction, the women's situation is compounded by gender blindness on the part of the authors. For example, Wina's *The Accusing Finger* is a male world dominated by male characters. Gender blindness is also exhibited by *Behind the Closed Door*, especially in the way the author treats the issue of rape. Only Muchelemba appears to deliberately make an effort to address the gender imbalances in society by challenging gender role stereotypes and creating female characters with clout.

To a large extent the six novels also reflect the cultural realities of Zambian society. This is evident in the marriages, family relations and ceremonies, among others. The cultural beliefs perpetuate gender imbalances which disadvantage women. The National Gender Policy says of cultural practices and customs:

'They include traditional ways of socialising girls and boys. These are perpetrated through formal and informal institutions such as the family, schools, places of work and courts of law. These place a heavier burden on girls and women than boys and men in the division of labour particularly in the performance of household chores. Certain roles assigned to girls tend to make them submissive and develop an inferiority complex. This in turn affects their performance in education, employment and other aspects of life. Women's triple roles of childbearing, child rearing, community management and contributing to the economic production of the household places a heavy workload and affects them emotionally and psychologically. Cultural norms, values and taboos that lead to perpetuation of gender imbalances are transmitted through the socialisation process. Girls are socialised to become wives and mothers who are generally submissive and have a low opinion of themselves. The gender roles assigned to them are recorded by society as being of low value and generally they acquire attitudes that contribute little to their individual ambitions and development. Boys on the other hand are assigned roles which are highly valued and are prepared for being decision-makers.'

This had led to a situation where dominate in decision making at household and community level as well as being in control of family and community assets. Inevitably, women end up in a subordinate position with limited powers and the roles they play in the development process are not fully appreciated by society. (ibid., p11)

The subordinate position of Zambian women as reflected in the six novels, therefore, can be attributed to cultural practice, social engineering and socialisation, authorial choices and gender blindness, domination of the male tradition and perspective in the writing of fiction, gender role stereotyping, male perspective intrusion, and male chauvinism, *inter alia*. From the patriarchal point of view, male domination is 'normal'; a woman is expected to be dependent on a man, both within and outside the marriage context. A proverb from the Sena of Mozambique captures this attitude and belief: '*Never marry a woman with bigger feet than your own.*'¹¹

In the six novels, as in real life, the superior-inferior dichotomy between men and women, and the gender imbalances, are best summarised in the proverb: men have 'larger feet' than women, therefore they deserve 'bigger shoes'. Women are confined to their 'small' corner because they have 'smaller feet'.

End Notes

1. Ngugi wa Thiong'o, *Decolonising the Mind: The politics of language in African Literature*, p16
2. Mary Anne Ferguson, *Images of Women in Literature*, 1973. Quoted in ARIEL, Vol 12, No 3, July 1981, p62
3. Ludwig Sondashi, *Marriage is not for Weaklings*, 1977, p37
4. Kenneth W Harrow, 'A Review of Recent Critical Writings on African Women's Literature', article in, *Research in African Literatures*, Vol 29, No 3, Fall 1998, p171
5. Mineke Schipper, 'Emerging from the Shadows: Changing Patterns in Gender Matters', *Research in African Literature*, Vol 27, No 1, Spring 1996, p163
6. See E M King, 1993. *Women's Education in Developing Countries*, p123

7. For more on the subject, see: Juliana Makuchi Nfah-Abbenyi, 1997. *Gender in African Women's Writing: Identity, Sexuality, and Difference*. Indiana University Press, Bloomington and Indianapolis, p3
8. *NGO Beijing +10 Shadow Report on the Situation of Women in Zambia During the Period 1999-2004*, 2004, pxii
9. *National Gender Policy*, 2000, p8
10. *Ibid.*, p8
11. Mineke Schipper, 'An Empty Calabash?' – *Africa Quarterly*, Vol 44, p47

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