

INTERROGATING MASCULINITIES IN FEMALE-AUTHORED TEXTS: A CRITICAL  
ANALYSIS OF VALERIE TAGWIRA'S *THE UNCERTAINTY OF HOPE* AND NESHANI

ANDREAS' *THE PURPLE VIOLET OF OSHAANTU*

A THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT

OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF

MASTER OF ARTS IN ENGLISH STUDIES

OF

THE UNIVERSITY OF NAMIBIA

BY

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OCTOBER 2016

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## ABSTRACT

This thesis explores the depiction of masculinities in Valerie Tagwira's *The Uncertainty of Hope* and Neshani Andreas' *The Purple Violet of Oshaantu*. The portrayal of the male figures in African women writing is an area which has not been given a lot of attention in gender writing. The two novels were selected using purposive sampling as they portray an array of masculinities. The researcher employed masculinities, nego-feminism and STIWANISM as literary theories to underpin this study. Masculinities as a concept was used in order to magnify the construction of the male identity as it has a lot of bearing on the character of men. Nego-feminism places both genders side by side as men and women try to negotiate their spaces in life. STIWANISM mirrors how the negotiated spaces between men and women bring about a transformed society in which negative patriarchal values melt away. A qualitative research design was adopted to interpret the portrayal of masculinities in the two novels. Content analysis was used to analyse the two novels for the portrayal of the male characters. The study indicated that the male figures identities are a product of a social construct which differs from community to community, and are constantly subject to change. The study further noted that, as portrayed by Andreas and Tagwira, some men are good and some exploit the patriarchal dividend of power and hold on to the characteristics of hegemonic masculinity. Among other themes that came up in the research are; emasculation of masculinity- reaction of thwarted personhood, the threatening scourge of HIV/AIDS, alternative masculinity-egalitarian existence, patriarchal values; exploitation of women, disinheritance of women and coping strategies in face of adversity. From the various roles men play in the texts, it can be concluded that the two authors portray masculinities as they are experienced in daily life where historical periods determine their different reactions to

situations and particularly interesting is that there are indeed 'good men' who are role models and the African women writers celebrate them.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank God for giving me a second lease on life, and for health and strength during the writing of this thesis. Professor Kangira, I would not have achieved this had it not been for your diplomatic and calm way of changing things. I would like to thank Dr Mlambo for his unfailing support, guidance, for always nudging me to go on and for believing in me. You are a great supervisor. Ms C. Beyer, my sincere gratitude for your assistance. I would also like to thank Dr T. Smit for always spurring me on wherever we met. My special gratitude to my two daughters, Kundai and Kunashe for their unwavering emotional and spiritual support, technical assistance and their belief that I could make it. Ms Aina Simson, thank you for always being there for me when things went wrong with the computer, and for always reminding me that I could do it whenever I doubted myself. Finally, I would like to thank Mr Engels for allowing me to leave work before time in order for me to catch on lecture times.

## **DEDICATION**

This thesis is dedicated to my late father James Zhuwarara, my two brothers, Rino and David Zhuwarara, for they are images of good men and to Kundai and Kunashe my jewels.

**DECLARATION**

I, Netty Zhuwarara, hereby declare that this study is a true reflection of my own research, and that this work, or part thereof has not been submitted for a degree in any institution of higher education.

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## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION AND ORIENTATION

#### 1.1. Introduction

This chapter serves as an introduction to the study. The chapter discusses the orientation of the study, statement of the problem, significance of the study, limitations of the study and the organisation of the study.

#### 1.2. Orientation of the proposed study

Multiple studies (Babamiri, Dashtpeyma & Jamil, 2014; Muchemwa & Muponde, 2007; Mutunda, 2009) have been conducted on gender issues in many literary works. Gender as a term includes both femininity and masculinity, but this study's focal point is on masculinity. Hence the definition of the term is imperative. It is a multifaceted concept which cannot be pinned down to a single definition as it has been examined "from diverse theoretical perspectives: biological, anthropological, psychological and sociological" (Mutunda, 2009, p. 20). According to Bertens (2014), masculinity is a traditional gender role which is culturally constructed with connotations of strength, rationality, stoicism and self-reliance. Each society has a different definition of manhood. It is from this pluralistic definition of masculinity that the writer will interrogate the presentation of the male figures in the selected texts. The greater percentage of the conducted studies have explored how masculinities have behaved towards female figures, in

other words, they focused on the power at play between male and female relations. This approach has drawn a template of victimhood of the female character. The study moves away from the traditional binaries which discuss male versus female, victimiser versus victim, evil versus good and enslaver versus enslaved types of criticism to texts written by women. The focus is to give a nuanced study on masculinities and femininities whose boundaries are constantly changing (Muponde & Muchemwa, 2007). Consequently, this study seeks to show how the female authors portray the male figures; whether this portrayal is a stereotypical depiction or a balanced approach which goes beyond the obvious and touching the underlying reasons and conditions in *The Uncertainty of Hope*, and *The Purple Violet of Oshaantu*.

### **1.3. Statement of the problem**

A plethora of gender studies (Showalter, as cited in Karmarker 2014); Roen-Zvi, 2013; Karmarkar, 2014), have paid more attention on the representation of the female character because of the late resurgence of her voice in the literary world. Most of the references to the male figure have been dominantly about his power and control over the subaltern. Consequently, a limited research has been focused on the images of men in female-authored texts and there is “the danger of a single story” (Chimamanda, 2014, p. 3) in the way critics and scholars alike, have concentrated on the presentation of female characters in texts by both male and female authors. This approach has seen the interrogation of the male figure in female literary works taking back stage.

Mutunda (2009) raises the concern that little attention has been given to the analysis of women’s writing on masculinities, as men only served as a backdrop against which to analyse African

women's experiences. Manhood has been presented mainly by focusing on how it negatively impacts on the female figure but hardly looking at the forces and circumstances which shape it into the roles it plays. At the same time women characters are viewed as heroines and paragons of resilience, with men afforded little space in female-authored-texts and their criticism. The idea of "a good man" has become alien as the man is viewed as an embodiment of evil by critics. Yet the authors many times present exemplary marriages with excellent father figures, and good partnerships between genders in a complimentary existence. The question is; are there no balanced representations of male figures which express positive and negative qualities within the literary works written by women? Or is it the same scenario over which feminist critics cry foul play on the stereotypical image of a woman figure in male-authored texts? Such questions will be answered by this study which seeks to offer a nuanced understanding of how African women writers present males in the literary works - whether the male figures can be viewed acting in a manner that represses or liberates in the two selected novels.

#### **1.4. Objectives of the study**

This study seeks to:

- Evaluate how both selected female authors portray male figures, in their various dimensions in the society;
- Analyse how the male characters are presented playing diverse masculine roles in their socio-cultural settings;
- Evaluate the portraits of masculinity in Neshani and Tagwira's fiction as images of African men defined by specific backgrounds.

### **1.5. Significance of the study**

The study will contribute to the existing narrow body of literature on masculinity and help balance the critical gender writing and criticism in Africa where the reference to men might become 'the ignored matter.' By using masculinities and STIWANISM, nego-feminism the study will inform other studies on gender about the availability of space for femininity and masculinity in literary works. This will bring a better understanding of the complex interlinking of any studies on gender.

### **1.6. Limitation of the study**

This study explored how the female writers portray the male figures in *The Purple Violet of Oshaantu* by Neshani Andreas, a Namibian writer and *The Uncertainty of Hope* by Valerie Tagwira, a Zimbabwean writer. Thus the study was limited to the two novels which allowed an in-depth analysis. Furthermore, the study was theoretically limited to the use of masculinities, STIWANISM and nego-feminism as theoretical lenses, even though there are many literary theories that can be used and this may consequently limit the breadth of the findings.

### **1.7. Outline of the chapters**

This study comprises of five chapters which are subdivided into titles and subtitles. The first chapter provides the introduction, orientation, statement of the problem, significance and limitation of the study. Chapter two reviews literature on what is masculinity, how masculinities are presented in female writing and the concept of masculinities, STIWANISM and nego-feminism as theories are discussed. Chapter three presents the research methodology used for the study. Chapter four discusses the presentation of masculinities in *The Purple Violet of Oshaantu* and *The Uncertainty of Hope* and discusses the character relationship, emerging themes and evaluates the balance in the female presentation of the male character. The final chapter presents the conclusion and offers recommendations.

## CHAPTER: 2

### LITERATURE REVIEW

#### 2.1. Introduction

The study explores the articulation of masculinities in female-authored texts; *The Purple Violet of Oshaantu* by Neshani Andreas and *The Uncertainty of Hope* by Valerie Tagwira. This literature review firstly focuses on the history of the emergence of the women writers globally and then positions the African women writers within their period. Subsequently, it discusses the different perspectives on what it is to be a man and the treatment of the male figures by women writers. The research further critiques the different views on how masculinities are socially and culturally constructed in different African societies and their reaction to their prescribed roles. It also reviews the salient tenets of the three theoretical frameworks in detail; Masculinities, STIWANISM and nego-feminism as the magnifying lenses which position both men and women on the stage of literary works. Finally, the literature review concludes by identifying the gaps in literature in the texts; *The Purple Violet of Oshaantu* and *The Uncertainty of Hope*.

#### 2.2. The female pen mirrors masculinities: Who is the woman writer?

It is imperative to briefly look at the background of the emergence of women writers on the literary scene which was predominantly occupied by men. Women writers can be nestled roughly into three developmental stages according to Showalter's analysis (as cited in Karmarkar, 2014). The first phase falls in between 1820 and 1880, championed by the Bronte Sisters, George Elliot

and Elizabeth Gaskell. They had to write under pseudonyms of male in order to match the intellectual of the male culture. The second phase was between 1880 and 1920 and this was under Feminist Movement, represented by Elizabeth Robins and Francis Trollope. This generation characterises a woman as a writer of protest against male values and rejects the text that depicted a woman as a stereotype and opposed the traditional injustice done to women. It is important to note that some male writers joined hands with female writers to dramatise the ordeals of wronged womanhood. The third phase which spanned from 1920 onwards women writers stopped both imitation and protest against unequal depiction of woman in male writing. Showalter (as cited in Karmarkar, 2014, p. 35) defines a woman writer as a “producer of her own text, in her own language, by her own thoughts which are combined by her own feelings and reactions.” This supports the idea that the female writing is no longer shaped by what is expected by society but has found a voice according to her objectivity in her understanding of the world she exists in.

The above developmental stages of women writing apply to the English-American women writers. As for her counterpart; the African woman legged behind in writing as her work domain was restricted to her household. Sandwiched in between patriarchy and colonialism, a black woman’s access to education in Africa took longer than her Western counterpart. Pasi (2014, p. 32), observes that “African-American women’s problem was that of being born black and being a woman, hence she was segregated not only as a woman.” Though at a later period, the black woman’s experience can be paralleled to that of African-American’s experience of fighting against oppression, not only against racism, but also against her own black man. Central to African women’s literature are motives of resistance, triumph, quests for a better life, and emancipation from racism, poverty and sexism. In this context women find liberation from the

subjugation of their gender by the male in society through writing. Their main aim was to right the wrongs of women representations in male writing; where their place was tied to the hearth. Namibian and Zimbabwean women writers are no exception from the same oppression from patriarchy, colonial racism and poverty.

### **2.3. Perspectives on how to be a man**

The presentation of masculinities in female writing can be established after looking at different perspectives by other scholars and critics on what is to be a man. As much as the basic meaning is based on the traditional definition of masculinity. According to Mutunda (2009, p. 23) “There is no one form of masculinity in Africa. Rather, there are multiple and sometimes ambiguous meanings of African masculinities; they are fluid and change over time and in different settings.” Mutunda’s observation might explain how difficult it is for the African male figures to understand their identity in the African context because the role attributed to them is a social construct which varies from society to society. Mutunda’s idea resonates with Jackson (1990, p. 264) who states that “masculinity personality or identity is not only an expression of an innate self but a social construction which can be understood by interrogating the social, psychological and cultural forces that have gone into the making of that masculine identity.” The character of a male figure derived from such an intricate background becomes complex, and that makes it difficult to understand the forces at play and the societal expectations.

The position of the masculinities becomes more precarious as they try to strike a balance between how they feel as individuals and what is expected of them, more so as the image



constantly keeps taking different forms and personalities with the changing of times. The same male figure is not only derived from a social construct but is also shaped by history as it plays an important role in shaping personalities according to events at play at any given time. (Jackson, 1990) asserts that the development of personality can never be isolated from the historical and social structures that shape a specific development and within which it exists. Are the masculinities in a position to determine how they should behave towards their counterparts, the women? It is against such a background and context that African women authors articulate and process the images of men in their literary works. This could be what contributes to the varied characters of men portrayed in women's fictional writing. Another critic, Adichie (2014), postulates that society stifles the humanity of boys by defining masculinity in a very narrow way where it is hard, and becomes a small cage in which boys are put. The same view of how the male image is constructed is shared by Lemon (2010), when describing how the traditional male figure is defined as tough, objective, rational, independent, achievement-oriented, aggressive, virile and emotionally inexpressive. This affirms that masculinity is a socially constructed identity and brings out the complexity of characters of the male representations in fictional writing. It is from this thread of argument therefore that the present study sought to explore the two novels, *The Purple Violet of Oshaantu* and *The Uncertainty of Hope*, to make an analysis of presentation of masculinities.

In response to male-written literary texts which presented women as a legal minor, many feminist critics have drawn a template of the male figure whose environment has edited out the female's existence through the patriarchal structures which dictate the parameters within which the 'she' operates. Zhuwarara (2001) expresses the reaction of women writers very aptly when commenting on how the pen becomes a relentless scalpel with which the woman writer tries to

expose how men try to deny their women folk equality. Through their writing, women try to create balance between the genders. It is against such a background that this study examines how women writers treat the male figure, after the female image has occupied the peripheral position demarcated by the fireplace, in male-authored texts. Muchemwa and Muponde (2007, p. xxi) observe that despite the stifling patriarchal structures, the urban spaces created by colonialism, opened opportunities for “black women who, although controlled and constrained by the colonial system and traditional black patriarchy, find in the urban instabilities and insecurities cracks through which to reconfigure black womanhood outside of matrimony and maternity.” This comment made by Muchemwa and Muponde on *Butterfly Burning* (Vera), reveals that the African women’s literature depicts women who are finding a new identity and fulfilment outside the institution of marriage and motherhood. They are no longer trapped and confined to the hearth. The emerging new woman threatens the core existence of manhood. In response to that perception in gender relations, female writers have created a “new model of an increasingly autonomous, sexually empowered, and assertive female figure which has also posed as a threat to contemporary conceptions of masculinity” (Schoch, 2013, p. 3). This has ensured the relentless battle of the sexes in the context of the emergence of the economically empowered woman who questions the inferior status accorded to her by her male counterpart.

Novelists like Flora Nwapa and Buchi Emecheta construct a new female identity that confronts the traditional conceptions of wifhood and motherhood as a sole and inescapable fate of African womanhood (Oloruntoba-Oju & Oloruntaba-Oju, 2013). This leaves the male figure in a rather confused state of uncertainty because of the masculine identity and role which have become obscure. Faced with the new woman, hegemonic masculinity has been thrown into a crisis where its life is precariously hanging on a thin thread. Such conditions leave a male character unsure of

how to react or the line of action to take as a man in any institution, be it in a marriage or at the work place. The changing roles of women directly challenge the identity of man whose image has been born, bred and nurtured in patriarchal traditional structure. Consequently, the impact of such magnitude can find expression through the actions and characters of the male figures in literary works.

The fact that the man can no longer consider a woman as an object to dehumanise, to neglect or to abuse her, raises another question: how does the same woman portray the man? Is there any sensitivity in women's writing in the way men are presented or it is a superficial portrayal without an in depth understanding of how it is like to be a man in such challenging circumstances? Babamiri, Dashtpeyma and Jamali (2014) affirm that the writing of women is taking a different dimension in their approach towards the presentation of the images of manhood. These critics assert that the negative experiences of women at the hands of men has set off a certain flair in the writing, leading to a representation of an egalitarian structure in which both male and females achieve the same right, enjoy it and live happily besides each other. Musekiwa (2012) has also pointed out that women's contribution to literature is offering an alternative perspective on issues affecting their society. This 'alternative perspective' is not limited to certain issues but is extended to the literary writing in terms of the male characters and images crafted by women authors.

The same notion is shared by Mlambo (2014) when he comments that individuals in a fictional society have a choice to choose between being a stereotypical African male who inflicts pain on his family or cares for them. This affirms that the literary writing of women is moving away from depicting masculinity using negative connotations but offering a balanced perspective. As much as the woman writer's task is compounded by trying to unravel the patriarchal shackles

and neutralising the initial overwhelming predominance of the male voice in fiction; there is a deliberate effort to depict society as she experiences it. This approach validates Molvaer's reflection as he opines that writers hold a mirror up to their society and a society finds expression through its authors and this way it is the co-author of literary works (as cited in Justus, Kizito & Makhokha (2011). This approach in gender writing has afforded space for the male character, and it resonates with Magosvongwe and Nyameda's (2014) claim that writers depict experiences according to their own understanding of their lived experiences culturally, economically, historically and socially.

It is in the light of the position and treatment of the male figure in literary writing and criticism that Muponde and Muchemwa (2007) consider masculinity and fatherhood in Zimbabwe as a field of academic study that has suffered long and unnecessary neglect. They argue that critical practices deny the existence of the marginalised and emerging masculinities. This is a shared notion by other critics who have noted that more focus is on the power at play between male and female relations. This approach has drawn a template of victimhood of the female character and ignored the male figures who suffer the same fate under hegemonic masculinity.

Muponde (2007) further argues that masculinity does not only prey on women and children but also on itself. The critics in *Manning the Nation* (2007) have approached the subject of masculinities from various angles which have seen men negotiating forms of fatherhood and manhood, in colonial and urban spaces, performing various forms of manhood in drama, fathering the nation, and seeking to explain why fathers cannot tell children stories. The same man is faced with a world whose economy is generating instability more so in the advent of deadly diseases such as HIV/AIDS. This thesis analyses masculinities as they play different roles, in the process unmasking the uncertainties underlying the existence of the male figure both

in literary writing and in the real world. The pre-occupation with masculinity as it is depicted by female authors is in itself unique in so far as it is likely to enrich debates on gender studies in Southern Africa. This thesis is therefore an affirmation of the need to fill in some of the existing gaps where the interrogation of masculinities lags behind in gender studies. Such an approach in writing will enrich debates about gender as masculinity comes under a critical examination as part of the discussion of *The Uncertainty of Hope* by Valerie Tagwira and *The Purple Violet of Oshaantu* by Andreas Neshani;

## 2. Gaps in literature

Reference to the position and space that Namibian literature occupies in relation to the rest of the Southern African region gives context to the text. *The Purple Violet of Oshaantu* (2001) by Neshani Andreas. Namibia being one of the last countries to gain independence and the youngest country in the region, saw its literary works emerging late on the literary landscape. Namibian literature has been overshadowed by literature from South Africa, Malawi, Zambia and Zimbabwe. Hence, Andreas' *The Purple Violet of Oshaantu* became a debut as it is work written by a female writer finding a voice for the subaltern in a patriarchal society.

In order to find gaps in literature, a survey was carried out to find how critics and scholars have evaluated and from what angles they have critiqued the *The Purple Violet of Oshaantu*. Ogbeide (2013, p. 54), in the article "Violet without Purple" focused on women's position of victimhood of spousal abuse. He argues that wife battering continues, courtesy of the silence of the fairer sex, until such a time that women can define their own existence by freeing themselves from the oppressive patriarchal yoke. He emphasises the essence of the network of friendship among the

women as it paves a way for the central character to undergo a radical transformation at the end. Another scholar Rhode (2003), analyses Andreas' literary work bench-marked in Gaytri Spivak's essay, "Can the Subaltern Speak?" In other words, can a female voice speak and be heard in the patriarchal context in the text. This approach deals with the position of women in Namibia in relation to violence meted out on them by the male gender. The suppression of women is not only from the indigenous patriarchy, but also from the influence of colonial powers and Christianity. Rhode's argument is on whether the female gender has room to tell their own stories under such gender relations in the post-colonial society.

Yet, another critic (Weiss, 2006), made a comparative analysis on Bessie Head's *Maru*, *Yvonne Vera's Stone Virgins* and *The Purple Violet of Oshaantu* in "Utter(ing) Silences." Weiss (2006) focuses on whether women portrayed in these texts are making their voice heard through their silence. The approach echoes Charles Mungoshi, a Zimbabwean writer's book in Shona called "*Kunyarara hakusi kutaura?*" which means 'Is silence not talking?' In *The Purple Violet of Oshaantu*, Weiss (2006) focuses on this aspect whereby the main character finds a voice through her actions to protest against patriarchal and cultural forms of oppression which victimise her.

Many critics and scholars alike, have studied and written about the text, but it seems to be lopsided. The angle has been one-dimensional; the tug of war between the male and female genders magnifying the dispossessed position of the latter and how patriarchy objectifies it. Hence this research focused on how the female writers treat and present masculinities in their works using African feminism and masculinities. In other words, the present has to sought to move beyond the often touched (even though relevant) male-female enmity by demonstrating that the author has managed to give the readers a complete view through her presentation of masculinities as represented by Michael, Kauna's father and Mukwankala' husband.

A general background to the Zimbabwean literary developmental stages of writing would place *The Uncertainty of Hope* (2006) by Valerie Tagwira, a female writer, in a certain category of its own. Zimbabwean literature can be divided into three different generations; the first generation's writing was steeped in cultural setting and mostly written in Ndebele and Shona which are the main languages in Zimbabwe (Zhuwarara, 2001). One of the goals was to preserve culture; a direct response to the coming of colonisation and the infiltration of the Western culture. The second generation of writers, whose setting was predominantly urban, were responding to the poverty and alienation from the land imposed by colonisation. Both generations were dominated by male writers (Zhuwarara, 2001). The next generation saw the emerging voice of the female writers who subtly, yet powerfully, questioned the traditions and patriarchy (Coxson, 2006). Though Tagwira's prose belongs to the third generation of female writers; it becomes one of the lengthy novels written by a female writer who chronicles one of the most difficult economic periods in contemporary Zimbabwean history, aptly known as the "Zimbabwean crisis" (Mlambo, 2014). Tagwira brings a fresh perspective on Zimbabwean literature, as she writes within the period and focuses on independent Zimbabwean society, politics and how the postcolonial leadership failed to improve the livelihood of the black people. This is a dimension which has received attention from some critics (Mlambo, 2011; Nyameda, 2013).

*The Uncertainty of Hope* has received considerable attention from critics, scholars and other writers as the literary work deals with a contemporary period and the concerns of the ordinary people. Mlambo (2011) used the resilience theory to explore how ordinary people adopted coping strategies in order to survive against all odds. The critic brings out the complexities of urban life at a time of crisis in Zimbabwe through the characters in the text. The emphasis by Mlambo was on strengths rather than vulnerability of the characters and providing reliable

pointers to probable solutions. Though Mlambo touched on a number of critical issues, he does not look at how masculinities are presented as individuals play different roles. Another critic, Nyambi (2012), approached the novel more from a political perspective where the focus was on how the novelistic descriptions can sway emotions by representation of arresting scenes of violence, homelessness, child labour, HIV/AIDS and the deterioration of victims' everyday life. The analysis regards the text's potential to make the reader doubt the state version of the event "Operation Murambatsvina" (clean up dirt) and its aftermath. Hence, the analytical focus is on the effective potential of the novel, as well as on the political consequences of emotions aroused by its descriptions. What remained uninvestigated in Nyambi's analysis are the gender relations which are at play, especially from African theorisation like; nego-feminism, masculinities concept and STIWANISM.

Magosvongwe and Nyamande (2014), in their article "Urban youth unemployment in Zimbabwe," use a comparative approach of *The Uncertainty of Hope* by Tagwira, *The Book of Not* by Dangarembga and Gappa's *An Elegy for Easterly*, to showcase how the female-authored texts depict this phenomenon. The critics used Asante Molefi Keita's Afrocentric "Location Theory" to analyse how the post-2000 female authors use their narratives to articulate the urban youth unemployment against the backdrop of the socio-economic crisis culminating from post-2000 economic meltdown. At the same time they interrogated the position of the female authors as they record the socio-historical experiences constituting the bedrock of urban youth unemployment in their fictional narratives. The critics' interest is embedded in the fact that the same socio-historical accounts of the period under question were mainly dominated by male authors. All these writers have critiqued the text from different perspectives and focused on particular issues concerning the experiences of the Zimbabwean people in the fictional narrative,



as a whole group of people. Yet, no one has looked at the presentation of masculinity and how the writers go beyond the surface as they also present “the unsaid” female – male relations which work positively.

Though *The Uncertainty of Hope* and *The Purple Violet of Oshaantu* have both received endless critiquing and analyses from scholars, critics and writers, the scholarly perspectives are either on the objectivity of the female gender engendered in the patriarchal environment, for the latter narrative, and for the other novel, the focus has been on abject poverty, political implications, the scourge of HIV/AIDS and the resilience within the human being as a coping strategy. From the handful discussed critiques, no critic has looked at the presentation of the male character as it unfolds assuming numerous roles in both narratives. This research focuses on this downplayed particular area of the texts. Such an approach in writing will enrich debates about gender as masculinity comes under a critical examination as part of the discussion of *The Uncertainty of Hope* and *The Purple Violet of Oshaantu*; which have the potential to bring out the positions of men and women in various relationships. By using masculinities, nego-feminism and STIWANISM as perspective lenses, this study sought to magnify the powers at play between men and women relations, and bring out whether the woman is the ‘victim’ and the man the ‘victimiser’ or they exist in complementary relations, in the two selected literary works.

## 2. Theoretical lenses

### 2.2. Masculinities

Masculinities cannot be pinned down to one definition as it is determined, produced and orchestrated from the anthropological, biological, psychological and sociological perspectives. From the anthropological perspective, gender differences come from specific adaptations to the environment while others describe the cultural variations of gender roles, seeking to demonstrate the fluidity of gender and the primacy of cultural organisation (Mutunda, 2009). Whereas the biological perspective argues that the biological differences between men and women are that men are born with the masculinity make-up as part of their genetic constitution. This definition is substantiated by Beyon (as cited in Mutunda, 2009), in which he describes masculinity as a “standardized container, fixed by biology, into which all men can be placed, something natural that can even be measured in terms of physical attributes” (p. 41). In other words, the physical body is believed to determine what masculinity is. Mutunda (2009) further states that from the sociological perspective, masculinity is based on sex-roles established in institutions like family, schools and religious organisations. These structure people to behave in the ways that are socially acceptable and suitable to their gender.

Psychological models have also contributed to the studies of gender roles. Mutunda (2009) further elaborates on how psychological studies have looked at the sequences of development of men and women. They claim that because boys distance themselves from the mother, it is a precondition for independence and autonomy. Consequentially, it is natural for men to exhibit independence and abstract reasoning. Thus, suggesting that women lag behind as they fail to

negotiate these psychological developmental stages. This approach to the development of masculinity has made feminists to contest that male children do not have higher capacity for abstract reasoning, but it is more based on a social context. The present researcher tends to agree with this notion as many societies expect boys to be more emotionally detached and repressed, whilst girls are ushered into nurturing roles as they maintain a close relationship with their mothers. Such roles are a social construct, as both men and women behave according to societal expectations; a man is not a man when he cries at someone's death and a woman who does not show such emotions is not considered humane. For example Sesotho culture has a proverb; "Munna kinku, haale," which means a man is a sheep, he does not cry. Masculinity behavioural traits and practices are prescribed by the way society socialises men.

The above different perspectives show that the concept of masculinity is complex, as it can be viewed from different angles. This study in particular, used the concept of masculinity as a social and cultural construct. In the last thirty years gender studies have been broadened by emerging interests in the development of focus on men and the masculinity dimension. An article by Carrigan, Connell and Lee (1995) introduced the concept of "hegemonic masculinity." This form of masculinity became dominant in society, and it silenced all other forms and combated alternative visions of masculinities. Hegemonic masculinity is embedded in the cultural ideal of what it is to be a man. This view of masculinity has enjoyed dominance in society; as it created a cultural image of what it means to be a real man. Connell as cited in (Ouzgane & Morrell, 2005) responded to that concept by refuting the idea that men are the same. That was the beginning of the shift of the concept of masculinity to the concept of masculinities. Since then the field has widened because some critics feel "that men have been overlooked, taken for granted, or treated as a homogenous category" (Ouzgane & Morrell, 2005, p. 7), hence the need to correct the

created imbalance. The concept of masculinities is able to embrace many other emerging forms, as masculinities are not static but are evolving all the time.

Connell (1997) defines masculinities as a concept which is derived from gender as a social construct based on patterns and practices associated with the position of men in any society's set of gender relations. Connell (1997) further developed the concept of "masculinity, to the extent that the term can be briefly defined as simultaneously a place in gender relations, practices through which men and women engage that place of gender, and effects of these practices in bodily experience, personality and culture" (Connell, 2005, p.71). From Connell's perspective, masculinity is relational; that is to say, it exists in relation to femininity. This aspect is crucial to this study, as the study examines masculinity on two-folds; how men play their roles in relation to women and how the female authors use their lens to articulate the male gender.

Furthermore, it has to be emphasised that "unlike maleness, which is a biological state, masculinity, is a gender identity category constructed socially and interpreted from a cultural view" (Mutunda, 2009, p.18). Mutunda (2009), further points out that masculinity has ambiguous and multiple meanings according to contexts which change with time. This view of the multiplicity and fluidity of masculinity is shared by Ouzgane and Morrell (2005), who posit that there are many ways of viewing and interpreting masculinity, but there is need to understand in terms of their origins and consequences. This is the gap which this study has identified and to fill up this gap, the fictional works by women writers serve as the materials for the interrogation of this fluid phenomenon.

In order to place the object of discussion (masculinity) in context, there is need to discuss the different views on African masculinities. This would support the idea that masculinity is not one

entity that is immutable. There is no one form of masculinity in Africa, like anywhere else in the rest of the world. According to Lindsay and Miescher (as cited in Mutunda, 2009), masculinity refers to a cluster of norms, values and behavioural patterns which express explicit and implicit expectations of how men should act and behave towards others. This suggests that there is no typical “real” man in Africa and nor a particular ‘model’ of a man, but various ways of being a man. It entails that different societies or communities in Africa do not share or have the same ideas about what it is to be a man; from culture to culture, community to community, a real man is expressed differently. Connell (2005) aptly defines masculinity as configurations of practice that are accomplished in social action and, therefore, can differ to gender relations in a particular setting. Connell’s definition is substantiated by studies of various communities in Africa which confirm the designed practices of what it is to be a man. The geographical setting, culture, political elements, economic aspects and gender relations play a pivotal role in the definition of a man, and the presentation of masculinities in the selected novels provides valuable insight to these multifaceted arguments.

Dover (2005) observes that for the Goba tribe in a Zambian village the concept of “masculinity and femininity juxtapose a hard, erect, strong and potent male body to a soft, round and yielding body” (p. 174). In this case boys are encouraged to be tough and self-reliant for their future roles as heads of a households. The process of becoming a man involves the orientation of the boy towards a male world and identification with the “father.” This creates a separate sphere of values and attributes. At the same time, the girls continue to identify with the mother in order to associate with their reproductive and domestic roles. Such a social construct in the Goba tribe creates hegemonic masculinity through the beliefs of what is expected of the male gender. The same concept of masculinity is shared by the Hausa men, but with slight variations. Salamone

(2005) argues that Hausa men serve as household heads and are responsible for agriculture, collecting activities, marketing, sewing, laundry repairs and transportation. In some settings; in Zimbabwean culture regards sewing, laundry and agriculture as activities for women not for men. The setting and culture play an important role in formulating masculinity and it bring out the differences in the concept.

The above description of roles is an exploration of what it is to be a man in a traditional society, which is quite different in a cosmopolitan setup. What determines being a man in the city varies with time and the different influences. Valdes and Olavania (as cited in Connell, 2005), state that even in a culturally homogeneous country such as Chile there are no uniform masculinities, since patterns vary by class and generation. The same exists in Japan, where there is the emergence of diverse masculinities in a homogenous society (Pstui-Kuntz, as cited in Connell, 2005). In South Africa the traditional concept of manhood has been translated into multiple expressions and re-articulated in new ways based on race, colour, period, setting and even individual preferences. Shefer, Ratele, Strelbel, Shabalala and Buikemawas (2007, p,11) state that for “African men in the liberation struggles of South Africa the assertion of manhood was a claim for freedom, and the struggle for freedom a claim for masculinity.” It is valid to say that the time period of Apartheid where the issue of race and colour was a conscious way of existence produced its own form of masculinity.

The black men could only find identity of their masculinity in their quest and fighting for freedom. For the Afrikaners, defending what they believed to their sovereignty created their own form of masculinity identity. Today the same group of people is in a state of confusion on what it means to be man in the new South Africa. This view is validated by Cillers (2014, p. 84), who observed that as masculinity and male identity are concerned, ... living in South Africa during

post-apartheid era with its new regime and political dispensation, one can argue that many white men are questioning their identities with the new political dispensation.” Today in the same society, the young men construct their own masculinity identity through risk-taking behaviour with respect to sexuality where a man who has multiple sexual partners is regarded as a real man, yet still with the advent of HIV/AIDS this has changed and it is this strand of thought on the fluidity and ever-changing nature of masculinities that this study furthers. Substance abuse and performing other acts of violence is associated with being a man, (Shefer, *et al.* 2007). From the above observation, it suffices to argue that masculinity identities take different forms shaped by race, colour, time period, age, economy and even individuality.

Masculinities are not only multiple, but are also subject to change as they are faced with historical, social and economic challenges. Morrell (as cited in Connell, 2005, p. 835), points out that “challenges to hegemony are common, and so are adjustments in the face of these challenges.” This brings about gender transformation as confirmed by Connell (2005) when he cites South Africa at the end of apartheid, whereby the masculinities found themselves in a system of segregated and competing patriarchies. The changing form of manhood is well presented by Clowes (as cited in Shefer et al. 2007) by analysing how the images of men portrayed in the *Drum* magazine showed a metamorphosis in their transformation over a period of time.

Clowes’ (2007) analysis of the adverts and articles in the *Drum* magazine shows that the early images of men acknowledged the complex and mutually supportive relationships, centering on family members inside and outside the home, and provided a public recognition of a social “manhood” rooted in a wide variety of domestic obligations inherent in those roles. In the 1960’s this image began to change to that of a man who had more relationship with colleagues and

bosses than with family. There was very little representation of a man's familial commitments and obligations that went beyond that of a financial provider. Later, these images established manhood primarily through relationships, with apparently independent and autonomous interactions with non-related men outside the home, and through sexual relations with women. Media often feeds on what is taking place in society. The same notion is shared by Easthope (as cited in Lemon 2010, p. 6), who points out that "men clearly do not passively 'live' out the masculine myth imposed by these images, (media) neither do they live completely outside it, since it pervades society." The images of manhood in the magazine could be a reflection of the changing definitions of masculinities on the ground and this is the strand of thought that this study has sought to fill through the analysis of *The Purple Violet of Oshaantu* and *The Uncertainty of Hope*.

### **2.3. African feminism**

The study uses African feminism in order to accommodate the characteristics of the African society which are unique and different because of its cultural, political, historical and social backgrounds, as other feminisms are peculiar to their place of origin. Feminism differs from setting to setting and even from one woman to the next. As much as the underlying concerns are the same; removing the yoke of patriarchy, but the approach is determined by the background of the situation.

African feminisms have developed as a response to the emergence of the First, Second and Third Waves of world feminism which transformed the way women responded to the patriarchal



structured societies. The nature and agenda of western feminisms seem not to particularly consider the African woman's situation whereby she is burdened by, and buried under a two-tier oppression; colonisation and patriarchy. This is a view shared by African critics and scholars alike. From a Marxist feminist theory perspective, the African woman is tucked even under a three-tier of oppression as she has to tackle race, class and colonisation. As much as the general concerns of feminisms share similar features, the African context requires a framework which pays attention to the forces which have created such. According to Akin-Aina (2011), "important variants of African feminisms resist the importation of certain European feminist paradigms into African society because the latter are defined by the struggles and contexts from which they emerge" (p. 5). Akina-Aina's view resonates with Lunga (2010), who comments that African feminism is a theoretical perspective which tries to combine African women and girls' concerns with the concerns of feminism. African feminists have developed different feminist approaches which suit their social, economic and political situations. This is opposite of the Western feminist who appears to identify patriarchy as the main enemy which has modelled the female disadvantaged existence, would get rid of men. African critics and scholars regard that a proper development of the continent can only be achieved through changes initiated by both the male and female genders. It is through such forms of analysis that this study has identified the need to interrogate the multi-faceted-ness of male-female relations by citing two female authored novels and exploring how masculinities are presented, specifically using a nuanced and novel approach.

African feminism examines African societies for institutions which are of value to women and rejects those which work to their detriment and it does not simply import the agenda of Western women. Therefore, African feminism deals with the rights and dignity of the female gender in an

African context. Further, it does not advocate to get rid of men, but seeks to afford black women the same opportunities in society alongside men. This approach t looks at both traditional and contemporary avenues of choice for women, Davies and Graves (as cited in Lunga, 2010). In essence, African feminism is a yearning for fundamental reassessment and ultimate re-arrangement of male and female relationships so that the interests and the wellbeing of the two genders are catered for.

African feminism has borne different feminisms; womanism, motherism, nego-feminism and STIWANISM at various times at the end of the twentieth century with a common objective of seeking gender justice. These are referred to as theories or models, but have become “a process of symbolic interaction, the connective tissue that constructs the difference” between the global practice, yet bearing semblance in objectives (Alikali, 2013). The pluralism in African feminisms tries to capture the “fluidity and dynamism of the different cultural imperatives historical forces, and localised realities which condition women’s activities” Nnaemeka (1998, as cited in Akin-Aina, 2011, p. 69). The African theorists are trying to carve a place and position of a woman of ‘colour’ in society, as well as on the intellectual arena.

### **2.3.1. Stiwanism**

It is against such background of negotiating the turns and twists in the African setup that STIWANISM was born; an acronym standing for Social Transformation Including Women In Africa. Ogundipe-Leslie, the proponent of stiwanism understands the female struggle from the perspective of African feminism which is absolutely dependent on the commitment from both sexes, and not a woman affair as emphasised by other feminisms. Therefore, its birth is a direct

response in trying to move away from defining feminism and feminisms in relation to Euro-American feminisms which seem to exclude men in the gender equation. Ogundipe-Leslie (2011) affirms that the transformation of the African society can only be realised when both men and women take responsibility and commitment to change their status quo.

The theory will be able to examine how female and male genders relate to each other in order to achieve a co-existence which brings about societal transformation. STIWANISM as a perspective and lens will enable the analysis to place men and women side by side in quest for their wellbeing and interest. In an interview, Ogundipe-Leslie states that African women need to focus on areas of concern socially and geographically.

We give birth to men, we raise them too, (sometimes and unfortunately oppress the woman), we marry them and are related by blood to them, so it is pointless to seek to hate them. ...we are indissolubly linked with men; therefore, we have to work out ways of co-existing harmoniously and effectively if not joyously, with them. (Ogundipe-Leslie, 2011, p. 6)

Ogundipe-Leslie's perspective hinges on the intrinsic bond between male and female genders; hence she argues that be it a theory or an idea which occurred or practised elsewhere in Euro-America, it must be steered by a conscious need of what is beneficial to a human being. If gender issues are to be resolved, it is imperative to transform the continent structurally within states and within families; and that, needs the engagement and collaboration of both men and women. The theory should be agile and adept to fit the history, experiences, and cultural needs of the peculiar African context. Nnameka (as cited in Akin-Aina, 2011) corroborates with the idea that there is

need for a feminism which is flexible to address the issues which arise in a complex African setup; “for African women, feminism is an act that evokes the dynamism and shifts of a process as opposed to the stability and reification of a construct or framework ... Feminism is structured by cultural imperatives and modulated by ever-shifting local and global exigencies” (p.1). The African society has a complex background steeped in culture, colonialism and other global aspects; these are the issues the two writers selected for this study grapple with.

Ogundipe-Leslie (2011) qualifies the uniqueness of the African society setup by exemplifying it by the unique setting of the Yoruba culture before some alterations by the western Christian influence; where a Yoruba woman had more private and public spaces and respected roles than pre-feminist American middle-class woman. Ogundipe-Leslie posits that there were dignifying and structurally important roles for women in the Yoruba culture, even within its patriarchal assumptions as recorded in divination poetry. The argument by Ogundipe-Leslie (2011) is that women were weighted equally with men as human beings, but they had to defer to men in certain contexts, while men deferred in others (Ogundipe-Leslie, 2011). Such a culture must still have some remnants of some of those practices, hence there is a need of moving away from the dichotomous evaluation of the female’s identity as completely opposite to a male’s and that can be sensed in some feminist studies on gender and through the selected novels in this study. Such views will further be interrogated and clarified. Ogunyemi (as cited Lungu, 2010, p. 30) observes that radical feminisms, for example Western/European/White feminism, Africana womanism, Afro-American womanism; are not suitable models for African women writers because these feminisms ‘overlook African peculiarities.’ In response to that need, Ogundipe-Leslie thus finds more refined perceptive and analytical tools in the expression of STIWANISM.

### 2.3.2. Nego-Feminism

In Africa men and women have a strong connection based on cultural practices which makes the societies unique, hence there is need to establish a harmonious co-existence of both genders. According to Maduka (as cited in Pasi, 2013), African feminism takes into account the African philosophy of life which stresses marriage as a social institution. Consequently, there is need to find ways of men and women to complement each other. The tenets of nego-feminism pave a way of approaching the relationship which exists between men and women.

Moreover, “African Feminist movement is characterised by: an on-going process of self-definition and re-definition; a broad based membership resistance to the distortion and misrepresentations by Western global feminism” (Akin-Aina, 2011 p. 65). It is from this view that nego-feminism’s origins can be characterised and perceived; African theorists and scholars are trying to pattern and shape African feminisms to fit into the frames created by the peculiarities in African societies, which are dynamic and forever assuming different shapes. The evolving of theories is a relentless undertaking in order to accommodate new circumstances around women issues which are steeped in past histories of the African continent.

Nnaemeka, (2013, p. 247) the founding theorist of nego-feminism defines it as “the feminism of negotiations; no ego feminism.” She actually takes the African feminism a step further than the other forms of feminisms; Motherism, STIWANISM and Womanism. According to the theorist ‘negotiation’ means “give and take/exchange and cope with successfully/go around (Nnaemeka, 2004, p. 378). This is to say, the principles of African feminism deal with negative elements in a patriarchal entrenched society through compromise and negotiations based on the shared values

in many African cultures. The theory becomes the shorthand of possibilities; surrounding issues of peace, conflict management and resolution, negotiation, complementarity give and take, and collaboration (Nnameka, 2013). Nego-feminism becomes a guide dealing with feminist struggles that occur on the continent and it considers the implications of patriarchal traditions and customs, and it aims to dismantle and negotiate around these; and these principles shed light to the presentation of many characters in the selected novels. Nnameka proposes that while male chauvinism vanishes, it is not replaced by a role reversal, or by feminist ego, but negotiates the coming together of men and women for a harmonious existence where there is no victim or victor. The approach detaches itself from personal gain and pride from the overall goal of achieving equality for women, as exemplified by a number of male characters in the two selected novels; Michael, Kauna's father, Victor, Mukwankala's husband, John, Mawaya and Tom.

The idea of 'no ego' is succinctly elaborated by (Nnaemeka, 2004, p. 378) when she metaphorically says, "it knows when, where and how to denote patriarchal landmines, it also knows when and where and how to go around patriarchal landmines." It expounds on the idea of how nego-feminism paves ways of negotiating with or negotiating around patriarchy in different contexts. The same view is shared by Oyemuru (as quoted in Akin-Aina, 2011, p. 5), who says that "... understanding of the social construction of gender as means by which all women are oppressed universally and across the world does not take into account variations in histories, world views and social organization across the globe." It is this notion that Nnaemeka tries to redress, by theorising the position of women in an African context through nego-feminism and how they can employ feminism for themselves and for others. This view thus helps to clarify the presentation of the male-female relationships between such couples like Michael and Mee Ali in *The Purple Violet of Oshaantu* and John and Katy in *The Uncertainty of Hope*.

Nnameka views the patterns of feminism having developed with a view that considers human life from a total, rather than dichotomous and exclusive perspective, hence she quotes Steady in (as cited in Nnaemeka, 2004, pp. 379-380) that "... for women, the male is not 'the other' but part of human same. Each gender constitutes the critical half that makes the human whole. Neither sex is totally complete in itself. Each has and needs a complement despite the possession of unique features of its own." The theory incorporates this idea, as African women are more inclined to reach out and work with their counterparts to achieve any set goals; for wifehood, sisterhood and motherhood remain important representation of African womanhood.

Nnaemeka premised her theory of nego-feminism on the idea that African feminism must be rooted on the realities of the indigenous contexts as they are not, as they ought to be or even as they might be. Nnameka further argues that, that is the only way significant advance to development of Africa can be reached (Nnaemeka, 2004), and the selected novels when read from this perspective further get clarified.

Nego-feminism is able to mirror the male and female genders as they negotiate for their spaces to achieve a complementary existence in society in the selected texts. The idea of developing alternatives in order to ease gender injustices can find expression in the choices of what kind of a world both genders decide to live in. Compelling attention of this avenue is expressed in Osammor's 217 page novel, *Water Lily*. According to Alkali et al., (2013), the study of the novel shows that the male characters have shifted from excessive antagonism to a gentle masculinity contingent on forging new identities. The narrator tells a story of trial and tribulations, of triumph of love and life in very frustrating circumstances where a new feminist streak showcases strength. By Nkem, a senior wife, vacating her husband's house and going overseas to make room for the second wife; in order to maintain the love she has for her husband helps the world

to see how possible it is to be accommodative. It also displays “how possible it is for a woman to love a man totally; just for himself and not for the fact he was a father of her offspring or the provider for her personal comforts (Alkali et al., 2013, p. 286). The character works around patriarchy and does not ‘denote any bombs,’ but at the end it becomes a win-win situation whereby the couple is blessed with a child. The critics further comment that the writer’s stance exhibits a bold claim of a new position, a new voice in the feminist writing, and such a new position and voice exhibited by Tagwira and Andreas in the novels; *The Uncertainty of Hope* and *The Purple Violet of Oshaantu*.



## CHAPTER 3

### METHODOLOGY

#### 3.1. Introduction

This chapter presents the research design and the strategies adopted to explore the research objectives.

#### 3.2. Research design

The study has used a qualitative research approach. There are numerous definitions of what a qualitative research is. According to Khotari (2004, p. 5), a qualitative research is concerned with subjective assessment of attitudes, opinions and behaviour. This gives room for the researcher to use insight and formulate impressions on underlying motives of human behaviour. It is concerned with understanding the processes and social and cultural contexts which underlie various behavioural patterns. The same view is shared by Marshall and Rossmann (2011), who state that in qualitative studies, the actions of humans can only be comprehended when the thoughts, beliefs, values, feelings and assumptions that preceded those actions are understood. On the other hand, Shank (2006) divided the qualitative design into three tenets: the central role of the researcher in relation to how data is interpreted; how the qualitative approach embraces new ways of looking at the world; and the integral part of a qualitative research is in understanding the phenomenon under inquiry. As much as the authors define qualitative research

design in various expressions there are certain elements which are common. The different components in approach in qualitative methods enhance a holistic approach towards literary works' research. Mason's (2002. p. 1) description of a qualitative research brings out the importance and relevance of this design to the analysis of literary texts.

Through qualitative research we can explore a wide array of dimensions of the social world, including the texture and weave of everyday life, understanding, experiences and imaginings of our research participants, the ways that social processes, institutions, discourses co-relationships work, and the significance of meanings that they generate. We can do all this qualitatively by using methodologies that celebrate richness, depth, nuance, context, multidimensionality and complexity rather than being than being embarrassed by them or inconvenienced by them.

Masson's description of the qualitative approach endorses the invaluable characteristics and the relevance of the design in studies that involve intricacies and complexities of social life. The interpretive nature of a literary study depends on the richness of the language used in the texts and the qualitative design contextualises the subject under discussion; masculinities in the two selected texts.

Based on the above understanding of the tenets of a qualitative design; it is the suitable approach which was used to conduct this study, in order to investigate the phenomenon of masculinities in the two selected female-authored texts. Qualitative research design is dependent on the collection of data which is not numerical, but words in form of texts. This form of research methods is suitable for the interpretation of literary texts as the design is "... flexible and sensitive to the

social context in which data are produced,” according to Masson (2002, p. 3). This flexibility enabled the researcher to sought understanding of how masculinities are portrayed in the two novels: Neshani’s *The Purple Violet of Oshaantu* and Tagwirei’s *The Uncertainty of Hope*.

By using content analysis as one of the design methods; afforded the researcher to analyse the literary texts, draw interpretations and made informed conclusions in relation to the position of the male figure as they unfold in the selected female authors’ texts. This was achieved by unravelling the background, culture and societal expectations which shape and mould the male character as these aspects determine masculinities’ interaction with other characters in different contexts. Masson (2002) further asserts that the qualitative research design is interpretative. This aspect shows that the design is concerned with the interpretation of the social world and it is applicable to novels as they are based on fictional social worlds. This is averse to the standardised methods of a quantitative research design which are rigid to suit every study. The interpretive element allowed the researcher to examine and interpret the position of masculinities in relation to the roles they play as; fathers, husbands, uncles, friends, brothers and at work places.

Masculinities and the two African feminisms: STIWANISM and nego-feminism are suitable for the study as they sought to interrogate the position of men in relation to men. African feminisms positioned the male figures under a microscopic lens and unravelled the way they are depicted in female literary works. The male figure is often shaped by background, culture and expectations of society. The study examined how these male figures play out in *The Purple Violet of Oshaantu*, and *The Uncertainty of Hope*.

Works by literary critics, book reviews, journals, scholars' research papers, academic presentations on masculinity were used in this study. These facilitated a close and critical analysis of the texts in order to understand and accommodate emerging themes.

### **3.3. Population**

The population of the study is the novels written by female authors in Southern Africa that deal with the presentation of the male figure. According to Bhattacharjee (2012, p. 65), "a population can be defined as all people or items unit of analysis with the characteristics that one wishes to study." Literary works written in English by female authors in Southern Africa which present masculinities were considered. The population selection was based on the depth of the depiction of an array of male characters.

### **3.4. Sample**

It is not pragmatic to include the whole population in any study; consequently a researcher has to find a sample that should fairly represent the entire population. Masson (2002) defines sampling as a set of principles and procedures which are used to identify, choose and gain access to relevant data sources from which a researcher can generate data by using one's chosen methods. This identification of a representative of the entire population is imperative as it gives a focal point to the study. There are numerous ways of sampling in research which are determined by the type of research being conducted. There are two categories of sampling: a probability sample

is one which each member of the population has an equal chance of being chosen; and a non-probability sample, some people have greater, but unknown chance, than others of selection.

This research has used purposive sampling to select the two novels: *The Purple Violet of Oshaantu* (2001) and *The Uncertainty of Hope* (2006). Leedy and Ormrod (2005, p. 145) define purposive sampling as the “selecting of individuals or objects that will yield the most information about the topic under investigation.” Bui (2009) has defined purposive sampling as the researcher’s selection of people who are a representative because they meet particular requirements for the study. This is what Biggam (2008) further discusses as, the sample has three elements of; representation, uniformity and explain the reasons for differences between settings or individuals. The two novels were selected as they are written by female writers from the same region, Southern Africa. Both writers draw an array of the male representatives in detail. The time setting of the novels; postcolonial and neo-colonial, has also been a determinant factor in the selection of the novels as this gives room to a lineal analysis of the men emerging from these different periods of time. These two selected works of literature have a lot of features as described by Biggam (2008), with reference to uniformity. This sampling method was selected precisely in order to obtain the richest possible information to explore the research objectives.

### **3.5. Procedure**

An in depth reading of the selected primary texts was done using the critical lenses of the three theories: masculinities, nego-feminism and STIWANISM. The focus was on the male figures as they play different roles in relation to their counterparts; women. The evaluation of the male roles included the examination of their positions of power in different societal settings at home

and at the workplace. The underlying conditions which influence their positions, characters and emerging themes was explored. An evaluation of the authors' position and attitudes towards the male characters was attempted.

### **3.6. Data analysis**

For this study, content analysis was used to capture different aspects on the presentation of masculinities, as they portray different characteristics emerging from backgrounds determined by societal expectations. According to Bhattacharjee (2012, p.116), content analysis is “a systematic analysis of the content of a text (e.g., who says what, to whom, why, and to what extent and with what effect) in a quantitative or qualitative manner.” Leedy and Ormrod (2005, p.142) synthesises content analysis as “a detailed and systematic examination of the contents of a particular body of material for the purpose of identifying patterns, themes, or biases.” They further explain that it is used on forms of human communications which include books, newspapers movies and even transcripts of conversations. This study has used content analysis because it examines the presentation of masculinities in *The Purple Violet of Oshaantu* by Neshani Andreas and *The Uncertainty of Hope* by Valerie Tagwirei. According to Bhattacharjee (2012), content analysis also involves sampling of the population, breaking down data into smaller units and naming the units according to themes. The researcher has done data analysis according to the themes.

The content was broken down using the research objectives of the study and themes which stem from the research topic. Suitable topics which covered the themes in each unit were assigned to different segments. The researcher critically examined each novel to identify the male characters

and their circumstances as they play various roles as partners, brothers, sons, uncles, husbands and workers in the working environment. Close attention was paid to categorise them into negative and positive male figures according to behaviour. The powers at play in relationships were looked at. The periods in which the literary works are set were considered in order to determine the shaping of the emerged masculinities. Finally, an informed critique was made on the way the female writers create and present the images of the male figures in the two texts. The interpretation was done by linking the findings with the literature review and the three theoretical frameworks in response to the research objectives.

### **3.7. Research ethics**

Research “ethics is defined as conformance to the standards of conduct of a given profession or group” (Bathacherjee, 2012, p.137). This researcher has maintained objectivity and the integrity by reporting the findings in full. All sources used in the study were acknowledged in order to uphold the ethics required of an academic to maintain transparency and honesty. The researcher has evaded personal bias by reporting different perspective as well as contrary results. Since the work is based on fictional work, reference to names of real places and people in the study are fictional.

## CHAPTER 4

### DATA ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

#### 4.1. Introduction

This chapter analyses how Neshani Andreas and Valerie Tagwira portray masculinities in *The Purple Violet of Oshaantu* and *The Uncertainty of Hope*, respectively. The chapter examines how masculinities are portrayed by integrating the objectives of the studies in the analysis. The objectives are as follows:

- To evaluate how both authors portray the male figures, in their various dimensions in society;
- To analyse how the male characters are presented as playing diverse masculine roles in their socio-cultural setting;
- To evaluate the portraits of masculinities in Neshani and Tagwirei as images of African men defined by specific backgrounds.

The chapter is presented in two sections. The first section critically analyses the novel, *The Purple Violet of Oshaantu*. In this analysis, firstly the summary of the novel is given. Thereafter analyses hegemonic masculinities, followed by violence as a reaction to emasculated masculinities and an egalitarian existence of exemplary husband and a good father. The second section; the summary of the novel, *The Uncertainty of Hope* is given. Thereafter it critically analyses masculinity and the control of the female, followed by different masculinity of a soft



and loving man, masculinity in a complementary relationship and finally men who display unconditional love and a generosity of spirit.

#### **4.2. Summary of *The Purple Violet of Oshaantu***

*The Purple Violet of Oshaantu* is a story based on the unique friendship between two women; Ali and Kauna. Both women are outsiders who find themselves in the middle of the village of Oshaantu, the northern part of Namibia because of marriage. Mee Ali is quite older than Kauna who is a young wife and has young children. Their hailing from outside the Oshaantu village draws them together into a friendship which spans over years. The personal account of these two women is set during the post-apartheid period in Namibia where HIV/AIDS and domestic violence are evidently prevalent in the Oshaantu village.

The book opens with Mee Ali tending to her homestead business in the village like any other woman during this time of the year. Most of the men are working far away from their homes and the women take over responsibility to tend the fields, look after the homesteads and bring up children. The pulse of lives of the women in the village is measured by the rhythm of seasons and the land.

Kauna is married to Shange and she got married to her husband during the time the purple violets are in bloom in the village of Oshaantu, and she is regarded as “the purple violet of Oshaantu” because of her beauty, when she arrives as a young wife. The beauty does not last long as her husband begins to abuse her. Unfortunately, Kauna does not conceive a child immediately which makes her an object of ridicule from her in-laws. Mee Ali, who has been married in the village first, is the only friend Kauna has and is one person who tries to intervene

and help her in all the suffering she goes through at the hands of Shange. Mee Mukwankala, an elder woman, is the only person who confronts Shange directly and lashes at him and this brings the physical battering to an end; but emotional abuse continues. The church elders do not concern themselves with intervening and stopping Shange's unbecoming behaviour, as spousal abuse is considered as a private affair.

Kauna does not hide her husband's abuse, as a result the whole village knows that she does not have a loving husband, but that she is entrapped in a loveless marriage. She has left him on three occasions and returned to her parents, but Shange brings her back by promising her family that he would be kind to her. He makes sure that she is not happy in every possible way. Kauna is not given her own cooking space for a longer period. Hence she is forced to share the hearth with eight other women in Shange's father's compound. Very different from Kauna, Mee Ali enjoys a peaceful marriage with her husband Michael, who works far away and returns home once in a while, but he is supportive of his wife whenever he is home. This does not sit well with her in-laws who think that she has bewitched their son. On the hand, there are other man who are in the village and these include, Victor, Peetu, Mukwankala's husband, Kauna's father, Tate Oiva and Tate Phillipusa.

There are other women characters who come into play in the story; Sustera a local nurse who always helps Ali to nurse Kauna's bruises, Mee Martha, a church elder who is interested more in Mee Ali than Kauna's predicament, Mee Fenny, Kauna's aunt who is divorced from an abusive husband, and Mukwangala the woman who dares to put Shange in his place.

Kauna's respite from Shange's abuse does not last long as Shange suddenly dies in his home when he has just been at the "white house." Kauna is suspected of having poisoned Shange,

especially that he has been abusing her. Kauna worsens the suspicion by defying the traditional behaviour of a widow; shedding of tears over a dead husband and giving a moving speech on how the husband was a good man. The widowed Kauna is stripped off everything she has worked for by Shange's family who take over her homestead and everything in it. She leaves a destitute, with only her children, but has a renewed spirit to start over.

#### **4.3. Hegemonic masculinity: display of patriarchal values**

Although Neshani Andreas focuses on female characters as central to her narrative, they develop and operate within their social relationships with the male figure, who deserves to be explored. In Andreas' novel, the reader is acquainted by the absence of the male characters who are away most of the times as they are migrant workers in the mines during the post-apartheid period in Namibia. For economic reasons, they spend most of their lives on their own in a predominantly male environment. They erratically visit home, mostly during festive seasons. This has its own impact on family relationships: it culminates to a separate development of characters independent of each other particularly in a marriage partnership, the dynamics of power shift in the family arena where women become 'heads of households.' A father becomes a stranger in his own home and this places fatherhood in a very precarious position as it undermines the male authority. On its own, it challenges the idea of what is to be a man, especially to the masculinity which is steeped in the traditional and cultural setup. This historical period of post-apartheid could be indicative of the pressures on the men as they try to re-configure and assert their positions in the family circle. This is a man who becomes alienated from his own family because of migrant work in far places from home. At work places, the same man lives and operates like a single man which can lead to multiple relationships with other women. He is reminded of his role of a father and a husband when he comes back to the village. It is a staggering responsibility

to find one's bearing in reasserting one's role as a man in a society shaped by traditional values. Leman (2010) brings this idea to the fore when she observes that due to economic and political changes, the traditional roles associated with the male sex role have been rendered increasingly dysfunctional. This status-quo can result in very different responses from the male figures as we see this novel through Shange and Michael.

In most traditional societies, hegemonic masculinity is prevalent. According to Connell (2005), hegemonic masculinity embodies the currently most honoured way of being a man; it requires all other men to position themselves in relation to it, and it ideologically legitimated the global subordination of women to men. It entails that men are superior to women and women should defer to men. This concept creates a stereotypical behaviour of men; authoritative, aggressive, heterosexual, competitive and physically brave. It gives more power to the male figure and any man can benefit from these patriarchal dividends. In the African traditional society, more often than not, the men exploit this status-quo.

The above described background is the environment in which a man like Shange, a husband to the protagonist, is operating in. Shange, a migrant worker in the mines, marries Kauna and they have very flashy wedding in the village. His money, a flashy car and seemingly good behaviour captivated Kauna and before she realised it, she is swept off her feet and she woke up a married woman. Shange fits very well in the shoes of the 'Big man' whose image is characterised by the show of material wealth; shiny cars and money. When she first meets him, he appears to be charming and loving; and this does not give Kauna any opportunity to know the man she is getting married to. For Shange it was more of a conquest than love and as a man from the mines he felt he deserves the best girl the village could offer. Kauna's social standing, beauty and naivety made her an easy target for Shange's male ego. He emerges as a man who has the sense

of entitlement which ties well with patriarchal values where a man has to get the best from a woman and not necessarily that a woman gets the same. Kauna is more of a trophy wife to enhance Shange's position in society, and as soon as Shange owns his own homestead, his true intentions surface.

The reader's first encounter of Shange is when he is from his mistress' house in the late morning. It is common knowledge that he is a having an extra-marital affair. He displays a typical attitude of a man who exercises patriarchal power over his wife. His attitude does not show any shame or remorse of displaying a philandering behaviour in public as he makes no secret of his escapades. Connell (as cited in Ouzogone & Morrell, 2005), points out that men have access to the patriarchal dividend, the power that being a man gives them to choose to exercise power over women. Shange seems to exploit that power accorded to him by the fact that he is a man; hence he knows that nobody is going to challenge his behaviour, as tradition accepts and supports that a man can have as many women as one desires.

It is important to note that in such a traditional setup, polygamy was a philosophy with a value system of depth and beauty in African societies, yet there were protocols to be followed if a man wanted to take a second wife. The husband had to get consent of the first wife before making it public that he had interest in another woman. This was done in a respectable manner in order not to bring the family name into disrepute. Shange's conduct is not illustrating a normal trend in an African polygamous relationships because he is not even showing interest in marrying the woman from the "white house; she is a mere concubine. He is exploiting the benefit which the patriarchal traditions offer through the attitude towards men's promiscuity. The wife is forced to relent to Shange's desire for an extra-marital affair, and the emotional scars accrued in the process are not taken into consideration. The ideal of 'happily-ever-after' is immediately

shattered as soon as Kauna's husband indulges in many extra-marital relationships. The idea of a happy marriage begins to evaporate into a mirage. Shange becomes the symbol of hegemonic patriarchy whose emotional abuse spells out danger that keeps Kauna and her children under total fear and silence, in such an African traditional set-up. This silence does not come glibly, but at a price of deep emotional pain that becomes ingrained in the victims. The community, instead of sympathising with Kauna, actually blames her for not being able to control her straying husband. It goes without saying that as soon as a man indulges in extra-marital affairs publicly, the wife is neglected in terms of her conjugal rights. Thus Shange denies Kauna of a basic need and leaves her high and dry. She suffers a double dose of emotional pain as the villagers do not make it any easier for her, but they ostracise her. Her husband reduces her into an object of public laughter and ridicule. Shange is portrayed as a man who has failed to play his role as a husband.

Another woman who has suffered from the same fate is Mee Sara, where the mother-in-law blamed her for not confronting her cheating husband. When Mee Sara asked for the in-laws' intervention; she was informed that her husband was just like his father and grandfather who had many wives and mistresses. This corroborates with Jackson (1990), who asserts that masculinity identity is shaped daily in the varied institutions like family, and quietly these practices and norm-enforcing mechanisms go on slowly, building an accepted masculine identity. Once this identity has been accepted in society it becomes normal, though it might impact negatively on those closest to the person. As much as the family may have acknowledged the unacceptable behaviour of their son, they dismissed it, as if to say, 'it runs in the blood.' Hence it became normal and acceptable, for such reckless display of hegemonic masculinity. In Mee Sara's husband's family, the infidelity of the male figures goes back into three generations of the

lineage which outlines a template of a society structured by patriarchal values where men are condoned for womanising with no consequences. The behaviour of these men becomes an acceptable norm and Andreas shows how everyone involved is browbeaten into submission and is incapacitated to do anything about it. The community as a whole becomes a silent victim to the patriarchal practices for the traditional gender norms that promote a sense of male superiority and a sense entitlement.

Moreover, Andreas' presentation of masculinity is evidenced in that Shange does not only emotionally abuse his family, but denies his family benefits of his financial gain as he built a house for the girlfriend where he spends most of his time. Kauna, the legitimate wife, has an ordinary hut in which she is accommodated during the husband's funeral. This means that he has financial obligations towards his mistress, and this reduces his participation in the economic needs of his family, and even the postcolonial period, migrant workers worked for next to nothing and this is perhaps the money that Shange splashes over the other woman. As a result, he is put across as a man who fails to support his family in a way a man is expected to; as a provider, and a central figure from which a family evolves. He also asserts his domineering attitude over his wife by deciding when she could visit her own family. She is also economically abused, as Shange discouraged her to own her own animals. This tallies with patriarchal wisdom that prevails in some traditional African villages that "a wealthy bride is not good for a husband's ego," as observed by Ogbeide (2013, p. 57). Most men in African societies are more comfortable with women who are more dependent on them; consequently some marry women who have lower educational qualifications because a woman who earns more than a man, becomes a challenge. This notion has its origins in the fact that according to patriarchal formulations, it was the man who was expected to provide for the family (Chitando, 2015).

However, as much as Shange is preoccupied with his life outside the family circle, Kauna is able to fend for her children without much of the husband's support. He reduces his wife to a woman who cannot develop in any way, but spends her daily life working around on what Shange wants. In a way Shange is paraded as a man who restricts his wife's access to financial and other resources, as a way of having total control over her. Traditionally, any responsible man would make sure that his family was well provided for. By exposing the male figure who fails to fit into that traditional role of a provider; the writer is criticising such a representative of masculinity. Andreas is frankly and unapologetically exposing the image of an unacceptable male figure whose behaviour exhibits total control over his counterpart, yet he fails to fulfil his role as the head of the family. The male figure, in this case, practices hegemonic masculinity in which men dominate women and they exploit this societal stratification based on sex, and this gives men, both power and material advantage over women.

Besides the emotional abuse, Shange's behaviour could have far-reaching consequences for the whole family, as the setting of the story is during the period when Southern African countries are under the scourge of HIV/AIDS. According to Attree (2010), the HIV infection was at its height in Zimbabwe in 2001 and in South Africa by 2005, 5.5 million people were infected. These figures confirm that the AIDS pandemic was sweeping across the Southern African region and the statistics on Namibia are there as well, considering the country's special historical connection with South Africa where it was once its colony. HIV/AIDS was the largest killer in Southern Africa. This scenario, coupled with the general promiscuous behaviour of men working away from home for long periods, is evidenced by Shange who puts his wife in a compromising health situation. During this period, the awareness of the scourge is very limited and most migrant workers are generally illiterate and unaware of the dangers of having multiple sexual



relationships. Hence both men and women are vulnerable due to lack of knowledge. Kauna's husband's roving eye becomes lethal in the wake of the deadly HIV/AIDS, and marriage becomes a death trap. Therefore, Shange has complete control over Kauna; emotionally, sexually, economically and physically, and this the dimension of masculinity that Andreas decides to expose and lampoon.

Moreover, this dimension of hegemonic masculinity is further illustrated through Victor, Mee Sara's husband who displays the same behaviour as Shange's, whereby he has countless sexual relationships with different women. He becomes the first victim to die from HIV/AIDS related illness in the novel. His death symbolises the effects of the scourge of AIDS which ironically the people of the village of Oshaantu are not quite aware of, let alone understand how it is contracted and how deadly it is. This lack of knowledge makes Victor's relatives accuse Mee Sara of bewitching their son. This is typical of an African traditional setting that the widow of the deceased is always suspected and accused of killing the husband.

It is only when Victor's co-worker, explains what had killed him that they stop harassing the widow. Yet still, Mee Sara is not completely exonerated because she is still accused of allowing Victor to behave the way he did, hence she is partly to blame for his death. Victor is not treated as the perpetrator but a victim "... you let him walk straight o his death" (Andreas, 2001, p. 107). This is a woman whose marriage has sentenced her to death; like Kauna, Mee Sara has no control over her sexuality and because she is married there is no room to negotiate for safe sex even if she had the knowledge of the disease. Her uncle is right when he bluntly says she is a 'corpse.' Victor makes Mee Sara a victim of his insatiable appetite for women even after his death; "And don't forget one thing, Mee Sara, she is a corpse now, she is dying," (Andreas, 2001, p.106). If she has contracted the AIDS virus, then her fate is sealed. In this case the family

does not want to hold the dead man accountable for his reckless behaviour. The author projects a society whose manhood is not accountable for its decisions and actions; hence it puts a heavy burden of responsibility on the women. The society allows the male figure to behave and live a life without any moral obligations. As result, most of the women are subjected to patriarchal values which put women under the male way of operating in communities. However, much as the hegemonic masculine values are common, there are still some pockets of men who do not subjugate the female gender, as they decide to work along them. The author, Andreas also portrays masculinities who find the emasculation of their manhood so stifling that they react by using violence; as evidenced by men discussed in the next sub-heading.

#### **4.4. Violence as a reaction to emasculated masculinities**

“She moved like an old cloth as Shange’s shoes struck her mercilessly all over her tiny body. The heavy mine shoes sounded as if they were breaking every bone” (Andreas, 2001, p. 58). Such a description leaves the reader perplexed at what Kauna has done to deserve such a beating which leaves her face covered in sand, mixed with blood, and only able to crawl like a newborn calf. Shange does not only hurt Kauna emotionally, but goes all the way to physical abuse. The beating is a constant occurrence so much that Kauna’s daughter always nurses her mother’s wounds. The father exposes his children to abuse by witnessing their mother’s subjection to extreme violence, and by so doing, this perpetuates the cycle of violence which is based on the masculinity normative. Sometimes Shange beats Kauna to the point that she has to seek refuge from her neighbours; Mee Ali’s homestead, but this does not deter him until his wrath is satisfied. It is an unfathomable situation for the reader to grasp what kind of a man Shange is; he

is cheating publicly, but still comes home and abuses his wife. He has no sense of shame or guilt to make up for his adulterous behaviour. He has no conscience or any pity. Nobody really understands why Shange behaves that way, even Mee Ali, the narrator comments that he is a bundle of contradictions as he behaves differently towards outsiders, but he is mean to his own wife.

The last ferocious beating Kauna has leaves her admitted in hospital and no amount of brown polish could hide that reminder of a scar left on her face. This time it has been the worst beating ever, which cannot be treated at home. Shange is therefore, portrayed as a man who reduces his wife to a mere punching bag. The vows they made on their white wedding were broken as their relationship becomes a nightmare of violence. Andreas presents a case of a man who recognises no constraint of morality or religion, decency or compassion, love or duty. He becomes a classic example of male psychology in a patriarchal society where he uses violence in order to assert his manhood. Shange's cruelty to his wife borders on the verge of embodiment of evil. His sadist behaviour can easily find expression in the image of Eugene in Adichie's *Purple Hibiscus* (2006) who brutally beats his wife, Beatrice, to the extent of her having two miscarriages, and he tortures the whole family in the name of religion. Kauna is no exception as she suffered a miscarriage because of Shange's beating which knows no bounds. Eugene and Shange share the same spirit which conforms to the image of a cultural man who regards a woman as a mere property of man.

Kauna becomes a perfect fit of an African black woman who is not expected to divorce a cheating and an abusive husband. This scenario is aptly expressed by Christiansen (2013), who observes that culture and tradition uphold values of obedience and silence in the face of violence and infidelity. The violence Shange displays leaves Kauna in total subjugation. She is left with

no recourse, as Christianity does not offer any room to accommodate issues of domestic violence, let alone help the victim. Worse still, Kauna's father is a pastor, and divorce is a territory which has to be treaded softly, as it goes against the biblical teachings. Though Kauna's father mentions to his daughter what he has witnessed as the negative effects of domestic violence and that Kauna has to make a decision to come back home; his reference is not forceful enough to urge his daughter to leave Shange. In a village characterised by patriarchal ethos, both the church and the community are unsympathetic to Kauna's suffering. The social norms in operation tolerate and justify violence against women. In this case patriarchal values are complemented by religion. It is quite surprising how the male-dominated society turns a blind eye to Kauna's plight; even Michael who treats his wife well, asks Mee Ali not to get involved in Shange and Kuna's private life. The reader expects him to stand for what is right as he does not abuse his wife. However, he dismisses Shange's domestic violence as "marriage problems" and treats it as private as well as normal. This symbolises how deeply the patriarchal values are intrinsically embedded in the people of the village of Oshaantu. Those women who have defied tradition by divorcing their abusive husbands are shunned by the community, like Mee Fennie who is expected to starve after walking out on her husband. Shange is well aware that he holds all the cards in his hands. As a husband, a father and a provider, the masculine figure in Shange's case, leaves very little to be desired. Andreas, thus portrays a man who capitalises on the benefits of both religious practices and social traditions that have been set by patriarchy.

The prevalence of violence in Oshaantu becomes obvious, as many women throughout the village try to hide the scars and bruises they carry, by applying brown polish on their faces. This brunt of violence on women is as a result of many intricate aspects within the society. The writer's perspective resonates with Freeman and Kamwanyah (2015), who observed that,

“Namibia’s political history, combined with social values and practices within which inequality between men and women are embedded and condoned, has created an environment where violence against women has flourished.” The male figure unleashes violence which has become part of life, hence acceptable culturally and more so Christianity legitimises it by not intervening or preaching against it. Ironically, Christianity spreads the good news whose essence should be love. Instead, the figure of a woman disappears between patriarchy and religion. This notion is shared by Rhode (2009) who argues that Christianity taught by missionaries reinforced the subordination of women under their husbands, by teaching them Christian values which have to do with patience and obedience for the sake of diverting their awareness away from real issues concerning their lives. Some of the characters like Mee Maita become “a veritable representative of the local culture’s passive acceptance of the abuse of women,” observes Victor (2013. p. 56). Even the nurses at the local hospitals have become unsympathetic to the local battered women because the women lie that they have been kicked by a cow whilst milking. Women reinforce the patriarchal values which accord them a lower status than men as they try to keep peace at all cost. In Oshaantu, many women’s concern is more on what the society says than their physical and emotional wellbeing. Both men and women are socialised into believing that it is acceptable for men to discipline women in whatever way as they see fit, and this therefore shapes the kind of masculinity that uses violence as a weapon to solve all problems.

Central to the issue of violence is emasculated masculinity (Nyambi & Mlambo, 2010). It is only when the reader discovers that Shange has stumbled upon his photograph in a cook’s uniform which Kauna has been given by Mee Ali; that one gets an inkling why he is livid with anger beyond control. He disregards Michael’s intervention and continues to batter Kauna’s small body. He is seemingly angry at the fact that his wife has discovered the nature of his work

as a cook in the mines as shown in the photograph. In many African communities there is a distinct division of labour; the kitchen is what separates a woman from a man. The kitchen is the arena which belongs to women. For a man to do a woman's work is seen as reducing the man's manhood and Shange is almost regarded as a 'wife' to all the men he cooks for at the mine. It is not surprising that he does not divulge the kind of job he does at the mine, to his wife. When he comes home he appears to fit in the image of a 'big man' with a flashy car and a display of having a lot of money. This is a man who does not only take orders from other men, but cooks for them as well. Shange's sense of manhood is debilitated by his role as a cook, and it demeans his standing in society.

Even Kauna is in disbelief when she begins to comprehend her husband's occupation. Me Ali adopts a sarcastic tone when lampooning Shange by enumerating every aspect of what he does in the kitchen; "He cooks for them, feeds them, washes the dishes, cleans the pots, the kitchen and does all kitchen work" (Andreas, 2001, p. 54). Once his 'top secret' is out and discovered by someone under him, he loses it completely. It is the period just after apartheid and the belittling of men was not just because of the menial jobs they did but "because he is a black man who has been economically marginalised by the white system, hence he unleashes his frustration on his children as an unconscious way of making up for his diminished personhood, observes Pasi (2013). In this case, Shange terrorises his wife and the children by pulling them into the vortex of perpetual violence. Colonialism reduced black men into marginalised masculinities who become potently and uncontrollably violent against vulnerable women and children. Violence is one of the legacies left behind by, apartheid and racial segregation, in most of the once colonised countries. The male figure finds himself battered by the harsh reality of being reduced to a 'cook' by the new order of the colonial system, and this shifted the position of the male identity,

once determined by traditional values and practices. One can observe that as much as Shange creates the image of a 'big man' he actually walks around like a wounded animal because his male ego is bruised by the nature of his job at the mines. Andreas portrays a male figure who feels so emasculated by the economic system that the only way to make up for that oppression is to articulate his frustration through violence. It could be the reason why when he is humiliated by Mukwankala who challenges him of not having fought against any man in the village, but takes advantage of his wife who cannot fight back; Shange is reminded of his humiliating role at work. Hence it works like magic and he immediately stops his physical abuse though, he switches onto emotional abuse. This is corroborated by Shefer, Ratale, Strebel, Shabalala and Buikema (2007, p. 20), who noted that "Though levels of violence that maybe found among the poorer, marginalised black men are not a persistent feature of their relationships, power over women is fundamental in their constructions of masculinity." Shange is an emasculated man, a victim of the apartheid system in South West Africa then.

The above mentioned historical period, reduced black men into servants like cooks and 'garden boys' because those were the available jobs for most uneducated African males. Violence becomes one of the available avenues for the black masculinity to re-configure their manhood and identity positions in their communities; thus home becomes the major site of that violence. Shange has to use it to vent out the frustration of being a 'woman' at work and he is trying to re-position his psyche and identity. Violence instils perpetual fear and in turn, Kauna cannot challenge her husband about the beating and the adulterous behaviour. He keeps her in check and this way Shange is able to maintain his male identity in front of his family and for himself. According to Kauffman (as cited in Shefer et al., 2007), the definition of masculinity has a significant impact on the propensity towards violence. As the environment changes, masculine

identity does not remain static; for it is a social construct which is fluid. Through Shange's behaviour, Andreas showcases masculinity in distress showing signs of identity crisis. A parallel can be drawn between Shange's defensive mechanism towards a humiliating job, and the way Kauna's big uncle, Kuku Peetu responds to the constant beating he gets from his wife. Kuku Peetu tries to make up for his thwarted manhood by displaying the character of a very strict uncle among his extended family members whenever he is away from the abusive wife. The same as for Shange, in order to feel like a man when he is away from his 'womanly duties,' has to impose his power over Kauna. Shange represents masculinity in crisis due to unreasonable and demanding pressures of the male sex role affected by economic, historical and political change, as asserted by Lemon (2010). Shange's predicament is no exception to many masculinities who found themselves unable to define their manhood according to the traditional stereotypical identity in the wake of colonialism.

Furthermore, by describing Kauna's re-arranged facial features after the terrible beating as from the 'purple violet of Oshaantu' to "something that looks as if it had been through some strange incisions made by a clan from outer space" (Andreas, 2001, p. 148). The author portrays the gravity and almost diabolic physical abuse Shange has unleashed on Kauna. The author uses unsavoury terms to describe how Kauna's initial beauty has gone through metamorphosis into something unrecognisable, to show how the violence has completely changed her. Hard life overloaded with village work and humiliations, as well as her husband's lack of respect transforms Kauna into a different kind of person - a defeated woman and deeply wounded by her fate. This is more damaging as she is shunned, hence Kauna experiences anguish.

The image of masculinity painted here leaves the reader with no sympathy nor empathy, tear nor sorrow when Shange suddenly dies after he has come from his mistress' house. His death creates



a certain relief as if fate has freed Kauna from the savagery assaults. Yet, the community is not yet done with her for they suspect that she has killed her husband. This throws Kauna into a hysterical mode trying to prove that Shange had not eaten her food, lest people might suspect her of poisoning him. The people of Oshaantu generally hold the belief that every event of misfortune that happens to an individual or a community; is not a matter of chance. For Kauna's situation it becomes obvious because Shange has been a bad husband to her.

Of particular interest is that Kauna subverts tradition and hits back against patriarchal values and practices by refusing to mourn Shange. Therefore it can be argued that she asserts herself by being silent where she is supposed to talk. Even after his death, Shange haunts Kauna as the patriarchal practice of inheritance strips her of everything she has ever worked for including the land which has been her source of livelihood. She walks away a destitute but with great optimism of regenerating again like a 'mahangu' plant which bounces back to life after being destroyed by cattle. The metaphor is overflowing with hope for Kauna's future, and in this way, the author demonstrates that masculinity can be challenged and it can be defeated. However, what is particularly outstanding in Andreas' presentation of masculinities is the fact that there are indeed "good men," "good husbands" and "good fathers." The next section therefore, analyses good men who live with their wives peacefully.

#### **4.5. True partnership in marriage**

As much as Andreas portrays a number of men as unfaithful husbands, shameless womanisers, and irresponsible fathers, absent men or downright drunks or dullards, she draws a startling backdrop of the image of a good man. It against such an array of unattractive male figures, that

the author presents Michael, Mee Ali's husband, as the very opposite of such men. The tragic suffering of women in *The Purple Violet of Oshaantu* may engross both the reader and the critic, yet Andreas does not downplay the presentation of a different type of masculine behaviour. A man who behaves different from the hegemonic masculinity, is often subjected to ridicule as he would be regarded as lacking authority or has been bewitched by the wife, in this case Michael, Mee Ali's husband. Michael and Mee Ali's marriage is strikingly the opposite of Shange and Kauna's marriage which is dysfunctional; riddled with cheating and all forms of abuse. Michael's portrayal sticks out like a sore thumb because he is differentiated from the rest the one represented by Shange, Victor and Tate Namutinya. It is for this purpose that the author puts Mee Ali and Kauna side by side as friends, for the reader to take cognisance of the different breed of masculinity. Michael breaks every rule in the patriarchal book of practices, when it comes to his marriage to Mee Ali. She is a daughter of a divorcee and in a traditional African society like Oshaantu village children brought up by a single mother are not regarded highly in terms of moral values. The mother is regarded as a loose woman because a woman's position and identity is only recognised when she is attached to a man. Me Ali's mother did not follow the Owambo traditional practice when her daughter fell pregnant; instead of sending a delegation she brought her, herself. One can imagine the image she created in Michael's family for the unprecedented and unacceptable procedure. Worse still, Mee Ali and Michael had their first child out of wedlock and this behaviour is affiliated to "bad girls" who are associated with ill manners and indulgence in bad and inappropriate behaviour. This is actually scandalous and the blame lies with the girl's family. Therefore, people expect Michael to abandon his pregnant girlfriend and not marry her. Hence Michael's mother labels her a "whore" and doubts the paternity of their first born son. Mee Ali's mother's unconventional procedure adds fuel to fire,

hence Michael's mother is repulsed. Yet despite all this, Michael defends his wife to be by stating, "I am sorry if don't like her. I love her and she is the woman I am going to marry" (Andreas 2010, p.17).

Michael's mother, sister and other relatives are shocked by Michael's stance and conclude that he has been bewitched, hence he is 'abnormally' in love. Michael is not a coward but acknowledges his culpability and accepts his responsibility by not abandoning Mee Ali. Through Michael's attitude and actions towards Mee Ali, Andreas highlights what Udumukwu (2007, p. 8) refers to as "the recognition of the need to place women at the centre rather than at the periphery" (2007, p. 8). In the eyes of the family, Mee Ali is not good enough for Michael because of her background and the fact that she does not hail from the village of Oshaantu. In some traditional African set-ups, parents encourage their sons to marry from families they know, lest they marry into bad families of witches or prostitutes. Hence in Zimbabwean Shona culture there is a saying; 'rooranai vematongo' which means marry from the same village. Michael is proffered as a man of his word who is willing to defy his parents' wishes in order to honour his relationship with Mee Ali. Consequently, Mee Ali does not suffer any psychological and emotional torture when she elopes to live with Michael before they get married. She is shielded from all the gossip about her falling pregnant out of wedlock when Michael defines boundaries between his marriage and the extended family. He has an "uncompromising attitude to right and wrong" (Andreas, 2001, p.169). He distances himself from the traditional and societal expectations and does what is right by Mee Ali. He displays total commitment to the woman he loves and defies his family's wishes. Michael's decision to stand by Mee Ali has far-reaching consequences on the relationship between his wife and his mother and it culminates into many

years of not being on civil terms with each other. Thus Michael redefines masculinity and what it means to be a “man” and a “husband”, he defies what society expects of him.

In a village like Oshaantu homesteads and kitchens signify a successful marriage, for they become the centre of a power struggle between in-laws and daughters’ in-law. No two women can share the same cooking space without stepping on each other’s toes. Michael thus quickly builds his wife a kitchen and provides her with her own homestead. He maintains peace between his wife and mother in order to avoid unnecessary conflict, the conflict which had already been ignited by the fact that Mee Ali is regarded as an unsuitable daughter in-law by Michael’s mother. Michael is well aware of how to manage both his mother and his wife in order to create a peaceful environment for his wife and children; and as result, the Biblical allusion of his name becomes reality as he is gentle, temperate and is the protector of his wife and children.

The fundamental characteristic of Michael and Mee Ali’s marriage is its distance from violence. Michael uses a negotiation approach towards any disagreement, Nnameka (2013). When his wife tries to help Kauna through appealing to the church elder and the story spiralled out of control, he asked her not to get involved. On another occasion he begs his wife not to confront his parents after they were saying bad things behind her back. He does not have to use violence to silence his wife, but appeals to her emotions, intellect and understanding. Neither does he feel less of a man to grovel before his wife in order to get the desired results out of a situation. From the onset, Michael is depicted as a good husband who has made a vow to himself: “I promised myself that I would not allow any family member or friend to ruin my marriage” (Andreas, 2001, p. 180). Michael has a more balanced view of a fair and equal partnership that should exist between men and women. He realised that marriage is only for the two key role players; a husband and a wife. Consequently there is no room for a family member or a friend to dictate to what must happen to

such a union. He is not entrenched in patriarchal values which would make him dominate over Mee Ali. To change the world one needs people who can help; and in any society the working together of men and women transforms society.

Michael is thus presented as a good husband to his wife for he does not abandon her even when he works very far from home; definitely there are women where he works, but his commitment is his wife. He comes home when he can and when he is home the reader can actually sense the closeness between the couple; for they sit and talk for hours even if his visit is for a short one. To amplify the loving relationship between the two, the author paints a very romantic image of the couple, “He stretched his hand out to me. I held onto it as I stood up. He put his arms around my waste and felt the beads around it, which sent a thrill through my body” (Andreas, 2001, p.181). The beauty of this scene is the contrast between Michael and Shange, especially that both are born and bred in the same village, but Michael decides not to tap into diabolical patriarchal dividends and be a partner to his wife. There is love, compassion, care and most of all understanding between the couple. By closing the story with the exemplary relationship, Andreas seem to make up for all the negative masculinities the reader has experienced in the narrative, as if to say there are still good men out there.

Moreover, the fact that Michael and Mee Ali’s children witness a complementary relationship between their parents means their perspective towards marriage will most likely emulate what they have witnessed. This same idea is expounded by Mukwankala who had an equally good husband who would advise his sons that women are not meant to be punching bags because he did not beat their mother, “I don’t want to hear of you beating women. It is a coward who does such a thing” (Andreas, 2001, p.73). This demonstrates an image of masculinity that has a sense of justice in the way he treats his wife and the women who are married to his sons, and this type

of wisdom is passed on to the sons who are the next generation. Mukwankala's husband is not a pastor, but he was a good man. By portraying an image of such a good man, the author is commenting on what is to be a "real," man who does not have to be influenced by Christianity in order to treat a woman with love and respect. Such form of complementarity is what is suggested by nego-feminism (Nnameka, 2013).

In the same breath, Andreas depicts another male figure, Kauna's father who is a pastor and a good man. The fact that he is a pastor can be construed to mean that, that is why he is a considerate man. As much as he is a man of the cloth, his principles go beyond the biblical teachings as he advises Kauna to leave Shange if she is not treated well. "Don't think of me, or my work. You must do what you think is best for you" (Andreas, 2001, p, 95). Kauna's father insinuates divorce, and as a pastor he goes against the biblical principle of divorce. Thus a father proposes a better life for his daughter whilst Kauna's mother does not approve because she is Christian. Andreas presents the image of a man that shows profound love for Kauna as his daughter. Such masculinity is an example of a good father who values the life of his daughter.

The author has provided a concept of a good marriage and how it should be, through the almost perfect partnership between Michael and Mee Ali who are in a give and take situation as proposed by nego- feminism. The same applies to Kauna's father who advises his daughter to opt for a better life, definitely he believes in the idea of a good marriage. Andreas denounces hegemonic masculinity by offering flexible masculinity through Michael. It is through these individuals like Michael that the eventual transformation of the entire community is possible as envisaged by STIWANISM proponents. Neshani showcases how men and women can no longer

live as binaries in a society, but where women are the other half of masculinity and the two are actually inseparable. In this case, motherhood and fatherhood find themselves in an embrace that is difficult to separate as hypothesised by Muchemwa and Muponde (2007).

In the next section, an analysis is made on how Tagwira also presents both forms of masculinities; hegemonic masculinity and exemplary masculinity based upon the precepts of nego-feminism.

#### **4.6. Summary of *The Uncertainty of Hope***

The novel chronicles the lives of Zimbabweans in Mbare, one of the dilapidated high density suburbs of Zimbabwe's capital city, Harare. The period is during 2005 when the Zimbabwean government-led removal and destruction of illegal settlements called Operation Murambatsvina (Drive out Rubbish). The clearance of shacks and many informal settlements led to the displacement of many Mbare residents who had to look for alternative accommodation with relatives or go back to the villages of origin in the countryside (Chirisa & Mlambo, 2013).

It is against such a setting, when there is an economic meltdown in Zimbabwe that Tagwira records the lives of two women who are best friends, Onai Moyo and Katy Nguni, and how their lives help present various masculinities. Onai is a poor market vender married to Gari and is a mother of three children; Ruva, Farai and Rita. Gari has been laid off work, and has money to drink and not for the family. At the same time he beats Onai at every slightest provocation and cheats on her with other women. Onai works hard by selling vegetables to fend for her children, but she is often physically hurt by Gari that she ends up getting help from Katy and her husband. Gari introduces his girlfriend to his wife and children, and indicates that he is going to take a

second wife. On the other hand, Katy has a loving husband (like Michael) John Nguni, who is a long distance truck driver who constantly travels between Zimbabwe and South Africa. The couple works hard towards educating their daughter, Faith, who is at the University of Zimbabwe and saving money to build a house in a low density area. Faith is in a steady relationship with a rich and caring young man called Tom.

Besides these two main families at the centre of the narrative, the writer portrays a cross section of the Zimbabwean society whose lives are caught up in a harrowing situation of trying to survive after they have lost their source of livelihood. The writer exposes the plight of individuals during the peak of high rate of inflation in Zimbabwe. Another man, a municipal officer at the municipality offices expects Onai to pay in kind for her house form to be processed. The men in higher positions are no exception in trying to sexually exploit vulnerable women. This type of behaviour leads to the spread of HIV/AIDS.

A man like Mawaya is also caught up in the upheaval of the confusion, bitterness and poverty which is the order of the day. Mawaya is a rich man in disguise who is trying to appease an angry spirit by living a beggary life for a period of time; a Shona practice called 'kutanda botso.' Onai becomes the only kind person who can still share the scraps of food she has with a total stranger. A lot of Mbare residents are left in a situation whereby the basic foodstuffs which were already in scarcity before the demolition are now unaffordable. It is a period where majority of the Zimbabwean population is living below the breadline. Such a situation comes with 'by-products' like corruption, black market and exploitation of any nature. It is against such a setting that Valerie Tagwira's story unfolds. Many characters are caught up in situations where the line between what is moral and immoral becomes blurred and obviously many become casualties in the process of trying to survive against all odds (Mlambo, Kangira & Smit, 2015). It is against



such a background that Tagwira portrays an array of masculinities playing different roles, in the process unmasking good and bad fathers and husbands, lovers and corrupt officials.

#### **4.7. Masculinity and control of the female**

As soon as the story starts to unfold, the reader is met by a gripping situation where Onai and her children are exposed to a life threatening situation where intruders are accessing her house without any difficulty. Both Onai and her children cannot defend or protect themselves. Instead they are the ones to hide from the thugs and the reader almost holds breath as one experiences the sense of fear in Onai and her children. By providence, they are only after any valuables and in this case they walk away with a television set. As much as it is the only prized possession the poor family has; it could have been worse if the thieves had other sinister intentions like raping or killing the occupants. Onai has to protect her children and reassure them after the intruders had left. The reader is baffled about whereabouts of “the man of the house,” but the thought is soon arrested when Gari walks in dead drunk, his shirt smeared with lipstick, and smelling of vomit. With that first impression, one can deduce the kind of man Gari is, a drunk, a cheat and an irresponsible type of a man. Tagwira leaves nothing to imagination, but depicts a clear image of a man who has no knowledge of what it is to be a man. Gari is thus an example of despicable masculinity, just like Shange in *The Purple Violet of Oshaantu*.

Instead of being ashamed and showing remorse, Gari turns on his wife and calls her names and accuses her that she has sold the TV set to her boyfriends. The guilty conscience and psychotic behaviour puts him in a defensive mode and he beats the lights out of Onai, who ends up landing in hospital with a concussion. Like Kauna in *The Purple Violet of Oshaantu*, “Her episodic facial

bruising and blackened eyes had ceased to be a material for speculation because they all knew precisely what was happening,” (Tagwira, 2008. p. 5). The use of the word ‘episodic’ confirms how repetitive Gari has abused Onai at whatever given time and to the point that people stopped asking her, but accepted it as part of her physical features. Onai has just gone through a traumatic episode of burglary whilst Gari is out drinking and having a good time with one of his women at the bar. He is a husband who has no time or sense to process and understand what his family has gone through because he is in a drunken stupor, or he does not just care. His failure to comprehend the situation and leaving his wife unconscious on the floor highlights Gari’s negligence as a husband and a father, who prefers to go drinking and womanising and leaves the family with no protection. He leaves his family’s wellbeing in the hands of neighbours and friends as shown by Katy and her husband who take Onai to hospital. He is a brute, “abusive, improvident, promiscuous drunk” (Mlambo, Kangira & Smit (2013, p. 48), and the succinct characterisation in this instance also demonstrates the ugly side of masculinity which the authors present as abhorrent.

As much as Katy, her friend advises her to leave Gari so many times, Onai’s way of looking at a marriage is entrenched in the societal patriarchal values, where a woman’s respect and value is determined by her marital status. She single-handedly keeps her children fed, clothed and in school during the most difficult period in Zimbabwean history as recorded by the author in the text. To worsen her situation is the “Drive out Rubbish” exercise operated by the police as vending of any sort is regarded illegal, hence prohibited. Many occupants of shacks are accommodated at the halls and grounds in Mbare waiting to be repatriated to their original villages. These are the very people who are the buyers of whatever Onai and other vendors sell at the markets. As much as she tries to sell behind the police’s watchful eye, the clean- up session

has destabilised the already ailing economy of the informal sector. Onai has to make, double if not triple effort to make ends meet as her husband is self-serving and has detached himself from the family. Gari treats his wife and children with a contemptuousness which hits the reader right in the stomach. His abuse makes Onai's problems larger and more personal than the economic situation being experienced by the general Mbare residents. The person she should depend on is actually the source of her crippling physical and emotional plight. The money and resources he uses to sustain the extra-marital affairs would have made a difference in his family's well-being. Tagwira thus showcases a man whose conscience is dead, whose sense of responsibility has diminished beyond any reasonable doubt.

Moreover, Onai does not see any other avenue to change her life because in her socialisation, marriage is not something you can walk away from, "once you get in, you stay. *Kugomera uripo chaiko mwanangu...* no matter how hard it gets (Tagwira, 2008, p. 7). As much as she suffers, she finds personal dignity in holding onto to a marriage which is almost non-existent. She draws an analogy with her upbringing that had her mother left her father; she and her siblings could have grown up on the street. According to most African practices, the image of a good woman or mother is the one who sacrifices one's happiness and well-being for the children. Society has made the woman to believe that it is a cause worth to endanger one's life for. Onai is no exception to this kind of thinking as she tells Katy off, that she lost everything from self-respect to putting herself first the day she decided to get married. This idea is widely shared across the African continent; as a survey in Ibadan showed that 68.7% of women said that they decided to stay in abusive and unhealthy marital relationships because they did not want their children to suffer (Weiss, 2004). Weiss (2004) goes on to elaborate that, "divorce is almost a taboo in many African societies and this accounts for the high degree of tolerance by women" (Weiss, 2004, p.

57). A woman who walks out of marriage is usually scorned at. Gari knows that from the patriarchal dividend, the winning card of the chess is totally in his hands, for Onai would not walk out of the marriage as she has nowhere to go as the only accommodation she and the children have is his house. Her situation has become worse with the enforced eviction of vendors by the police. “Onai is burdened by a double yoke, that of a political and economic national crisis and that of being a woman in such a crisis- but a patriarchal society that condones wife bashing and emotional torment” observe Mlambo, Kangira and Smit (2013, p. 50).

Onai’s back is bent backwards as she faces problems from all spheres of her life and there is no repose; through her the author presents to the reader a classified example of improvident masculinity. The economic melt-down and destruction of the informal settlement exacerbate Onai’s personal problems. Tagwira illustrates a man who has concluded that owning a house in which Onai and the children live is enough contribution to the family. The house which he has not even worked for, but a family house inherited from his parents. The rest of the responsibilities rest on the wife’s shoulders. He feels that Onai should provide him with good meals, including meat when he decides to eat at home. Instead, he brings a packet of biltong and eats alone without even giving to the wife or the youngest child. He is a representative of men who are inward-looking and feel that there is no need to invest in an institution like marriage. Gari terrorises his children each time he beats the wife; his exasperating character and behaviour exudes a cold detachment, that of a stranger. As a father, he fails dismally, as his children never have any quality time with him. Ruva is disgusted and angry at both parents as she is the one to nurse the mother after he has hurt her; and the mother, for not doing something about her situation. Gari makes his daughter assume an adult responsibility each time he beats her mother; thus; Gari cheats his children out of their childhood. They have to witness their mother being

battered by someone who should love her; they nurse their mother to health after each abuse, hence they are forced to mature quickly before their time to assume responsibilities of adults. The younger children, Rita and Farai try to assist their mother by selling vegetables but they end up being exposed to another form of brutality at the hands of the police as they are arrested.

Therefore Tagwira, through Gari, exposes the horrible side of masculinity and the sad consequences it has upon the family and the society at large. Gari and Shange's form of masculinity is thus an example of hegemonic masculinity which the society frowns at. Thus by introducing the idea of STIWANISM, African thinkers seek to arrest such displays of irresponsible manliness which do not in any way consider the role of man as a provider and protector.

Furthermore, what Tagwira, just like Andreas, presents is the horror of violent masculinities. This view is further supported by Weiss (2004) who concludes that spousal abuse has only one purpose, and that is often to gain and maintain control over the victim. As a married couple, Gari controls Onai's sexuality and she has a limited say in whatever happens to her. "It was a man's prerogative to run his household as he wished, with no allegiance to any rules, especially those dictated by a woman" (Tagwira, 2008, p.121). This is captured through Onai's internal monologue when Gari has not come home the whole night. Particularly on this night, Gari is in the arms of the most infamous prostitute, whom he might have infected with HIV or another man before him. Onai's problems are multi-dimensional as Gari does not only beat and deny Onai of financial assistance, but he rejoices when his resounding beating has put her in hospital for her absence affords him more time with Gloria. By bringing Gloria into his home, Gari has brought the threat of HIV/AIDS into his family. He has introduced the popular concept in Zimbabwe of a "small house" which is derived from the historical practices of polygamy in which men have

senior and junior wives (Christiansen, 2013). Of significance to note is that Gari remains oblivious of why Gloria is ready to please him in whatever way; she knows she has HIV/AIDS, and that sooner or later she is going to need a proper place to die from. When AIDS becomes fully blown, Gloria is well aware that she will not be able to sell her body to make a living. Hence, Gari becomes her comprehensive full cover insurance, for he has a house and a job. She begins to pressurise him to evict his wife and children in order for the two to start a new life without any disturbances. He is so consumed by the way Gloria makes love to him that he fails to see the motive behind her move. Just as he is blind to that; he has no comprehension of why Onai cannot please him the way a prostitute does, for she is overwhelmed by the drudgery of trying to eke out a living in an economic environment which can no longer sustain the informal sector.

Gari completely refuses to assist her in taking care of his family; he categorically reminds Onai that, “I provide accommodation and you do the rest” (Tagwira, 2008, p.176). Here we have what may be called blind masculinity and ironically the strong image of masculinity is presented as the Achilles heel and it is such a huge weakness in masculinity that the author wants to expose. Thus, the author portrays a man who has relinquished all responsibilities to pursue personal interest which gives him momentary gratification. He has self- destructive habits and a recklessness which finally claims his life through HIV/AIDS. Gari finds Gloria extremely attractive compared to his wife, yet John, Katy’s husband, recognises that Onai is a beautiful woman whose beauty is being wasted by Gari. “What a waste of such a beautiful woman...what a terrible waste, he thought to himself” (Tagwira, 2008, p.13). Gari thus is a man who behaves like an animal which always finds the other side of the pasture greener than where it is, and through him we can see blind masculinity preying on itself.

Moreover, Tagwira also presents ways of negotiating hegemonic masculinity. Gari and Onai's marriage which is already precariously hanging by a thin thread is directly challenged by the implications of Gari's promiscuity. This is a union based on traditional patriarchal values, whereby a woman has no control over her sexuality. The social norm allows Gari to determine the kind physical relationship they should have. In the same vein, this demands that Onai's sexuality and her social status are tied to her husband. A man like Gari is unscrupulous as he even accommodates his former girlfriend Sheila (who is dying of AIDS), in his home as a lodger; nothing can deter him from demanding his conjugal rights without protection, or worse still force himself on Onai. Having Sheila who has fully blown AIDS is a reminder of his past which might mean that Gari is aware of his possible HIV status. It is not surprising that later he puts Onai out of the house and is taking Melody as his second wife. The period Tagwira records is when HIV/AIDS has become a 'killing machine' in Zimbabwe. The advent of HIV/AIDS poses critical challenges and complex problems on the institution of marriage. Any person with common sense would try to avoid any risky behaviour at any cost, except a man like Gari. Instead, he decides to pick on a woman like Gloria who is well known as a prostitute and whose former boyfriend is said to have died from AIDS. "Any other woman but Gloria, please!" (Tagwira, 2008, p.125). Gari puts his marriage on the line as his relationship with Gloria challenges the values of obedience and silence expected of Onai in the face of infidelity. Silence and obedience from a wife become deadly in times of HIV/AIDS. In this case Gari 'sentences' his wife to death, despite the fact that Onai vehemently holds on to high moral values in a marriage as demanded by norms of the older generation.

Thus Onai is caught up between a hard place and a rock, where on one hand, she wants to protect herself from the virus, and on the other hand, she is afraid of provoking her husband to

discuss his risky behaviour. At the same time, “the threat of HIV hung over her like a hangman’s noose” (Tagwira, 2008, p.126). In this case, “marriage becomes a death trap and is far from being part of the solution to the social crisis of AIDS; rather it is described as the most root cause of many woman’s vulnerability to the disease,” as observed by Christiansen (2013, p. 524). Onai’s sexuality is controlled and determined by her husband, and any deviation from the norm, violence ensues. The room for any negotiations for safe sex between Gari and Onai becomes limited as violence is always lurking whenever they are in each other’s presence. This scenario is not unique to the couple depicted by the author, but is a stated fact by United Nations (as cited in Freeman and Kamwanyah, 2015). The United Nations concluded that women’s relative lack of control over their sexual lives and methods of preventing HIV and other sexually transmitted infections due to violence or fear of violence is one of the factors behind the spread of HIV. This substantiates the pain and hardship Onai suffers because she is respectably married to Gari, therefore, it is an insurmountable task to convince a violent man like her husband to suggest the use of condoms.

It is by a stroke of luck that Gari agrees to use condoms and saves Onai from contracting the deadly virus. When she insists on using protection with her husband, she is trying to negotiate around the social norms which define masculinities when it comes to sex. This introduces how the AIDS virus changes the sexual relations between men and women, as women begin to take charge of their sexuality by challenging patriarchal notions of a traditional marriage. At this stage the sexual power which men exercise over women when and how to engage in intimate relationship is put to test. It is by sheer tenacity that Onai succeeds in remaining HIV negative while Gari succumbs to the virus. It is as if the author is commenting on how Gari gets what was coming his way all along when he dies of AIDS. Gari’s behaviour and attitude towards aids is



suicidal, to the point that it might suggest that he might be well aware of the fact that he is going to die anyway. He is addicted to risky behaviour and is presented as a habitual womaniser.

The author portrays a man who is economically disempowered because of the economic melt-down which has brought about hyper-inflation in Zimbabwe. At the same time retrenchment is looming over Gari's work place because the company is relocating to South Africa. Just before he dies he had lost his job. Connell (2011) observes that a situation where unemployment is high, the lack of a paid job can be a damaging pressure on men who have grown up with the expectation of being breadwinners. It is against such a background that Gari is presented. The challenges which face the Mbare residents at this time are multiple and people react to such situations differently. Gari reacts by resorting to alcohol and women, at the expense of his family. Tagwira portrays a failed representative of masculinity who has buckled down under pressure to the point of physically, psychologically and economically disengaging from his role as a man. Instead, he becomes a vehicle of spreading AIDS through his careless behaviour, and the idea of masculinity being an emblem of strength, power and protection is thus debunked as a fallacy.

#### **4.8. Masculinity as a display of exploitative tendencies**

The period of economic decline showcased by the author has some adverse effects on how masculinities react; hence men are portrayed responding in different ways. As soon as a country goes through economic challenges, corruption in every form becomes rampant. A man like Chanda displays the same qualities, when he exploits the innocence of a university student, Melody. Poverty and dire need reduce a young woman to operate in a 'small house' role. Chanda

takes advantage of the poverty to engage in a relationship with Melody as a 'sugar daddy' more so when his wife is away working in the England. This is not to exonerate Melody's equal participation in such a relationship, but Chanda is supposed to be the mature person in this engagement, especially when Melody could be the age of his own daughter. He represents a man with no sense of morality and who seems to be unaware of the scourge of AIDS threatening the health of the majority of the Zimbabwean population. Chanda takes advantage of the fact that Melody badly needs money for tuition fees and for her upkeep. The moral boundary has been crossed by both and Tagwira portrays a man who uses his financial power to get what he wants, and he becomes the image of the 'big man' during the worst economic situation in Zimbabwe.

In addition, the male figure extends this exploitation of women to the point of exploiting and abusing his official role in government in exchange for sexual favours. However, Onai is faced by this challenge when she is trying to register for a municipality housing scheme. This is a period when people throw caution to the wind and where morality is not even an issue as people are focused on trying to survive. However, Onai maintains her high moral ground and does not fall into the trap of immorality of the kind which deforms a people's cultural practices and which often blurs the line between what is moral and acceptable and what is not. It is a period that the female gender becomes particularly vulnerable to HIV/AIDS because they cannot take charge of their sexuality, hence the spread of the virus. However, critical to note is the fact that the author presents masculinity as a source of social ills.

The male figures are shown misusing their positions of power, as they abuse official resources for personal gain. This exploitative streak is apparent in Assistant Commissioner Nzou who uses government vehicles and fuel to transport smuggled goods. At the same time he commands juniors to do his private business instead of executing official duties. The author demonstrates

how government officials who are supposed to enforce the law are busy are involved in black market deals. This unscrupulous behaviour in men extends to the private sphere, that is, the family arena. As soon as Gari dies, his brother, Toro, takes advantage of the Shona traditional practice of inheritance. He quickly moves in the family house Gari was living with Onai so as to run away from the poverty which characterised his life in the village. Consequently, he throws Onai and her children on to the streets, without even thinking about it twice. He displays a cold and calculating attitude towards his brother's children. He practices the law of the jungle which is survival of the fittest. It goes against the grain to think that culturally the young brother of the deceased is expected to take responsibility of the widow and the children's wellbeing. Onai tries to get sympathy and intervention from Gari's sister but to no avail. It is not surprising that it seems that the element of cruelty runs through the Moyo family. Certain values are passed on from generation to generation and this masculine trend of "maleness is perpetuated as it is carried on from generation to the other and these forms of masculinities are therefore being exposed and criticised by authors like Tagwira.

What is outstandingly fascinating and captivating in Tagwira's presentation of masculinities, is how she also has the good sense to balance out situations by depicting how some men are responsible, caring, considerate, affectionate, and are protectors of the household. This is the type of men who is analysed in the next section.

#### **4.9. Different masculinities: A soft and loving man**

In this regard, Tagwira uses the marital relationship between John Nguni and Katy as a direct contrast to the undesirable marriage that the central character has with Gari. John's job as a long

distance haulage truck driver who often travels between Zimbabwe and South Africa puts him in a conducive environment for promiscuous behaviour. John's job takes him away from home for very long periods of time. Furthermore, the author brings to the fore another element which can make John act recklessly, because he has an easy access to young girls he smuggles in his truck into South Africa. He is always dealing with foreign currency and that could afford him any woman he fancies. Sex has always been the downfall of many notable men in the world, with examples even from as far as in one of the oldest book in the world; the bible, where Samson lost all his power to the temptress Delilah. John Nguni's sense of purpose and his commitment to Katy is a quality which makes him different from any other man the reader has come across in the text. The author through the omniscient narrator, delve into John's past which has made him the man he is. "Sleeping with a prostitute was something John had done at a much younger age, well before the advent of AIDS" (Tagwira, 2001, p. 243). By letting the reader into John's past, we are not surprised when he responds to Katy after she gave him condoms in case he is tempted on the trip. "I'm not that kind of man. I don't sleep around,' he replied with quiet dignity" (Tagwira, 2001, p. 243). John could have taken the advantage of the 'green light' he has been given by his wife, but he takes the condoms for his fellow drivers and most importantly, to make Katy feel safe. He neither makes an issue out of his wife's unprecedented behaviour, instead he shows understanding and consideration. By the use of dramatic irony, the author reveals to the reader a solid character in the image of John Nguni. He is a man who knows the importance of making vows and keeping them; and he is aware of the fact that momentary thrills are consequential to a deadly end in the face of HIV/AIDS. Here is a type of masculinity who puts his spouse first and invests emotionally into the relationship he has with his wife. Why? One may ask! Because each time a spouse cheats, a 'chip' of that relationship is also chiselled away.

Faithfulness becomes the integral part which cements John and Kate's marriage. This creates a very strong sense of family which finds expression in the kind of daughter they have brought up. As much as she is the only child they have, she does emit an aura of level headedness and does not have a sense of entitlement. She actually exudes a strong sense of what is right and what is wrong. This is evidenced by the confrontation she has with Tom when she suspects that he might have acquired his lucrative farm through crooked means as it is the order of the day. A strong family is a basis of a strong society, and this enviable family set-up seems to have been as a result of the type of masculinity represented by John, who is a loving, and an exemplary father to the family.

#### **4.10.1. Masculinity in a complementary relationship: The nego-feminist avenue**

One of the significant attributes of that masculinity represented by John is that of complementarity, what Nnameka (2013) calls nego-feminism. The narrative acknowledges John as a man who exists in a complementary partnership with his wife, Katy. As much as he is the one who has access to foreign currency because of the nature of his job which takes him out of Zimbabwe, he hands it over to his wife. He gives Katy the money to do commercial exchanges with people within Harare. Of course the sense of morality is over ridden by desperation and need, what Mlambo, Kangira and Smit (2015) call pragmatic morality. Katy's dealings with the money John brings is complementary to John's efforts. At same time Katy brings a packet to the table by supplementing resources brought by John into the family through the selling of vegetables. They both work towards a specific goal in unison, and that is to, educate their daughter Faith and accumulate enough money to build a house in a low density residential area.

The way John operates in his household ties well with what Nnameka proposes (as cited in Ouzogane & Morrell, 2005), that collaboration, negotiation and compromise are important features of African gendered life; for men and women in Africa face the challenges of daily life together and their unity is their strength. Kate and John's team work enables them to put their daughter through university successfully. John treats his wife as a partner and he does not objectify her, which helps them to decide and act on their decisions as equals.

Both Kate and John play equal roles in keeping their household afloat during the most trying times in the lives of Mbare residents. Their relationship can become a metaphor for a successful community where men and women hold hands and work together to change their status-quo. John is one of those men that support gender change because he sees its relevance to the well-being of the community they live in. He has a more balanced view of a fair and equal partnership which should exist between a man and a woman. In John and Katy's relationship there is respect, love and some complementarity as they give each other equal rights and duties. Thus Tagwira through the character of John challenges the idea that women's work should be divided along gender lines. In situations of mass poverty and unemployment, the flexibility in the gender division of labour may be crucial to a household's survival as noted by Connell (2011). This pragmatic attitude finds expression in the success this couple has under such unbearable conditions as portrayed by the author.

#### **4.10.2. Men display unconditional love and a generosity of spirit**

Moreover, it is noteworthy to realise that the portrayal of John can be linked to a type of masculinity that has realised that to live a fulfilling life he has to have a strong base, which is a

home filled with love. He becomes a key player in laying such a foundation; this is shown by his unflinching faithfulness even if he is in a position to cheat on Katy and get away with it. The temptation is real; “Border posts were crawling with prostitutes of all shapes, sizes and ages” (Tagwira, 2006, p. 242). Let alone the girls he gives a safe passage into South Africa. This takes such a highly principled individual to resist such a temptation. John values his relationship with his wife for it is based on honesty and love. His value for Katy extends beyond the parameters of their home; he is willing to give a hand to Onai because she is a friend to his wife. Even when he feels and wonders why Onai is still with Gari, he assists because he does not want to see his wife in distress – that is a caring husband, neighbour and friend has to be, hence the irony of his name being of biblical origin like Michael in *The Purple Violet of Oshaantu*.

He comes across as a very generous and kind hearted man. This is showcased by his determination to educate his daughter. He goes beyond a father providing his child education, an average man of character would have thrown in the towel, especially under the economic hardship they were operating in. They adopted what Mlambo, Kangira and Smit (2015) refer to as “pragmatic morality.” He got involved in illegal foreign currency deals and smuggling of foodstuffs which were in acute shortage in Zimbabwe. He treats the girls he smuggles into South Africa with respect by not taking advantage of them and charges them a fair fare. Thus through one can postulate that he typifies the “Ubuntu” masculinity in that he respects fellow human beings and does not prey on the weaker member of society.

Furthermore, John always accommodated Onai as if she is part of his family; such that after even after getting his hard-earned petrol after being in the queue for three days out of the five he has been on leave, he drives her to hospital. Even after Toro evicts Onai, John agrees that she and Ruva could stay with Katy whilst Onai is sorting out her life. The same spirit rubs off on Faith

when she is dealing with Onai and her family; she decides that Ruva becomes one of her bridesmaid. It means a good family structure gives birth to an equally good younger generation, and through that, a society transforms into something better. And for this to happen, there is indeed the need to have a different form of masculinity as exemplified by John.

At the end of the novel a new couple is in the making, the upcoming wedding for Faith and Tom Sibanda. Tom is a rich entrepreneur who has acquired a lucrative farm through his own efforts, at a time people in position of power are grabbing land to enrich themselves. This is as opposed to the controversial land acquisition (Mlambo, Kangira & Smit, 2015). Tom is a self-made man; he does not take advantage of the political situation or the fact that his father is a well-known individual. Instead, he fights for the farm legally in court which he wins fair and square. His character portrays a young man who any mother would like their daughter to bring home. He is a well-mannered and a promising good husband, a typical example of cherished masculinity. More so, Tom has a lot of money, and could get any woman he wanted, yet he wants to make Faith the honest woman that she is. Both come from totally different backgrounds and worlds, but that does not deter him because of his genuine love for Faith. He picks and drops her in Mbare where wealthy people might not want to put their feet in; Mbare is a squalid environment, and worse with the demolition which took place. In addition, in the fold of Nnameka's nego-feminism, when Tom asks Faith to marry him and she was not ready, he does not force her, but negotiates with her. That is a promising 'give and take' relationship. He understands Faith's reasons for not wanting to get married soon after graduation and working. Thus "At her suggestion, Tom had seen the wisdom of a year-long engagement" (Tagwira 2001, p. 262). He is considerate of his girlfriend's reasoning and respects that. That is a compromising approach towards a relationship and it is because he loves Faith. He wants a big engagement party and one of his friend



comments on how big the wedding is going to be. Tom's response was that a man gets engaged once, and that he believes that marriage is permanent. This shows Tom's commitment to the relationship and he intends to have a lifelong partner. Tagwira portrays a good young man whose love for Faith is apparent and can be felt from the way he treats her, he is an example of what a "real" man has to be, as opposed to hegemonic masculinity represented by Gari and Shange.

Besides the author focusing only on Onai's generosity towards people she thinks are less fortunate than her; Tagwira balances her presentation of men and women characters who exhibit the same good spirit. Mawaya is a "self-made beggar" who is trying to cleanse himself from his wife's spirit. This could be from a guilty conscience when one believes they have wronged a dead person in some way. Just the step Mawaya takes to humble and humiliate himself by doing the right thing is enough to tell the kind of man he is. This is a Shona cultural practice called "kutanda botso." Mawaya happens to do it coincidentally at the same time when Mbare has been dismantled by the government. He has to deny himself of any luxury and when people jeer at him and make him a laughing spectacle; that is supposed to appease the wronged spirit. Onai can barely scratch food for her children, yet she is able to share it with Mawaya; there is no humane spirit which surpasses that. It is like a biblical story of multiplying talents and only to have them at the end. By giving a beggar some food, Onai is 'investing' her 'talents' for the future. Mawaya becomes her benefactor at the end when he offers her a job at his late wife sewing shop. This whisks Onai out of poverty into a world she never thought exists. Mawaya is not related to Onai at all, yet he realised that he could have starved to death if it was not for her. One good turn deserves another, and through Mawaya we are presented with a picture of a good man, a good husband and a good humanitarian. Thus Tagwira in her novel presents the various forms of masculinity to show both the good and the bad without necessarily stereotyping.

As much as there is an ugly picture of masculinities represented by Gari, Tagwira's brush paints an array of more good men than bad ones; men who are willing to change the image of what patriarchal values had created over generations. This is a man who is willing to work side by side with the female gender for the betterment of society.

#### **4.11. Summary**

In both novels *The Purple Violet of Oshaantu* and *The Uncertainty of Hope*, the female writers; Andreas and Tagwirei have portrayed masculinities in a balanced representation of the good and the bad in men. I believe that is the gap in the study. It is ironic that the "feminist" writers after showing the ugliness in some men, they also go on to show evidently that there are many men who are really great examples of role model masculinities. The next chapter will be about the conclusions and recommendations.

## CHAPTER 5

### CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### 5.1. Introduction

The aim of this research was to analyse the representation of masculinities in *The Purple Violet of Oshaantu* by Neshani Andreas and *The Uncertainty of Hope* by Valerie Tagwira. The study was conducted in relation to the fact that studies on masculinities have taken the back stage, as many studies' attention has been focused on the plight of women in their relations with men. The objectives of the study were as follows:

- To evaluate how the authors portray the male figures in their various dimensions in the society, in *The Purple Violet of Oshaantu* and *The Uncertainty of Hope*;
- To analyse how male characters are presented as playing diverse masculine roles in their socio-economic setting;
- To evaluate the portraits of masculinity in Neshani and Tagwira's fiction as images of African men defined by specific background.

The study used the masculinity concept, nego-feminism and STIWANISM theories to analyse the two narratives as they present various male figures. The conclusion of the study is presented below.

## 5.2. Conclusion

Both Andreas and Tagwira portray various male figures in *The Purple Violet of Oshaantu* and *The Uncertainty of Hope*, respectively. This presentation of masculinity indicates that men are better known through their relationships with the female gender. The study has looked at masculinities through thematic readings or analysis of the development of characters. At the same time there is a common thread which runs throughout the two narratives: acceptable and unacceptable characters of the male images.

In both novels there is a presentation of a dominant expression of masculinity which makes life very unbearable for their counterparts, that is women. Through the male characterisation of Shange in *The Purple Violet of Oshaantu* and Garikai in *The Uncertainty of Hope*, there is a display of cultural patterns and practices which debase women. The behaviour of the two characters expresses hegemonic masculinity whose behaviour and traits are steeped in the traditional definition of what it is to be a man. They use their male positions of power to abuse their women as a way to massage their bruised egos. Shange's manhood is emasculated by the apartheid system which accords him a "feminine" job in the kitchen which is traditionally regarded as a woman's job. He subsequently abuses, humiliates and subjugates Kauna as his wife. On the other hand, Garikai finds expression of his frustration in a very unstable economic environment, by emotionally detaching himself from the family and he uses violence on his wife, Onai. Violence becomes a form of reaction to the emasculated masculinities. The historical periods in which their characters and actions are articulated thus impact on the formulation of this particular masculinity identity.

Apart from the extreme use of violence, both Garikai and Shange react to their problems by engaging in promiscuous behaviour in the open and they make their infidelity a public affair. This kind of behaviour shows men who are exploiting the patriarchal dividends which gives them a leeway in getting involved with multiple partners even though they are married men; and this without condemnation from society. Andreas seems to caution society against tendencies of such men who abuse their spouses as in form of poetic justice, Shange dies all of a sudden. Garikai does not have long to live as he has contracted the HIV/AIDS and dies within a short space of time, but surprisingly enough Onai is free of the virus. Tagwira sends a clear message to men who behave like Garikai, that one dies the way one has lived.

Other issues pertaining to the theme of patriarchal values upheld in the societies these male figures are set in are portrayed through the inheritance problems faced by widows after the death of their husbands. The extended family benefits from the traditional customs that privilege their claims to the estate of a dead relative. In this case, Shange's relatives strip Kauna of everything and she leaves the village a destitute. The same applies to Onai who is put out on the streets by Garikai's brother who inherits the family home. This exploitative nature is also displayed by men in power during the difficult economic period in Zimbabwe, where they take advantage of needy people. This is characterised by the municipal official who tries to get sexual favours from Onai when she wants to be considered for a municipal house. The chief of police, Nzou is another male figure who displays corruption by being involved in foreign currency deals and abuses government resources for personal gain. This presentation of hegemonic masculinities therefore reflects one view which is responsive to all the three objectives of the study.

On the other hand, the three objectives of the study were responded to through another perspective of masculinities. The two authors present a male figure that is totally opposite of the abusive man imaged in Garikai and Shange. Michael is presented as a man who rejects a hegemonic life-style by regarding his wife as an equal partner. He adopts a non-hegemonic lifestyle by resisting family and societal pressure to conform to the behaviour of men in general. This makes him a man who has compassion, love and understanding for his wife and children. He is more tolerant and accommodating; hence he creates a peaceful and a harmonious existence with his wife. This egalitarian existence enjoyed by Michael's family is regarded with suspicion by those close to him, as they believe that he has been bewitched by Mee Ali. He exudes the aura of a 'new man' in the modern world, who is regarded to be soft but caring towards his partner and family. It is not only Michael who projects the characteristics of a good man, but Kauna's father who practices what he preaches. He is a good man who warns his daughter, Kauna to leave Shange if she is not happy for he had seen many women dying in marriages where they are abused. Apart from the two men, Mukwankala's husband is also described as a good man who never laid his hand on his wife; hence he was exemplary to his sons. Is not surprising that Mukwankala reproaches Shange's harsh behaviour towards Kauna; for she had a loving husband herself. The array of good men presented by Neshani Andreas shows commitment of men to change in their attitude towards women by behaving differently from the social norm; the men decide to work together with their partners. It also suggests there is no uniformity in masculinity behaviour. This gives a hopeful future for a transformed society where both genders benefit from the partnership which is envisaged by African feminism, particularly as espoused by nego-feminism.

Moreover, in *The Uncertainty of Hope*, Tagwira redeems the image of a vicious man like Garikai by depicting a loving, caring and considerate husband in John Nguni. As much as he works far away from home most of the times, he is a principled man who values his relationship with his wife, Katy. He works for the betterment of his family by doing all there is to do in order to educate his only child and daughter, Faith. As much as he is a long distance truck driver he remains focused on his goals to get money for Faith's university tuition and save enough for building a house in a better area and take his family out of Mbare. He is prepared to get involved in illegal deals in foreign currency to attain his goals. He works hand in hand with his wife, in a complementary way; the foreign currency he gets from South Africa is given to Katy who sells it at home. He is a man who treats his wife with respect, even in her absence he finds it not necessary to cheat on her even when the opportunities avail themselves. His respect for women is also shown when he does not demand sexual favours from the young girls he offers transport into South Africa, but leaves his encounter with them as a mere business transaction.

John is also presented as a man who has a generous spirit as he extends a helping hand towards Onai who is married to Garikai who physically abuses her to the extent of being hospitalised. The fact that Onai is Katy's friend is enough for, John to step in and help by taking her to hospital when there is need. At the end when Onai is homeless he agrees to let his wife take her and her eldest daughter in, who is about to write examinations. The author does not only portray a generous man, but also very considerate one too. The same generous characteristic is shared by a man like Mawaya who encounters Onai when he is in need. He does not forget how generous Onai was during the time when Mbare was 'cleaned up' of any illegal structures by the government, which left many people homeless. He survives the difficult period in which he is going through a cleansing ritual "kutanda botso" (in the Shona culture) because of Onai's giving

spirit. He only manages to carry out his ritual successfully because of Onai's scrapes of food she shares with him to sustain him. When he returns to his normal life, he does not forget the poor woman who showed a kind of generosity which is least expected during a period when the economy is at its lowest. Mawaya opens Onai's doors to a successful life in an affluent suburb which she could only dream of before. He offers her a place to live and to do her dress making. This is a dream come true as she 'inherits' Mawaya's late wife's boutique. He is a man with a grateful and generous spirit, a man who ploughs back into Onai's life. He displays a generosity of spirit in a remarkable way. This presentation of a male character in this way thus responds to the second objective as it touches on how men position themselves in the social and economic settings.

The goodness in the male character is not only expressed through the older generation, but also through the coming younger generation, in the image of Tom, Faith's boyfriend. He does not take advantage of the land grabbing which is taking place in Zimbabwe at that moment, but works hard through legal means to be able to buy his lucrative farm. He is a loving man who has asked Faith's hand in marriage.

The rapport between the engaged couple shows a loving and 'give and take' relationship. Tom does not exhibit any high-handedness because Faith comes from a different background from his; he shows a genuine loving nature. He is shown to be a man who invests into the relationship he has with his partner. The two narratives share quite a number of themes in the representation of masculinities; the exercise of patriarchal values, abuse of women, exploitation, disinheritance of spouses and an egalitarian existence of male and female genders.



It can be concluded that some African feminist writers like Tagwira and Andreas play the devil's advocate as they present both sides of the coin, hegemonic masculinity and benevolent masculinity.

### **5.3. Recommendations**

The study revealed that as much as Neshani Andreas and Valerie Tagwira's central characters are female' there is also a solid representation of various male characters. Both novels portray a cross section of masculinities which are fairly balanced in terms of the 'good' and the 'bad.' This obliterates the "the danger of a single story" as the two female authors present the male characters as they are experienced in life or how the women writers expect the male figures to be and to behave

- Future research can be conducted further to pursue this phenomenon of how other female authors present men to bring about a balance in gender studies.
- Studies tracing the changes in the portrayal of masculinities by female writers over a long period spanning many generations.
- A comparative research on how women writers treat the subject of men from different African traditions located in: Francophone, Lusophone and Anglophone areas of Africa.
- Apart from the themes explored in the two novels in relation to the male gender new forms of gender can also be explored, that is transgender identities.

#### 5.4. Conclusion

This chapter concludes the study on the presentation of masculinities in female-authored texts; *The Purple Violet of Oshaantu* and *The Uncertainty of Hope*. The conclusion of the whole study as presented, is that despite the authors' identity as female, and to a greater extent as feminist writers, they however accord more breadth and depth to the male characters and present them in a myriad of dimensions playing diverse masculine roles as images of African men prescribed by certain backgrounds. Furthermore, the chapter also suggested possible areas for research in the area of masculinities in African literature by women writers.

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