

LITERARY REPRESENTATIONS OF SOCIO-POLITICAL ISSUES IN THE NAMIBIAN  
SOCIETY IN PHILANDER'S *THE NAMIBIAN STAGE CHRONICLES* AND *KING OF  
THE DUMP AND OTHER PLAYS*

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

ERRIKSON SHILEMBA

9700358

APRIL 2018

MAIN SUPERVISOR: DR REWAI MAKAMANI

CO-SUPERVISOR: DR NELSON MLAMBO

## Abstract

The study is a critical analysis of the literary representations of socio-political issues in the Namibian society as portrayed in Philander's two anthologies: *The Namibian Stage Chronicles* (2010) and *King of the Dump and Other Plays* (2005). Namibia attained independence in 1990 and socio-political issues such as unemployment, violence against women and children, nepotism, corruption, poverty, injustice and economic window dressing dominate life. The chosen plays from the two anthologies: "Election Fever", "King of the Dump", "The Porridge Queen", and "Victim of Love" feature these socio-political issues and allow room for comparison on how it was before and after independence. The study found out that problems like corruption and nepotism feed into other problems like high unemployment rates which in turn spearheads for poverty and higher crime rates as well as other social problems. Philander's plays also raise public awareness regarding socio-political issues that affect people in Namibia and their open endedness gives the public the choice to take action or not. The study also found out from the plays that inequality and injustice have deep roots in pre-independence Namibia as life after independence has only improved for some individuals and remains a daily struggle for the majority of Namibians. The study employed content analysis and is a qualitative desktop study. The study is informed by the Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) which addresses language issues, power and ideology, as well as discrimination, oppression and injustice and the Marxist literary theory which attempts to draw conclusions about the relations between the literary and the social. The study recommends that future research be carried out on exploring socio-political issues but utilising other literary theories. Also research may be conducted in other genres of African literature to explore socio-political issues, and compare whether societies have any shared experiences.

## **Acknowledgements**

I would to express my profound and utmost gratitude to the Almighty God who has been my source of strengths and protection from my childhood. Thank you God for the wisdom and guidance you gave me. I would also like to thank my dear mother, Ruusa Titus, who has been taking care of the house while I was away during my studies at The University of Namibia. Mom, you really deserve special thanks and may God bless you. To my dear sister Aina Shilemba (Ngula), you really played a parental role to ensure that our mother was always in good health and gave her necessary support when I was away. So, keep it up! To Mr Gideon Ndaluka Kweyo, your house was my accommodation and library. Thank you. My special thanks go to my supervisors, Dr. N. Mlambo and Dr. R. Makamani for your continued support and guidance you rendered to me since the proposal of this thesis. Your guidance and support will always remain fresh in my memory. I also wish to thank The University of Namibia library staff members, particularly Mr Kavevangua Kahengua and Mr Darryl Kajovi, for your support and assistance you gave me to search relevant journal articles in the library especially when I was struggling to find relevant sources for my study. I am grateful to all my classmates at The University of Namibia, particularly Teopolina O. Hangula, Naftal Haufiku and Ricardo Kavari for your encouragement and support which made my stay at The University of Namibia more fascinating and enjoyable. We really pushed and navigated this journey together. Finally, my special thanks go to Coletta Kandemiri for her unwavering support and commitment in assisting and guiding me to write this thesis.

## **Dedication**

This thesis is dedicated to my family and friends, for their endless love, support and motivation throughout my studies.

## **Declaration**

I, Errikson Shilemba, 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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Date

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# CHAPTER 1

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Introduction

This chapter introduces the study on the literary representations of socio-political issues in the Namibian society by providing the background of the study, statement of the problem, and the objectives of the study. In addition, the importance of the study, as well as limitations and delimitations of the study are highlighted. Lastly, the way in which the study is organised from the beginning to the end is also illustrated.

### 1.2 Background of the study

The study followed a critical analysis of the literary representations of socio-political issues in the Namibian society as portrayed in Philander's two anthologies: *The Namibian Stage Chronicles* (2010) and *King of the Dump and Other Plays* (2005). Other than just for hedonistic purposes, literature performs an important role in educating the society. Beyer (2012, p. 8) states that, "writers rarely write to simply 'fit a theme,' rather they write in response to certain socio-political events and experiences from their surroundings". In other words, literature becomes a social art dedicated to human mores and it always leaps out of a specific historical and social context. In that way literature may not possibly exist in nothingness.

Achebe (1988) as an African writer, has a specific role to play in society. Ngara (1985) affirms that "literature enables us to see the nature of the ideology of an epoch because it is socially conditioned" (p. 21). In a way Philander acts dutifully as a writer to awaken the society on matters that they may not be aware of, that directly impact on their everyday lives.

Furthermore, the power of literary works is evidenced in what Mlambo and Kandemiri (2015) assert that a text is "a sharp portrayal of societal realities" (p. 63). So, all those concerns that



writers write about are a reflection of societal actualities. Philander (2010) contends that “although Namibia has been independent for almost over two decades ago, unemployment, violence against women and children, nepotism and economic window dressing dominate life” (p. 7). This study therefore looked at how socio-political issues are presented in the Namibian society as presented from Philander’s two anthologies, specifically the four selected plays namely, “Election Fever” (2010), “King of the Dump” (2005), “The Porridge Queen” (2010), and “Victim of Love” (2005).

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

Although Namibia attained its political independence more than two decades ago, there are some socio-political problems that affecting some communities. This prompts one to question the meaning of independence for ordinary Namibians. Nashongo (2016) states that literature can be “a powerful tool to voice the unvoiced” (p. 5). Thus, literature reflects on real life situations and through it a writer can contemplate on the specific issues concerning the society.

A number of studies have been conducted on societal issues which includes Hamukwaya (2016), who commented on satire as a tool for socio-political commentary in Namibia. Mlambo and Kandemiri (2015) analysed *The Other Presence*, a Namibian novel, with emphasis on the articulation of the unsayables in Namibia. Hangula (2016) focused on the myths surrounding death involving the HIV and AIDS pandemic. Moreover, Ashikuti (2012) and Malaba (2000) studied particularly poetry in Namibia, paying attention on some of the struggles of the masses in the post-independence era.

It appears that no study has been conducted on the socio-political issues in Namibia, particularly using Philander’s two anthologies, thereby creating a gap that this study tried to fill in. Therefore, this study investigated how the socio-political issues affect people in

Namibia as portrayed through the selected four plays namely, “Election Fever” (2010), “King of the Dump” (2005), “The Porridge Queen” (2010), and “Victim of Love” (2005) in Philander’s two anthologies *The Namibian Stage Chronicles* (2010) and *King of the Dump and Other Plays* (2005).

#### **1.4 Research questions**

The study sought to answer the following questions:

- a) How does Philander present socio-political issues in pre-independent Namibia?
- b) How does Philander present socio-political issues in post-independent Namibia?
- c) How do the selected plays succeed in arousing people’s socio-political consciousness?

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

This study contributes to the existing knowledge of literary research, and it may raise public awareness regarding socio-political issues that affect communities in Namibia. According to Ngugi (2012), “literature acts as a mirror in which human experiences can be viewed. It stretches the mind, deepens one’s experience and heightens awareness of the surroundings. Through literature, communities get to understand themselves better” (p. 60). Thus, this study focused on plays that deal with the Namibian society in different socio-political dimensions which are a reflection of people’s lives.

#### **1.6 Limitations of the study**

The study was limited only to socio-political issues in the Namibian society as portrayed in the four plays : “Election Fever” (2010), “King of the Dump” (2005), “The Porridge Queen” (2010), and “Victim of Love” (2005) selected from Philander’s two anthologies: *The Namibian Stage Chronicles* (2010) and *King of the Dump and Other Plays* (2005). The findings therefore cannot be generalised to other plays and their characters which may be

addressing similar thematic concerns. Also, the study was theoretically bound to Critical Discourse Analysis and Marxist theories which frame this study.

### **1.7 Delimitations of the study**

The study was delimited to the socio-political issues in Namibian society as portrayed in Philander's two anthologies: *The Namibian Stage Chronicles* (2010) and *King of the Dumps and Other plays* (2005). However, there were many other thematic concerns in other plays in Philander's two anthologies other than those presented in the selected plays for the present study.

### **1.8 Organisation of study**

This study is organised as follows:

The first chapter (Chapter 1) provides the background of the study which introduces the study. The research questions of the study are listed and followed by the significance of the study. Also, the limitations and delimitations of the study are presented as well as the statement of the problem is highlighted. Chapter 2 specifies the two theories (Critical Discourse Analysis and Marxist) that informed this study, as well as the literature review which shows how other scholars have applied these theories on other literary works.

Chapter 3 explains the methodology on how this study was conducted from the initial stage of critical reading to the last stage of reporting on the findings, recommendations and conclusions.

Chapter 4 is the analysis and discussion of the selected plays: "Election Fever" (2010), "King of the Dump" (2005), "The Porridge Queen" (2010), and "Victim of Love" (2005) as guided by Critical Discourse Analysis and Marxist theories and supported by the reviewed literature

in Chapter 2 of this study. Chapter 5 presents the conclusions, and made some recommendations and finally concludes the study.

## **1.9 Conclusion**

This chapter (Chapter 1) oriented the study by highlighting the critical concerns of the study which is the representation of socio-political issues in the Namibian society, particularly in the selected plays: “Election Fever” (2010), “King of the Dump” (2005), “The Porridge Queen” (2010), and “Victim of Love” (2005). The chapter further clarified the problem statement, the research questions, the significance as well as limitations and delimitations of the study. The way the whole study was organised was also taken into consideration.

The next chapter (Chapter 2) discusses the theoretical frameworks adopted and the reviewing of relevant literature for this study.

## **CHAPTER 2**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK**

#### **2.1 Introduction**

The previous chapter (Chapter 1) introduced the study. This chapter (Chapter 2) focuses on the theoretical framework and the literature review of the present study. The theoretical framework is discussed with regards to why it best informs this study. The literature on the social and political issues in Namibia is reviewed. The literature review is discussed in segments with sub headings which assisted in assessing the basis of existing knowledge and forming the justification of carrying out this research in particular.

#### **2.2 Theoretical framework**

This study adopted two literary theories as tools for framing the analysis. This study is informed by the Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) and Marxist theory. CDA theory was relevant to this study as it addresses language issues, power and ideology, as well as discrimination, oppression and injustice, which are the major concerns for this study. On the other hand, the Marxist theory complements the CDA. Rice and Waugh (1989) explain that “Marxism attempts to draw conclusions about the relations between the literary and the social” (p. 2), hence making these two theories most appropriate for this study. The two literary tools were useful as they offered the fullest discernment towards the understanding of the socio-political issues portrayed in the selected plays.

##### **2.2.1 Critical discourse analysis (CDA)**

Critical discourse analysis (CDA) refers to the use of an ensemble of techniques for the study of textual practice and language use as social and cultural practices (Fairclough, 1992). According to Hall (1996), CDA builds from three broad theoretical orientations specified as follows: a) from post-structuralism the view that discourse operates laterally across local institutional sites, and that texts have a constructive function in forming up and shaping

human identities and actions; b) it draws from Bourdieu's sociology about the assumption that actual textual practices and interactions with texts become "embodied" forms of "cultural capital" with exchange value in particular social fields; c) and it draws from neo-marxist cultural theory the assumption that these discourses are produced and used within political economies, and that they thus produce and articulate broader ideological interests, social formations and movements within those fields (Hall, 1996).

Critical discourse analysis (CDA) aims at making transparent the links between discourse practices, social practices and social structures, and those connections that might be impervious to the ordinary person. CDA is not a homogenous model, nor a school or a paradigm, but at most a shared perspective on doing linguistics, semiotics or discourse analysis (VanDijk1996). Fairclough's (1995) definition perceives;

CDA as discourse analysis which aims to systematically explore often opaque relationships of causality and determination between (a) discursive practice, events and texts, and (b) wider social and cultural structures, relations and processes; to investigate how such practices, events and texts arise out of and are ideologically shaped by relations of power and struggles over power; and to explore how the opacity of these relationships between discourse and society is itself a factor securing power and hegemony. (p. 135)

CDA has one element which differentiates it from other types of discourse analysis namely its feature of being 'critical'. According to Fairclough (1992), 'Critical' implies showing connections and causes which are hidden; it also implies intervention, for example providing resources for those who may be disadvantaged through change" (p. 9). With playwrights like Philander, it is important to expose the hidden things, through fictional works such as the selected plays since they are not evident for the individuals involved. As a result, they cannot be fought against. From its inception, CDA was a discipline designed to question the status

quo, by detecting, analysing, and also resisting and counteracting enactments of power abuse as transmitted in private and public discourses (Tenorio, (n.d.), p. 187). Thus, CDA aims at helping to reveal some of the hidden and ‘out of sight’ values, positions, and perspectives such as the socio-political issues evident in Philander’s (2010; 2005) selected plays.

The strengths of CDA lie in its principles as stated by Fairclough (1992), that some principles for CDA: a) Social and political issues are constructed and reflected in discourse; b) Power relations are negotiated and performed through discourse; c) Discourse both reflects and reproduces social relations: d) Ideologies are produced and reflected in the use of discourse. Simply put, adopting CDA includes not only a narration and interpretation of discourse in context, but also suggests a justification of why and how discourses work. Thus, CDA was adopted particularly for this study considering its principles as set out by Fairclough (1992).

Despite the strengths of CDA, there are numerous critics to this theory which include Widdowson (1998, 2004), who feels that CDA should include discussion with the producers and consumers of texts since its focus is mainly on the text. Also VanNoppen (2004), notes that, CDA does not always consider the role of the reader in the consumption and interpretation of literature. Furthermore, Schegloff (1997) comments that, CDA does not provide detailed and systematic analysis of texts. Lastly, Cameron (2001), points out that the weakness in CDA is its reliance on just the analyst’s interpretation of the texts. It appears that much criticism of CDA is on its lack of involving the reader and the writer. However, this study still found it worth to adopt CDA on the basis that the focus of this study was on how socio-political issues were represented in the selected plays, which are in the form of literary texts and not paying attention at the writer or reader’s perspectives.

### **2.2.2 Marxist theory**

The Marxist theory is a prominent philosophy of Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels in which the concept of class struggle plays a crucial role in understanding society's supposedly

inevitable development from bourgeois oppression under capitalism to a socialist and eventually a classless society. Marxism has its main intellectual origins in German philosophy, English political economy, and French utopian socialism (Ollman, 2017). From Hegel, the German philosopher, Marx learned a way of thinking about the world, in all its fluid complexity that is called dialectics. The British political economists, Adam Smith and David Ricardo, provided Marx with a first approximation of his labour theory of value; and from the French utopians, especially Charles Fourier and the Comte de Saint-Simon, Marx caught a glimpse of a happier future that lay beyond capitalism (Ollman, 2017). What Marx acquired from Hegel and other intellectuals, coupled with the enigma of an Industrial Revolution which created as much poverty as it did to wealth. These became the main components that led to the formation of Marxism.

According to Johnson (2017), Karl Marx was one of the first social scientists to focus mainly on social class, and his main focus on social class was that one's social class dictated one's social life. In other words, Marx could be meaning that if one is in the upper class, life was one of leisure and abundance, while those in the lower class lived lives of hardship and poverty. According to Marx, there was one social element that would determine where one fit in the social class hierarchy: that of who controls the means of production, meaning those who owned the resources necessary to produce what people needed to survive (Johnson, 2017). The *American Heritage Dictionary* (2017) states that, rich persons would be the individuals who owned the land and factories and be in control of all elements of society. Furthermore, Johnson (2017) notes that according to the sociologist John Macionis, the wealthy and the working poor have opposing interests and they are separated by a vast gulf of wealth and power, making class conflict inevitable. Croft and Cross (2004) note that the Marxist theory has central to it the idea of class struggle. The class struggles were prominent before Namibia attained its political independence and they were still prevalent after



independence as presented in the selected four plays: “Election Fever” (2010), “King of the Dump” (2005), “The Porridge Queen” (2010), and “Victim of Love” (2005), for the present study. Thus, the Marxist theory with its characteristics of defining the class differences best suited this study as its focus is on socio-political issues in Namibia.

### **2.3 Reviewed literature**

An exhaustive literature review establishes reliability in any research. According to O’Leary (2010), “a well-constructed literature review is an important criterion in establishing research credibility” (p. 72). Moreover, Mouton (1996) maintains that, “a survey of the literature is an essential component of any study because it is the main access point or gateway to the relevant body of knowledge” (p. 121). Furthermore, O’Leary (2010) reiterates that “the production of new knowledge is fundamentally dependent on past knowledge” (p. 71). For the stated justifications as made by the above scholars on the importance of literature review there is therefore the need to carry out a thorough literature review to back up the analysis of the selected four plays: “Election Fever” (2010), “King of the Dump” (2005), “The Porridge Queen” (2010), and “Victim of Love” (2005).

Creswell (2008) states that, there is no specific way to carry out a literature review, which might imply that literature review may take several forms. What is of paramount importance is for the literature review to be critically done. Furthermore, Creswell (2013) upholds that, “The literature review helps to determine whether the topic is worth studying, and it provides insight into ways in which the researcher can limit the scope to a needed area of inquiry” (p. 57). Thus, a literature review is crucial as it generates the platform on which to critique “Election Fever” (2010), “King of the Dump” (2005), “The Porridge Queen” (2010), and “Victim of Love” (2005) by looking at the socio-political issues as presented in the selected plays.

### **2.3.1 The genre of drama/play**

The genre of drama/play differs considerably from poetry or prose in that it is commonly written for the purpose of being performed on stage. Dukore (1971) describes it as “staged art” (p. 867). Thus, drama or a play is intended for the theatre as characters are assigned roles and they act out their roles as the action is performed on stage. These characters can take any form as they can be human beings, dead or spiritual beings, animals, or abstract qualities. So it may be discerned that drama is an adaptation, recreation and reflection of life actualities on stage. Thus, Philander’s selected plays: “Election Fever” (2010), “King of the Dump” (2005), “The Porridge Queen” (2010), and “Victim of Love” (2005) are an adaptation, recreation and reflection of socio-political issues impacting on Namibian societies.

The novel is divided in chapters and the poem is written mostly in stanzas, while drama is presented in acts and scenes, movements or parts (Crown, 1983). Spiazzi, Tavella and Layton (2015) also state that a play consists of an act or a number of acts divided into scenes (p. 1). Furthermore, the number of characters, which in the past were called *Drámaticis Personae*, may vary but always includes: a hero, the protagonist of the play who is not necessarily “heroic”, noble and brave; a heroine, the play’s main female character; an antagonist, who is the hero’s main opponent, usually the play’s villain and lastly characters can be divided into main or minor according to how important they are for the play (Spiazzi, et al., 2015, p. 5). In each of the play selected particularly for this study, there are characters acting to bring out the socio-political issues which happen to be the major reason why this study had to be done.

Drama is an imitation of life. So in the process of enacting life the characters imitate life as it is and thus follow the utterances done in reality. Spiazzi et al. (2015) observe that “There are three types of utterances in drama, monologue, dialogue and soliloquy” (p. 6). Dialogue is the main support of drama since: it creates the action; it provides details about the characters

and their relationships; it contributes to theme development; it gives information about the past; it can foreshadow subsequent events and it may be built to cause specific reactions in the audience (Spiazzi et al., 2015). Also, soliloquy and monologue are special conventions of Elizabethan drama and these devices enable the playwright to let the audience know: the character's thoughts about a specific problem; the character's plans for the future; the character's feelings and reactions; the character's explanation of what happens between scenes (Spiazzi et al., 2015). All three utterances are prevalent in the selected plays: "Election Fever" (2010), "King of the Dump" (2005), "The Porridge Queen" (2010), and "Victim of Love" (2005). The utterances are of paramount importance as they augment in bringing out the socio-political issues highlighted in the selected plays.

Other than the three utterances highlighted by Spiazzi et al. (2015), another special form of speech in drama is referred to as an aside. Lethbridge and Mildorf (n.d.) assert that "Asides are spoken away from other characters, and a character either speaks aside to himself, secretly to (an)other character(s) or to the audience (*ad spectatores*)" (p. 123). Spiazzi et al. (2015) further magnify on asides that they are short comments made by a character for the audience alone, usually occurring in or between speeches. Furthermore, their purposes are: to reveal the nature of the speaker, to draw the attention of the audience to the importance of what has been said; to explain developments; to create humour by introducing the unexpected (Spiazzi et al., 2015, p. 8). Therefore, Philander uses fictional characters in the selected plays to sensitise some socio-political issues that affect people and arouse public consciousness.

Drama thrives on action is also the most active of other genres of literature because of the immediate impact it has on the audience (Spiazzi et al., 2015). Thus, drama is used to inform, to educate, to entertain and in some cases to mobilise the audience. Bocket (1980) notes that;

You see that dramatists can use their works to help to shape the future of the societies. They can do this not only by reflecting the ugly sides of the societies but also by promoting the positive aspects of the people's way of life that are worth emulating or cultivating. (p. 69)

Hagher (1994) states that Ngugi WaThiong'o was arrested and detained because of the political and social consciousness that his play, *I Will Marry When I Want* (1982) written in Gikuyu language, stimulated in the audience after the production and prompted for immediate action and that forced Ngugi into exile. The drama of any society, therefore, reflects the problems, aspirations, philosophy and cultural background of the people.

Therefore, each dramatist uses arts to enlighten audience on the goodness, imbalances and shortcomings of the society. Apart from their thematic concerns, each dramatist, in his own style of relaying his message, tries to highlight his cultural background through the use of myths, legends, music, songs, dances, proverbs, riddles, and other local expressions. In this way, dramatists all over the world are regarded as the conscience of their societies, and custodians of their moral and cultural values.

### **2.3.2 Socio-political issues in the studies of literature**

Different artists of different genres of literature from different parts of Africa have written numerous works that reflect on the problems that affect African people and African societies in their everyday lives. Mupondi (2013) and Tembo (2012), comment on the commitment exhibited by African writers in communicating the socio-political concerns which include unemployment, inequality, and corruption, to mention but a few.

With writers giving attention to socio-political issues, this shows how societies are being affected by such issues and the writers bring that to the fore for the society to decide on what

to do about the problems. Kehinde (2004) remarks on how writers whose works are in a position to offer critical evaluations of prevailing political circumstances in order to redirect and influence the actions of a society. Thus, through the selected plays, Philander (2005; 2010) highlights socio-political issues in order to redirect the actions of society.

Writers are always in season and highlighting the socio-political issues that affect societies at any given time. During the colonial times, writers like Athol Fugard wrote on the criticism against the apartheid system through several plays which include “Sizwe Bansi is Dead” (1972). Charles Mungoshi, a Zimbabwean writer, exposed the brutalities of colonialism through the novel *Waiting for the Rain* (1975). In Mungoshi’s (1975) and Fugard’s (1972), socio-political issues are central to their works as they pay particular attention to issues such as segregation, family disintegration as well as aspects involving identity amongst other pertinent issues. Also, Oyono (1966) through *Houseboy* reveals the abject conditions of the Africans in the era of colonialism, which are again an example of socio-political issues. Bhat (2014), argues that early African writers focused on the basic problems of African colonialism as well as the socio-political issues attached to it. Moreover, WaThiongo (2012) argues that theorising about the colonial situation in Africa is based on the foundational efforts of fiction writers. Similarly, writers like Chinua Achebe wrote works like *Things Fall Apart* (1958) aimed at challenging the misrepresentation of Africans in the literary works of colonialists, again by incorporating the socio-political issues of that epoch.

Upon attainment of independence in most African countries, writers modified their way of writing to expose the socio-political issues that came with independence such as poverty, dictatorship, nepotism, bad governance, unemployment and corruption amongst others. Examples include Achebe’s *No Longer at Ease* (1960), which exposes the rot in society and how corruption is immoral. Nyathi (2008) through *The Other Presence* considers a number of

socio-political issues which include among others HIV and AIDS, modernity and education. Also, Mariama Ba (2008) through *So Long a Letter* highlights on the plight of women subjugating fellow women, as well as the question of inheritance amongst other pertinent issues. Furthermore, Andreas (2001) through *The Purple Violet of Oshaantu*, addresses women plights in patriarchal societies. Thus, WaThiong'o (2012) states that, "The novel, like the myth and the parable, gives a view of society from its contemplation of social life, reflecting it, mirror like, but also reflecting upon it, simultaneously" (p. 16). In this manner, writers highlight issues that affect societies directly as reflected in Philander's selected plays: "Election Fever" (2010), "King of the Dump" (2005), "The Porridge Queen" (2010), and "Victim of Love" (2005).

It may therefore be commented that writers whenever they write, they have their societies in mind particularly giving attention to the issues that make part of their lives. As suggested by Ohmann (1976);

There is no sense in pondering the functions of literature without relating it to the actual society that uses it, to the centres of power within that society, and to the institutions that mediate between literature and people. (p. 303)

Thus, literature functions as a prospective footing for the analysis of social thought as the issues highlighted in the writers' works engage with the nature of existence. To reinforce this line of thinking Mlambo, Kangira and Smit (2015) state that "The arts in Africa are serving a central purpose in the society, for they are not necessarily patterned in the western concept of art for art's sake" (p. 49). For the present study, it aimed at exploring how Philander through his plays: "Election Fever" (2010), "King of the Dump" (2005), "The Porridge Queen" (2010), and "Victim of Love" (2005) engages with socio-political issues which are hinged on people's way of living. This concurs with WaThiong'o (2012) who prefers that "It

[novel/play] helps organise and make sense of the chaos of history, social experience, and personal inner lives” (p. 16).

### **2.3.3 Namibia’s historical context**

Germany ruled Namibia from the 1880s through 1917, and after World War I, Namibia was transferred to South Africa under a League of Nations Mandate (Fuller, 2006). From 1884 onwards, Germany South West Africa (GSWA) was consciously developed as a settler colony where imperial power ensured that the colonial capitalist mode of production would become dominant in that colony (Alexander, 2013). Colonial rule starting with the Germans then the South Africa with apartheid system which took a long time through which indigenous Namibians were disinherited and deprived from the rights to both land and resources. First German and then white South African settlers were encouraged to migrate and establish commercial farms and related businesses (Fuller, 2006, p. 1). Thus, the exodus of the Germans and the white South Africans generated numerous socio-political problems for the Namibians which were aggravated by this move, and turning into long lasting challenges.

Moreover, in apartheid Namibia, land rights were regulated by the colour of the skin. Whites had freehold rights to land and many of its associated resources while the non-whites were forced into homelands where communal land tenure was in effect (Fuller, 2006). Therefore, the whites controlled the means of production while the non-whites suffered on their indigenous land. Okolo (2013) acknowledges that “Land is held onto as a sign of belonging to a particular community, a link to one’s roots and source” (p. 23). The forced migration of indigenous Namibians from their ancestral lands into homelands created problems associated with rootlessness and this impacted on identity as well. These problems emanating from the forced transfers had repercussions that resulted in some of the socio-political issues that

happen to be the core purpose of this study as presented in Philander's selected plays particularly "Election Fever" (2010) and "King of the Dump" (2005).

Peters (2007) observes that "Indigenous people's relationship with their traditional lands and territories is said to form a core part of their identity and spirituality" (p. 1). In addition, Magosvongwe (2013) notes that, "Land and cultural identities are intertwined" (p. 3), meaning any intervention results in the unnatural course of flow and results in problems in the societies affected. Furthermore, Mhlauli, Salani and Mokotedi (2015) observe that "Not only was apartheid a system of racial discrimination, however, it was also imposed separation or segregation of blacks and whites in the areas of government, labour market and residency" (p. 205). Thus, the presence of repressive systems such as apartheid did more than good and actually instigated suffering particularly for the oppressed. Again, the forced migrations distorted and destructed the links between the Namibians and their spirituality at the same time advocating segregation. Mhlaulietal (2015) state that "It [apartheid] was, thus, pervasive in that it was deeply embedded within the economic, social and political structure of the whole country" (p. 205). In a way, apartheid in its entirety created problems for the Namibians right from the time of its inception and the problems are the ones being highlighted by writers such as Fugard (2005; 2010) who exposed the conditions during and after the repressive times of colonial bondage and the socio-political problems within those epochs. Thus, such political issues are highlighted in the selected plays: "Election fever" (2010), "King of the Dump" (2005), "The Porridge Queen" (2010), and "Victim of Love" (2005) under present study.

The socio-political problems emanating from the presence of apartheid were faced with much resistance such that "The denial of rights to land and resources to the majority of Namibians during the colonial period was the primary fuel for Namibia's liberation movement" (Fuller,



2006, p. 2). The brutality and cruelty engraved in the apartheid system prompted the Namibians to fight against the system as they were being denied the status of being humans as observed through “the exploitation of their bodies, land and resources and the denial of equal socio economic opportunities to them” (Mills, 1992, p. 11). Furthermore, the absence of equal socio economic opportunities is a major issue that affects societies and this is typical in the four selected plays: “Election Fever” (2010), “King of the Dump” (2005), “The Porridge Queen” (2010), and “Victim of Love” (2005), as they reflect upon a Namibian society at a time during and after apartheid.

The deep-seated brutality in apartheid lobbied the agonising Namibians to fight the system with hopes of their life improving after the struggle. Melber (2005) posits that;

The liberation struggle was at the same time about creating conditions for a better life after Apartheid - not only in terms of political and human rights but also with regard to the extricably linked material dimensions to human well-being and a decent living of those previously marginalised and excluded from the benefits of the wealth created (to a large extent by them). (p. 306)

The liberation struggle was thus undertaken in order for the Namibians to restore life that had been intruded by the advent and roosting of apartheid. The socio-political problems that were prevalent before independence are typical in the plays: “King of the Dump” (2005) and “Election Fever” (2010) which exposed the callousness of apartheid and that triggered the Namibians to fight the system. The plays thus protest against social injustices and abuse of power amongst other anomalies.

### **2.3.4 Post independent Namibia**

Independent Namibia is faced with various challenges. There is a need to bring the institutions of government in line with the needs of the whole country as opposed to the privileged elite (Fuller, 2006, p. 5). Namibia faced monumental challenges in its quest to become a productive and progressive country that was previously under the apartheid annexes. The transition from apartheid to independence also brought with it and carried forward some problems that affected societies hence playwrights like Philander highlight those problems through their works such as the plays: “The Porridge Queen” (2010) and “Victim of Love” (2005) which reflect on socio-political issues in post independent Namibia.

According to Melber (2005), since the declaration of independence in March 1990, the government of Namibia has held the exploitative and discriminatory nature of the country’s century of firm occupation under colonialism first then apartheid. To be independent means to be free from the colonial bondage of the coloniser and the attainment of self-autonomy. The denial of rights to land and resources to the majority of Namibians during the colonial period was the primary fuel for Namibia's liberation movement and just like South Africa and Zimbabwe, Namibia inherited an unequal pattern of land distribution and associated wealth when it achieved independence (Fuller, 2006, p. 2). Thus, the redistribution of land should be a number one agenda so that the people of Namibia should be in control of the means of production.

According to Fuller (2006), prior to 1990, rights in communal lands were managed by local traditional leaders who were responsible for the allocation of land, settling disputes and inheritance issues. The Constitution of Namibia declared that communal lands are the property of the State, and that power over those lands resides with the State President (Fuller, 2006). This disrupted the duties and roles of the majority traditional leaders in Namibia and

left them hesitant to be part of the land management. The government's taking over the responsibility from the local traditional leaders may be interpreted to be a characteristic inherited from the previous oppressive system. Melber (2005) notes that, "The infamous system of apartheid is responsible for the gross inequalities still characterising the current post-colonial social disparities" (p. 306). So, it appears that the socio-political issues permeating from the apartheid era found their way through to the independence of Namibia. The selected plays reflect upon the period before and after independence and the present study paid particular attention to those socio-political issues that existed then and are still lingering unresolved even in the present independent state.

Responses to the situation brought about by The Constitution of Namibia varied, some traditional leaders felt they had lost any authority to discuss land issues, others continued as if nothing had happened, still others fell somewhere in between (Fuller, 2006). Furthermore, Fuller (2006) points out that during the period of uncertainty, opportunistic individuals took advantage of the lack of local management and that resulted in consequences that cause some of socio-political issues presented in Philander's selected plays. The socio-political issues such as those created by some individuals taking advantage of a situation are highlighted in the selected plays and said to affect society's everyday life.

With regards to land as a central point for controlling any country's means of production, Huggins (2010) comments that;

The term "land issue" covers a multitude of problems including demographic pressure and migratory waves, returning refugees and displaced people, land-use conflicts (farmers versus pastoralists), historical land claims and local power struggles. (p. 9)

In addition, Freeman (1992) observes that “the legacy of South African rule included a severe fiscal crisis, a dependent economy, uneven development, and inadequate social services for the black population” (p. 25). So, the comment by Huggins (2010) and the observation by Freeman (1992) are the results of socio-political issues being emphasised in Philander’s selected plays: “Election Fever” (2010), “King of the Dump” (2005), “The Porridge Queen” (2010), and “Victim of Love” (2005) under present study.

With this pattern of foreign ownership of most of Namibia’s productive resources and the application of South Africa’s apartheid policy, Namibia at independence had one of the most dramatically unequal distributions of income in the world. Structural inequalities were manifest in extreme differences in income levels between Namibia’s impoverished black majority and the tiny white community, and in unequal access to productive resources, markets and social services (Freeman, (1992). The veins of apartheid are still engrained in the post independent Namibia and they are typified in the post independent Namibia as represented in the plays: “The Porridge Queen” (2010), and “Victim of Love” (2005).

#### **2.4 Discussion of the key socio-political issues**

Through plays/drama, conflicts and emotions are expressed through dialogue and action. The majority of socio-political issues feed and breed into one another as one may be a consequence of the other and a majority of them are rooted and inherited from the apartheid system. These socio-political issues include poverty which has many facets and its definition depends on what context it is being discussed. According to Deen-Swarray (2006), “Poverty has many dimensions, and varies across time and from one society to the next” (p. 2). Also, Mchombu and Mchombu (2014) view poverty as a complex phenomenon that can be defined from various perspectives. Being aware of the multifacetedness of poverty aids in

understanding the “poverties” highlighted by Philander (2005; 2010) in the plays both before and after independence.

Ogbokor and Ngeendepi (2011) assert that poverty is a major concern of governments all over the world, such that a number of poverty alleviation programmes and campaigns have been developed overtime and subsequently implemented across the regions but still, poverty remains. Namibia is not exempted from the problem of poverty and writers like Philander highlight such issues of poverty as a trajectory back dating from apartheid time to post independence time, and this is typical of the selected plays: “Election Fever” (2010), “King of the Dump” (2005), “The Porridge Queen” (2010), and “Victim of Love” (2005) particularly selected for the present study.

According to Deen-Swarray (2006), absolute poverty is defined in the Copenhagen Declaration as “a condition characterised by severe deprivation of basic needs, including food, safe drinking water, sanitation facilities, health, shelter, education and information” (p. 2). Another definition from an economical perspective notes that, poverty refers to a circumstance characterised by a lack of wealth material goods and resources, and socially, it describes a state of social exclusion, dependency and the ability to live what is termed a “normal” life in society (Deen-Swarray (2006, p. 2). Furthermore, other dimensions of poverty include poverty of access and power, and the term poverty of access is often used to describe the lack of access to basic infrastructure and services. Poverty of power often relates to the lack of access to information, and inhibiting the poor from fully participating in economic activities (Deen-Swarray (2006, p. 2).

Therefore, with different forms of poverty, some of the facets form largely the socio-political issues of Philander’s selected plays: “Election Fever” (2010), “King of the Dump” (2005), “The Porridge Queen” (2010), and “Victim of Love” (2005) under present study. Schade

(2000) attributes the causes of poverty to high unemployment and unequal distribution of assets, particularly land, which was the order of the day during the Apartheid period. Thus, the problem of land generates other problems such as unequal distribution of land, leading to little or no control over means of production, resulting in high unemployment rate, triggering poverty and high crime rates. In other words, one problem ends up creating and sparking other problems. The selected plays: “Election Fever” (2010), “King of the Dump” (2005), “The Porridge Queen” (2010), and “Victim of Love” (2005) selected particularly for the present study, highlight such socio-political issues and how a single problem feeds, breeds and multiplies to form other problematical challenges.

Other than poverty, other socio-political issues include trauma, segregation, tribalism, racism, inequality, gender issues, corruption, forced migration, land issues, rootlessness, identity, displacement, separation from ancestors, interference with indigenous knowledge systems (IKS), nepotism, high crime rates, high rates of unemployment, lack of education, the list goes on and on. The majority of these problems have their roots in pre independent Namibia (apartheid era) and they are brought forward into independent Namibia. Thus, the pre independent plays: “Election Fever” (2010) and “King of the Dump” (2005), reflect socio-political issues for that era, while “The Porridge Queen” (2010), and “Victim of Love” (2005) expose the socio-political issues found in the era after independence. Unemployment as a direct contributing factor to poverty has indeed become one of the most burning social issues demanding attention and combined efforts to contribute to its solution (Melber, 2005, p. 307).

## **2.5 Other plays highlighting socio-political issues**

Makin (2015) in the play *I Will Marry When I Want* by Ngugi WaThiong’o (1977), notes that the play was written in post-independent Kenya as a protest against the dehumanisation of the masses by the new leadership. The aim of such protest is to highlight effectiveness of

this genre in sensitising the people to oppression by their colonial and neo-colonial leaders (Makin, 2015). In Philander's selected plays, the readers are sensitised about how people suffer from the oppression during the apartheid era as portrayed in the pre independence plays: "Election Fever" (2010) and "King of the Dump" (2005).

In *The Lion and the Jewel*, Soyinka (1962) highlights the post-colonial struggle between modernity and tradition as portrayed mainly through the characters Lakunle (modern) and Baroka (tradition). The conflict between cultures results in people in societies caught in-between and that impacts on their identities as well. Aspects pertaining to the struggle between modernity and tradition are prevalent in almost all societies where indigenous cultures and traditions come into contact with other cultures through forms such as colonialism and apartheid. Thus, the clash of tradition and modernity is prevalent in the selected plays and the playwright presents them as a social challenge.

*The Honourable MP: A Play* by Musengezi (1984) subtly captures Zimbabwe's socio-political environment with its pot-bellied politicians who drain the government's coffers and abuse the powers vested in them at the expense of the suffering masses. This is typical in the post-independence plays: "The Porridge Queen" (2010), and "Victim of Love" (2005) which reflect on how the ruthless leaders mislead the country and the ordinary citizens suffer.

Moreover, Masinde (2010) comments that;

Although *The Beautiful Ones Are Not Yet Born* focuses on post independence Ghanaian society, it is symbolic of many other developing countries, where corruption remains a major problem at all levels. For the common man, there seems to be no end to the scourges of corruption and moral decadence. Indeed, it appears the saviors or the "beautiful ones" as Amar calls them, are not yet born. (p. 1)

This may imply that the advent of independence did not remove the suffering that the masses were enduring during the liberation struggle under different forms of repression, independence actually carried forward the socio-political problems though under the masses are now under new governments. Thus, socio-political issues are prevalent in the plays that represent pre-independence: “Election Fever” (2010) and “King of the Dump” (2005) and those that represent the post-independence era: “The Porridge Queen” (2010), and “Victim of Love” (2005).

Furthermore, for the play *The Trial of Dedan Kimathi* by WaThiong’o (1976), Yadav (2017) comments that;

The play written in response to colonialist writing shows the divisive mechanisations of the imperialist power. The title of the play highlights key aspects of the play, the trial of Kimathi and the progress of Mau-Mau rebellion movement and its contribution in the freedom of Kenya from imperialism. (p. 1)

Thus, the play shows the political situation during Kenya’s liberation struggle and how unfairly the Kenyans were oppressed and how the play was a form of improvement to represent the true Kenya and the significance of the Mau-Mau towards the emancipation of Kenya. Again, this play reflects on the problems that the majority of the oppressed encounter before attaining independence as also represented in “Election Fever” (2010) and “King of the Dump” (2005).

Furthermore, Goff and Simpson (2007) comment on the play *The Gods are Not to Blame* by Ola Rotimi (1971) arguing that it is an allegory of colonisation and decolonisation and revises the established reading of the play as a representation of the Nigerian Civil War. Furthermore, the protagonist's patricide is understood as the slaying of the colonial father at



the moment of independence, and the ensuing incest is the intimate embrace between the hero of national liberation and what the despatched coloniser leaves behind, namely his culture (Goff & Simpson, 2007). This political decolonisation is thus staged as the easy part, while cultural decolonisation is dramatised as impossible because the incestuous embrace results in an issue which is not only the children in the play but also the play itself. As such, the play is a product of an indigenous and a colonial culture. Ethnic aggression, as both colonisation and civil war, is thus characterised as fighting oneself (Goff & Simpson, 2007). Therefore, Philander presents social injustice and abject poverty in the selected plays: “King of the Dump” (2005) and “Election Fever” (2010) to inform the readers.

Another African play that helps provide critical insights into the present study is the play from closer to Namibia, the South African play, “Sizwe Bansi is Dead” (1972). Sizwe Bansi is the play by Athol Fugard, John Kani and Winston Ntshona about the dehumanising treatment of South Africa’s black population under apartheid”. Through this play, Fugard (1972) exposes the brutalities attached to the repressive system of apartheid. Namibia suffered equally under apartheid and the brutalities of apartheid system in Namibian context are represented through the plays: “Election Fever” (2010) and “King of the Dump” (2005) which are set in pre-independent Namibia.

## **2.6 Conclusion**

In this chapter (Chapter 2) attention was given to the two theories, CDA and Marxist literary theory, which framed this study and justifications as to why they best suited this study. Literature was reviewed with much attention given to areas such as the genre of drama, socio-political issues in African literature studies, history of Namibia as well as other plays and the kinds of socio-political issues that they deliberated on. The next chapter is on the methodology that was employed in carrying out the present study.

## CHAPTER 3

### METHODOLOGY

#### 3.1 Introduction

The previous chapter (Chapter 2) focused on the theoretical framework and literature review. In this chapter (Chapter 3), focus is mainly on the methodology and it includes features such as the approach and design, population and sample as well as data analysis and ethical considerations.

#### 3.2 Approach and design

This study adopted a qualitative approach as the research deliberated on the analysis of the literary representations of socio-political issues in the Namibian society. According to Bui (2014), “the qualitative approach is a method that delves into a particular situation to better understand a phenomenon” (p. 290). Therefore, this research opted for the qualitative approach to critically examine and get an in-depth view of how Philander represents socio-political issues in the selected plays: “Election Fever” (2010), “King of the Dump” (2005), “The Porridge Queen” (2010), and “Victim of Love” (2005). Qualitative research is a means for exploring and understanding the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem or situation (Creswell, 2009). Punch (2003) stresses that qualitative research investigates social phenomena which are not quantifiable. The intrinsic socio-political issues that exist within the Namibian society may not be reduced easily to numbers, hence making the qualitative approach the most appropriate approach adopted by this present study.

Masson (2002) identifies that there are two features of the qualitative research design. Therefore, the qualitative research features are concerned with the interpretation of the social world and that it is flexible and sensitive to the social context in which data is produced.

Unlike the fixed and systematised methods of the quantitative research where conventional approaches are suggested for every study by employing laid out formulations.

Furthermore, the qualitative approach is grounded on arguments and understandings designed at comprehending the multifaceted nature of the social world within a specific context. Kothari (2004) states that, “the qualitative approach to research is concerned with subjective assessment of attitudes, opinions and behaviour” (p. 5). Thus, the researcher explores the issues being studied and then transmits the data in the form of words. This permits the researcher to conduct an analysis of data and extract information from a range of sources, analyse them and come up with conclusions.

The qualitative approach was used on the merits that it is interpretative in nature and aspires at understanding the qualities of social life, and its ability to give an in-depth textual description in the social context. Jupp (2006) perceives qualitative research as “research that investigates aspects of social life which are not amenable to quantitative measurement.” (p. 24). Hence qualitative research design has been appropriate in this study as the study explores literary texts in detail.

No field work was done for this study as it was confined to a desktop design because of its qualitative nature. This research was conducted as a desktop research study as the researcher read the selected plays: “Election Fever” (2010), “King of the Dump” (2005), “The Porridge Queen” (2010), and “Victim of Love” (2005) from Philander’s two anthologies, as well as data collected through reading a variety of secondary sources.

### **3.3 Population**

Johnson and Christensen (2012) define population as a complete set of cases from which a sample is drawn. Neuman (2011) further defines a research population as “the abstract idea of

a large group of many cases from which a researcher draws a sample and to which results are generalized.” (p. 241). Moreover, Creswell (2012, p. 142) adds that a research population is “a group of individuals who have the same characteristics” (p. 142). Burns and Grove (2003) define a research population as “all the elements that meet the criteria for inclusion in a study.” (p. 213). Bhattacharjee (2012) defines a population as all people or items (units of analysis) with the characteristics that one wishes to study (p. 65). With all the above definitions, the research population for this study was all Philander’s fourteen (14) plays that are written in English which portray socio-political issues. From Philander’s fourteen (14) plays, two anthologies were selected and two plays from each anthology formed up the sample of the present study.

### **3.4 Sample**

The study’s sample was Philander’s four plays: “Election Fever” (2010), “King of the Dump” (2005), “The Porridge Queen” (2010), and “Victim of Love” (2005). Burns and Grove (2003) define sampling as “a process of selecting a group of people, events or behaviour with which to conduct a study” (p. 31). Purposive sampling was used for this study as the researcher intentionally selected the four plays from Philander’s (2010; 2005) two anthologies. According to Creswell (2013), purposive sampling is “a sampling method in qualitative research where the researcher selects individual sites for the study because they purposefully inform an understanding of the research problem and central phenomenon in the study” (p. 300). Furthermore, Khotari (2004) states that in purposive sampling, “items for the sample are selected deliberately by the researcher, his choice concerning items remains supreme” (p. 59). The critical notions of socio-political issues were common in the selected four plays: “Election Fever” (2010), “King of the Dump” (2005), “The Porridge Queen” (2010), and “Victim of Love” (2005), making the selection of the plays having been influenced by similar thematic perspectives.

### **3.5 Research instruments**

The research was a desktop qualitative study and had the selected plays: “Election Fever” (2010), “King of the Dump” (2005), “The Porridge Queen” (2010), and “Victim of Love” (2005), as the primary data instruments. Also, reference was made to secondary sources such as journals, internet sources, text books, previous studies and all other relevant sources of information as instruments that informed this present study.

### **3.6 Procedure**

The study was a desktop study and data was collected through an intense reading and critical examination of the selected four plays: “Election Fever” (2010), “King of the Dump” (2005), “The Porridge Queen” (2010), and “Victim of Love” (2005). The study relied on the framing of CDA and Marxist theories and also considered relevant secondary sources which incorporated sources such as book reviews, journals, research papers and academic presentations as well as other relevant sources on socio-political issues. Reference to these sources enabled a critical analysis of the socio-political issues as presented in the selected four plays. Furthermore, the sources together with the two theories complemented the analysis and provided a platform on which this study was built upon. The chosen plays were analysed by applying the CDA and Marxist theories that framed this study, and also informed by the reviewed literature which resulted in informed findings for the conclusions for the present study.

### **3.7 Data analysis**

The study employed content analysis in the examination and analysis of the representations of the socio-political issues as presented in the selected four plays: “Election Fever” (2010), “King of the Dump” (2005), “The Porridge Queen” (2010), and “Victim of Love” (2005).

According to Anderson (2010), content analysis is the interpretation and exposition of the data collected for the study. Furthermore, Kothari (2004) posits that, “content analysis consists of analysing the contents of documentary materials such as books, magazines, newspapers and the content of all other verbal materials which can either be spoken or printed” (p. 110). Moreover, Krippendorff (2013) defines content analysis as “a systematic reading of a body of texts, images, and symbolic matter, not necessarily from an author’s or user’s perspective” (p. 40). Data collected was organised into subsections by categories for easier management, and themes emerged through those categories. The interpretation of data was done by considering the tenets of CDA and Marxist literary theories. Furthermore, the data was then presented in narrative form and the findings were then extracted from the interpretations and analysis, and finally they were used for the formulation of the discussions and conclusions.

### **3.8 Research ethics**

Denscombe (2012) states that “research ethics is about setting standards for conducting research that minimise doing possible harm rather than good” (p. 122). This study was based on fictional works with fictional characters that are non-human but it involved written material that was readily available in the public domain. Numerous researches have highlighted the importance of ethics in instances where the treatment of research participants, relationship between society and science, and professional issues, are the point of focus (Christensen, Burke & Turner, 2011). Thus for this research, the researcher considered not ridiculing the authors and avoided being biased by reporting the findings as they were presented in the selected plays under the framing of the CDA and Marxist theories. Instead, an objective analysis of the play was done. Furthermore, the researcher sought for ethical clearance from the University of Namibia’s research and ethics committee.

### **3.9 Conclusion**

This chapter (Chapter 3), focused on the methodology that was used in the construction of this research. Aspects such as the population and sample for this study were specified. The research approach and design were also specified. Also noted were considerations of research ethics that are important for every research. The next chapter (Chapter 4) focuses particularly on the in-depth analysis of the selected four plays: “Election Fever” (2010), “King of the Dump” (2005), “The Porridge Queen” (2010), and “Victim of Love” (2005) framed by CDA and Marxist literary theories, and as edified by the reviewed literature in Chapter 2 of the present study.

## CHAPTER 4

### ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION OF THE SELECTED FOUR PLAYS

#### 4.1 Introduction

In this chapter, the selected plays for the pre-independence: “Election Fever” (2010) and “King of the Dump” (2005) and those that represent post-independence: “The Porridge Queen” (2010), and “Victim of Love” (2005) are analysed and discussed based on the literature reviewed in Chapter 2 and bounded by the CDA and Marxist theories. Sub-titles are used to focus on specific themes and a short summary of each play is provided before the analysis.

The following research questions are considered:

- a) How does Philander present socio-political issues in pre-independent Namibia?
- b) How does Philander present socio-political issues in post-independent Namibia?
- c) How do the selected plays succeed in arousing people’s socio-political consciousness?

#### 4.2 Pre-independence

The period before Namibia attained its political independence is usually examined against the background of the gross violation of human rights aggravated by the existence and operations of the popular exploitative apartheid system. Problems emanating from the exclusion of Namibians resulted in numerous socio-political challenges. “King of the Dump” (2005) and “Election Fever” (2010) give a snapshot of what life was like during the times before independence.

##### 4.2.1 “King of the Dump” summary

The play is set at a city’s dumpsite where Pompie is a self-imposed leader of the whole dump area and has Eva as his partner. Life is difficult there as they survive on scavenging food from the rubbish that is brought by the municipal refuse collecting trucks. The dialogue



between Pombie and Eva, and one of the refuse truck drivers touches on some of the socio-political challenges faced by the ordinary Namibian citizens and how their lives are shaped and controlled by the ruling government. Also, the dialogues expose the corruption which is rife within the government system as well as uncovering the unscrupulousness of other bodies that disguise themselves as charity organisations. “King of the Dump” (2005) is a play that questions the de-humanising effects of apartheid which compelled many people to graft out a living of rubbish dumps.

#### **4.2.2 “Election Fever” summary**

This play is set just before the first independent elections in Namibia and the concomitant commotion. The play exposes the politicians and how they lied to the masses to vote for them into power as well as portraying the chaos that ensued amongst political leaders. Some of the parties’ leaders are given a chance to confess for their political sins and numerous confessions reveal the corruption that they brought to the Namibian society and how they contributed to the formation of socio-political problems that in turn had an impact on the masses.

#### **4.2.3 Pre-independence segregation**

Segregation is a socio-political problem which is rooted in the apartheid system and emphasises separation on racial grounds. Where segregation exists, chaos is a norm as people pull each in all directions. Some political parties actually advocated for the continuity of segregation as discerned in Scene 2, “Election Fever” (2010):

HANS: ...Just like the AWB and Eugene Terblanche, little constable who ran away from this country, my party also believes that a sheep, a goat, a horse and a donkey cannot live in harmony in the same kraal. They must always be

separated in the interest of self-preservation and ethnic survival, like us Basters in Canaan, here on the banks of the Kakriver alias Rehoboth. We believe all minority ethnic groups should be protected under the law. (pp. 82)

Thus, Hans's political party is one that perpetuates further division within a country. The allegory of different animals gives a lasting and memorable impression on the continuity of individualism. This concept is adopted from the apartheid system which advocated for separateness. A problem of this nature does not only advocate for physical separation of different races and tribes but also extends to areas of government, labour market and residency (see Mhlauli et al., (2015) in Section 2.3.3 Namibia's historical context in the study).

Considering the multi-cultural, multi-tribal, multi-racial and multi-lingual nature of Namibia, Hans's political party finds the country a favourable ground to maintain the party's philosophies of separateness. Thus, Hans further states that:

That is why my party prefers ten independent little states in a Federal system with each its own government like in Switzerland. If it cannot be like that, I foresee many problems for this country. My supporters and I will settle nothing else, come hell or fire. (p. 82-83)

What Hans is not considering is that Namibia is one country and therefore should be united for it to be able to fight the socio-political issues that were brought about by colonialism than apartheid. To Hans, Rehoboth must operate in isolation from other regions in the country and also operate as an independent state which is practically impossible due to the fact that Namibia is a country not a continent made up of countries. Furthermore, to reinforce his argument, Hans goes on to explicate using the allegory of the different animals so that the message is communicated effectively:

That is why my party believes that a donkey, a sheep and a horse each have their own kraal in Wamboland, Hereroland, Basterland, Damaraland and Bushmanland. Vote for the Federal Party in future and get this. (*Holds up the head of a sheep*) One Barsterland, one Kaffirland. Goodnight. (p. 83)

Different parties have different views about politics and thus political parties like the Federal Party have leaders like Hans who publicly advocates for division within a nation which actually fuels tribalism and causes social unrest in a country. Such parties go against unity and communalism hence endangering against the independence process.

In “King of the Dump” (2005) segregation is also highlighted and portrays the ugliness delimited to it. Eva’s character sees the insensibility that exists amongst humans and questions why people fail to unite and do away with the calls of apartheid as seen in Scene 2:

EVA: But mind you, this is the only place in the country that doesn’t smell apartheid. The rubbish may come from different townships and suburbs, but here they form one big family across colour lines, no discrimination. If rubbish can mix freely, why not the people...? Damn apartheid! (p. 12)

Through Eva’s character, Philander (2005) indicates to the nation that apartheid is the roots of all their problems and that if people would unite just like the rubbish, then most of the problems instigated by apartheid would be minimised or even be eradicated.

Intermarriages were not permissible as they encouraged the weakening of the racial line which was not a notion of the apartheid era. This is revealed in the dialogue between Eva and Pombie (Act 1, Scene 11):

EVA: Do you know what a gang of white ducktails did to us one night?

POMBIE: I’m not exactly burning to know.

EVA: I'm telling you, anyway. Those barbarians attacked us like they have done with all other mix couples in the city. To them it was like a happy adventure, hurting people; waiting in fast cars and on motor bikes, dressed in lumber jackets and wielding metal chains to beat us up unconscious. We only came by in the hospital. God forbids I never experience that. (p. 40)

For those who had interracial relationships they lived a life of fear as the apartheid rule did not allow it as witnessed in the gruesome attack of Eva, the coloured lady, and Willie, the white guy, who had to be resuscitated at the hospital after being attacked by other white hooligans. Earlier on, Eva's father had openly disapproved the relationship as stated in Scene 10 "King of the Dump" (2005). When Eva went to introduce Willie to her father he openly disregarded the relationship alongside the gifts and money and the watch from Willie (pp. 38-39).

The evils associated to segregation causes separation in almost all aspects of life and deny the segregated group access to almost all of life's needs. When Eva married Willie Neumeister, her new identity as Mrs Neumeister over the phone allowed her to have access to some privileges entitled for white people only. On two occasions she was booked for services over the phone only to be turned down and shunned when she appeared physically. The first incident is in Scene 9 "King of the Dump" (2005) at the salon:

EVA: But when she heard, Neumeister, she fell over her feet and booked me an appointment. When I arrived in person at the salon, she almost got a heart attack. (*Imitating*) "A coloured Neumeister?" (p. 37)

The second incident is seen when Eva and Willie wanted to rent a flat in the city and over the phone a deal was sealed and a flat was available for "Mister and Missus Neumeister" (p. 37). Eva then went in person and the agent put her name right at the bottom of the waiting list and

said “We will let you know” (p. 37). However, when Willie, the white person, went to the agent he got the flat immediately for both of them.

It is therefore worth commenting that segregation brought about separation that actually saw the segregated suffering from the system’s oppressive philosophies. It denied the segregated groups access to life’s needs as observed by Eva’s character and how being in an interracial relationship made life tough for them.

#### **4.2.4 Corruption in pre independence context**

Corruption in all its formulas and engagements remains a major challenge that can run down any country’s economy to below ground level. According to the *Oxford Dictionary* (2017), corruption is a dishonest or fraudulent conduct by those in power, typically involving bribery. In both plays: “King of the Dump” (2005) and “Election Fever” (2010) corruption is highlighted and how it fuels the suffering of the ordinary people as it is mainly appearing to be perpetrated by those in power. The law cannot touch those in power and they remain in power which further perpetuates corruption for personal aggrandisement.

In “King of the Dump” (2005) a number of scenes reflect on corrupt activities and how the people involved do the corrupt activities at the expense of the innocent masses. It appears that corruption thrives in those areas where those in power utilize any given chance to swindle on anything that comes their way. The following dialogue between Eva and Pompie enlightens the audience one of the areas where corruption thrives at the expense of the poor masses:

EVA: What are you trying to say, Pompie?

POMPIE: That in the past we’ve had all sorts of charity organisations: Operation Hunger, Meals-On-Wheels, Care and Hunger. They were all started ostensibly to help us, the poor. And what really did we get from them? Sweet

fanny. Now this new one, a food bank. It's a scam, I tell you, a new name for yet another typical rotten and corrupt organisation. (p. 21)

Pompie is able to pinpoint at the evils in society aggravated by corrupt "responsible authorities" who always find ways of enriching themselves through using the disadvantaged poor people as their shield. Pompie further states that:

POMPIE: You will see we won't get anything once they have started with their 'equal distribution' nonsense. We won't get anything from them (Walks away angrily) (p. 22)

Corrupt leaders seem not to care about the poor people's plight. From the way it is presented here, Philander (2005) seems to be saying that the 'the people in power' thrive on the suffering of ordinary citizens and see anything towards improving the poor people's status as loophole from which they would loot and redirect everything to their personal use. As the character Pompie testifies "We won't get anything from them".

Moreover, Philander (2005) also exposes other organisations that appear to be genuine charitable organisations but are also part of the corrupt activities. Again, this points at how anyone can be playing a part in corrupt activities at the expense of the poor people. Instead of the rightful poor people benefiting from such programs it appears that those who actually do not need the food are the ones divert everything away from the intended individuals. This is reflected in "King of the Dump", Scene 4:

POMPIE: ... You will see what they'll be doing to us now, all those imposters and so called sacred pastors, fathers, lay preachers, nuns, sisters, social workers and God-knows-what-else. They are going to help themselves first at the free food

meant for us the poor. Emergency provisions, they call it, but we'll be damn lucky if we get anything at all on time. (p. 22)

Of course it may be hard to believe that people such as the clergy man, man of the cloth, are involved in such corrupt activities. This gives impression that corruption is a disease that affects those in authority who are supposed to be genuine leaders, who are sensitive to the plight of the disadvantaged people in the society. To frame his criticism on the people in power, Pompie substantiates his observation by making reference to an incident he claims to have experienced. Again, this shows that corruption is not only found in one place but appears to be more or less a global socio-political problem. Wherever aid or food is sourced to poor people, those who are supposed to distribute tend to convert the aid before it reaches the intended poor people. This is noted in “King of the Dump” (2005) in the dialogue between Eva and Pompie:

EVA: How do you know all these things, Pompie?

POMPIE: It's general knowledge. Five years ago I was staying in the drought – stricken Karoo settlement. There I saw it; people dying like flies of hunger, whilst they lived like kings and queens on the food that was send to us from overseas. Some people had to buy the same food from the same people who claimed they were there for us, the poor. (p. 22)

It may be inferred that Philander (2005) deliberately exposes these ‘responsible people’ with the intention to caution them that their shameful acts actually promote permanency in poverty for the less advantage people in societies.

In “Election Fever” (2010) Scene 6, the ministers are already awarding themselves hefty salaries which are a sign of selfishness as noted in the following dialogue:

HESTER: Listen to what the right-wing newspaper, *The Namibian* has to say “Big salaries for Ministers and members of Parliament are on their way”

CHICO: So what?

HESTER: Wake up man. Can't you see? They are not yet in the new government and they are already given themselves big salary increases. How does one understand that? (p. 90)

The character Chico seems to be in his own world not understanding what effect the move of awarding “Big salaries” has on the economy of a country and how the result impacts on the ordinary citizens himself included. The leaders are already showing elements of greediness through the gross mismanagement of government monies which are usually the tax-payers' money. Hester goes further to enlighten Chico:

HESTER: They [Ministers and Parliamentarians] should be ashamed of what they are doing. Where will all the money come from with forty or more percent of the people unemployed? (p. 90)

Thus, the corrupt and looting nature of those people in power is caused by greediness and selfishness. Priority is on feeding and fulfilling their personal aggrandisements which is rooted in self-centredness. The leaders seem not to care about the people they are leading hence the country's over forty percent unemployment rate.

As corruption comes in different shapes and forms, all sorts of things are done by those who have access to any sources of money. The character Swapo-D Man makes a confession on how he got involved in corrupt activities in Scene 2 “Election Fever” (2010):



SWAPO-D MAN: Good evening fellow Namibians. As a former informer, I mean, well paid minister in the Transitional government of the National Unity- I could at least afford to buy myself a house for my old age. (p. 81)

The focus is on finding every chance for self-enrichment without consideration of the problems that those corrupt actions might have on the country and the future generations.

Furthermore, an unsuspecting form of corruption is highlighted by Philander (2010) when one of the politicians makes a confession:

HANS ROHR: Tonight I want to confess my political sins to you. My party like so many others only existed in name, but do not let the donors know this... Also thank you very much for all the overseas trips I undertook on your expense. I really enjoyed it. (p. 82)

Characters like Hans Rohr, do not take life seriously, everything seems to be for fun or for a joke. They seem not to care about the effects they may have on country and the future generations. This may affect foreign investment in a country as potential investors may not trust a government made up of corrupt leaders who are literary imposters. Their main concern is of personal aggrandisement through dubious means and swindling money.

Also, characters such as the secretary general for the Namibia National Front (NNF), exhibit degradation within the political parties and how their party prefers a specific sector of the nation to be its followers. This illuminates the hidden agendas of the party and how she, in particular, is corrupt, from "Election Fever" (2010) Scene 2:

WOMAN: Just before I also disappear from here, the following official party policy standpoint: NNF still welcomes intellectuals and would be intellectuals, although many of them will now leave Namibia for greener pastures elsewhere

and inter alia become CEOs of banks. But please, don't forget to let roll in the money. (Produces a small purse which she holds out) We need much more. My personal Swiss banking account number is: 4928493762. I may also skip the country... (Trumpet sounds and screen closes) or alternatively start a private school in Katutura with Japanese funding. (p. 82)

It is clear that this secretary general is only after money and addresses her speech directly to “intellectuals and would be intellectuals”. She targets a group in the population that she knows is guaranteed to have a regular and reasonable income. Therefore, an idea of providing a personal foreign account number insinuates corruption itself.

Even the character Clown, who hosts the television program on view points of different parties and what they do for the nation, somehow attacks these political leaders, and considers the majority of them as just a nuisance. An element of humour is noted in “Election Fever” (2010) Scene 2 when Clown announces:

CLOWN: Our next speaker to undress... I mean address the nation is the man from the Action Christian National party... (p. 80)

The researcher considers Clown's words in the above quotation as a deliberate criticism on the politicians and that their conducts are a disgrace to the nation and figuratively they ‘undress’ the nation. The same point is noted again in Scene 2 in the following excerpt:

CLOWN: Our next liar, I mean participant in the programme is none other than the man from halfway to the North. He and his party were both disqualified in the elections. Don't ask me why. How he got to appear on this programme beats the shit out of me. It must be one of the disadvantages of our newly acquired democracy. (p. 81)

It appears that the politician Hans ROHR, the man from halfway to the North, fraudulently found his way on the program and Clown is actually questioning if the “new democracy” is already producing results like the corrupt politician hence referring to him at first as “next liar”. The character Chico has high hopes that the country will definitely prosper in “Election Fever” (2010) Scene 6:

CHICO: We must all be patient, the fruits will come. The whole world is just waiting to help us with everything we need. Namibia will become a land of milk and honey in Africa. (p. 90)

But with the corrupt nature witnessed through the confessions made by the different political leaders, the chances of Namibia being a country of ‘milk and honey in Africa’ are thus smooth-shaven.

#### **4.2.5 Control over the means of production**

The exploitation of Namibians’ bodies, land and resources and the denial of equal socio-economic opportunities (see Mills, 1992, Section 2.3.3 Namibia historical context of the study) resulted in Namibians suffering in their own country. The existence of apartheid meant the absence of almost all the means of production for the Namibians. Thus, Namibians have to engage in a war to fight apartheid and liberate the country so that they could take control over the means of production.

In “Election Fever” (2010) although Namibia is looking forward to self-autonomy, there are some white members who are not willing to let go and allow Namibians the full remit of independence. This is evident in the “Election Fever” (2010) when the politicians are given the platform to talk to the nation. Scene 2:

CP-MAN: ... We in the ACN as the sole, only, authentic and de facto representatives of all Whites in this country, feel pleased with your performance at the polls. Even though we three managed to narrowly make it into parliament, we are ready to lead you the chosen people of this nation into the unknown and dark future of independence of this country. (p. 81)

The presence of ACN in the new parliament would mean the continuation of apartheid into the new parliament, also implying that the suffering of Namibians would also continue. The ACN members are even stating that they are ready to lead the Namibians into the “unknown and dark future of independence of the country”. Their presence may be described as an impending doom for the country’s independence. Their existence will inevitably bring socio-political problems to the Namibians as they will insist on following the apartheid ideologies as noted in the following excerpt:

CP-MAN: You as well as I know we Whites will always have the economic power in our hands. They will have to accommodate us, somehow. Aluta Continua. (p. 81)

The claim of having the “economic power” in their hands symbolically means that the whites have control over the means of production. Thus, the whites control the means of production and have the power to drive the economy in any direction they wish.

The traits and tone of racism are noticed in the CP-Man’s utterances, thus carrying forward those rudiments that define apartheid when he remarks: “Blood Botha who sold the Whites out of the mercy of the damn Blacks” (p. 81). Furthermore, the CP-Man openly exposes himself as a typical apartheid lord and from the way he talks, it appears that nothing can uproot his apartheid beliefs. This is evident in the play “Election Fever” (2010) Scene 2:

CP-MAN: But to get back to the point, although the Blacks are now the new government, bloody Sam Nujoma, my party still welcomes conservative, civilised Black and Coloured people as supporters, as long as they join us in separate groups. I can assure those wishing to join we will treat you separately, but equal away from us Whites. (p. 81)

Thus, apartheid may never be eradicated while there are characters like CP-Man still preaching and advocating for the perpetuity of apartheid in an independent state. To comment on the language expression, it is rather offensive to be used by a 'leader' addressing the nation as it reads:

CP-MAN: Sorry I didn't mean it that way, but Kosie and the Blacks have angered me so much, I just want to fuck them up good and solid, if such a political cliché is not too offensive to you? (*Shows threatening fist to the back*). (p. 81)

Offensive language gives a negative image of a person who is a parliamentarian and who should be leading by example. The nation may lose trust and respect for characters such as CP-Man. And such characters like CP-Man who pull forward apartheid into independence, they pull it together with apartheid which leads to unemployment and poverty.

#### **4.2.5.1 Unemployment**

Globally, problems of high unemployment rates are prevalent in most developing countries. Unemployment is when people have no jobs and when they are willing and seeking for work. While people may give importance to the number of unemployed individuals economists focus on the rate of unemployment which can be measured as dividing unemployed workers by all individuals in the labour force (Farooq, 2011). In Philander's "King of the Dump" (2005) and "Election Fever" (2010) high levels of unemployment are also highlighted as one

of the socio-political problems that the Namibians are enduring. A number of factors that include the control of means of production by the oppressors results in low wages (cheap labour) and high unemployment rate. This affects societies as other problems also develop as a result of unemployment. For example, many mines and factories are still owned and ran by white people and labour force is replaced by new technologies such as machinery and computers which contributes to unemployment rate in the country.

In “Election Fever” (2010), the character Hester is complaining over the kind of job that does not pay well. The low paying jobs they are engaged with do not sustain their lives, and their labour is more like a donation of manpower and thus they are grumbling. This is noted in the following dialogue between Chico and Hester in (Scene 6):

CHICO: I am doing it for the... new Fatherland. The new order demands it from us  
all.

HESTER: The new order, always the new order. The new order stinks. Why does the  
new order not give us better jobs than this? (p. 91)

The nation is complaining over low paying jobs. The new government is not addressing the unemployment problem which may push the people to do other activities in order to subsidise the low wages as resort to criminal activities in trying to make a living. Like in the following dialogue from “Election Fever”, Chico talks about ‘survival of the fittest’ in order to survive:

CHICO: It is survival of the fittest. I please everybody who is somebody, somewhere  
or anywhere in politics, but don’t tell anybody about this. If I want food, I am  
DTA. If I need money, I am Action Monitor.

HESSIE: And when you want to steal, you become, Swapo, right? (p. 79)

Thus, Chico uses the tactic of knowing and connecting to the right people at the right time and place for his own means of survival. In “King of the Dump” (2005) Pompie has been looking for a job but in vain as represented in the following dialogue from Scene 11:

POMPIE: My eyes hurt from looking at and reading all those signs at potential workplaces anywhere: No, work.

EVA: What about the labour bureau?

POMPIE: Oh, no. there it's worse. Long queues of Blacks, every day. They go on as if they own place, because they sit and lay around and mass like a swam of black bees. (p. 40)

The country is not able to address the job problems of the nation hence people are crowding at the workplaces in the hope of getting employed. As a result, Pompie, Eva and other poor people flock to the dumpsite to find something to eat. Also in Scene 5 Pompie reported his dumpsite colleagues to the police as a means to survive and was paid for that effort where Eva says “Later we learned that Pompie was paid for tipping off the police on our whereabouts that day” (p. 29). So, where there is high unemployment rate the majority live in poverty. Hence Pompie, Eva and other people live at the dumpsite.

#### **4.2.5.2 Poverty**

Mchombu and Mchombu (2014) view poverty as a complex phenomenon that can be defined from various perspectives (see Section 2.4 Discussion of key socio-political issues of the study). Thus, different forms of poverty are represented in Philander's “King of the Dump” (2005) and “Election Fever” (2010) and he illustrates the impacts on the societies in day to day life. A number of people are living under the same circumstances as that of Eva, Pompie and other characters at the dumpsite and Eva believes that, their suffering is caused by some

people who are greedy and also not doing their work as presented in Scene 2 “King of the Dump” (2005):

EVA: But I know it’s not only us starving here on the dump. There are many people  
countrywide who suffer and starve because of THEM. (p. 13)

The suffering and poverty that Eva experiences at the dump site and elsewhere, is caused by irresponsible government’s leaders who mismanage funds through various means including hosting parties where the officials are said to just be eating Scene 2 “King of the Dump” (2005):

EVA: The fancy people don’t mind what they spend at those parties because they  
themselves don’t pay for it. Always entertaining others. Tax monies, I tell you.  
The high bugs at these parties eat and drink like pigs. (p. 13)

Poverty is dehumanising and is represented by the life of the characters at the dump. Poverty drives people to insanity and the people tend to just change and behave more or less like animals as shown in the following dialogue from “King of the Dump” (2005) Scene 4:

EVA: Sis! (*To audience*) He now drinks from a pee pot. (*To Pompie*) Don’t you have  
any self-respect no more?

POMPIE: That’s my worries. (*He drinks*) (p. 18)

This is degrading and pulling down the definition of a human being. It is as a result of poverty that Pompie seems not to care and appears to have gone insane. He picked the pot from the dumpsite which he does not know who the previous owner was or whether the users had any disease. That pot is the one that Pompie uses as his drinking cup.



Eva and fellow characters scramble for food and life is getting even worse and much harder with each day. This is shown in Scene 2 where she says “It is now so bad, not even the dead cats from the location get here anymore. They get eaten there and then, directly from the streets, smells and all.” (p. 13). People are reduced to animals due to conditions created by selfish people.

In “Election Fever” (2010), the poverty endured by the masses is also highlighted and how the politicians lie to the masses during election campaigns and only forget their promises once voted into power. The character HESSIE imitates some of the commonly used rhetoric of the politicians when soliciting for votes in “Election Fever” Scene 1. “My party promises you and your children a better future” (p. 77). Surprisingly, the masses are suffering to the extent that some are scavenging for food at the dumpsite as presented in “King of the Dump” (2005).

The politicians are, to a greater extent, to blame, as they make promises that they fail to fulfil after being voted into power. The poor are the most affected as they will feel the pangs of poverty. Elements of selfishness are noted on the part of the politicians and they turn out to be hypocrites and their actions contribute to the further suffering of the less privileged in society. With their promises, they build hope among disadvantaged people who will cast their vote with hopes of an improved life as noted in Scene 1 in the dialogue between HESSIE and CHICO:

HESSIE: I am just as frustrated because for months now the politicians promised us  
the sun, the moon and the stars on a silver platter just to get our vote.

CHICO: They are all sacred hypocrites, if you ask me. (p. 78)

A tone of bitterness is evident in Hessian's utterances as she is frustrated by the empty promises made to the people by politicians. They promise the nation for things that they cannot practically deliver. Again, it shows high levels of insensitivity on the part of the politicians. The politicians when campaigning ensure that they have reached all potential voters and in the process, they actually create confusion among the ordinary citizens, as seen when Hessian engages in a dialogue with Chico in Scene 1:

CHICO: The blacks are definitely going to destroy this country. Join us in Aksie Monitor (*Himself*). They are going on like street women!

HESSIE: Yes, worse than the ten plights in the bible.

CHICO: I know, but right now I am so mixed up because it is politics breakfast, lunch and supper. The hundreds of cars, trucks and lorries with loudspeakers blaring all over the city, can drive anybody crazy. (p. 77)

Even on the day for voting, party candidates "happily transported voters free of charge in taxis, cars, trucks and kombis just to vote for them" (pp. 76-78). But, as soon as the party candidates are in power, they forget about the people who voted them into power. They are never seen in public like they did when campaigning when politics was literally the order of the day "breakfast, lunch and supper" (p. 79). The civilians languish in poverty, they do not exist in the lives of the politicians, they are literally insignificant in the day to day agenda of the politicians. Thus, Philander highlights how some of the socio-political issues affect people which the public may not be aware of.

#### **4.2.6 Women and children**

Before Namibia attained its independence there were many problems that directly affected women and children under the apartheid repressive system. Women were exposed to

conditions that violated their right as women in society. This is reflected in the following utterance from “Election Fever” (2010) by the character Jakobus who to a certain degree acts as a voice to the voiceless where it reads:

JAKOBUS: Good evening viewers and all those who have survived the hell holes of Lubago. We know we cannot get back our lives destroyed by false accusations of being spies, which we never were. I sit here tonight to demand an apology from those who have killed and maimed innocent Namibians during the liberation struggle. My own sister was gang raped and died in the most appalling conditions imaginable in Angola. That is why I am taking part in this election. Voting for me will take away all the pain my fellow Namibians will overcome and fears for the future. I thank you. (p. 82)

Besides the war, women suffered by being raped and being vulnerable to other forms of violence. In this instance, the character exposes the ugly side of Swapo whose men were cruel to their women by “gang raping” them. This again questions the authenticity of Swapo being the ruling party if it had members who were brutalising and bullying fellow Namibians. It may be commented that, Swapo, because of the callousness represented here, is more or less than identical twins of apartheid. Also, the utterance by the character Swapo is an admission of the atrocities committed by Swapo members during the liberation struggle. This is from Scene 2:

SWAPO: Aluta Continua. One Namibia. One Nation. Victoria. Escerta. Viva Swapo. Viva. Viva Sam Nujoma. Viva. Thank you comrades for voting for us. Damn independent candidate. How can he expose us like that? (p. 82)

If such matters of “gang rapping” are left unsaid and swept under the carpet they cause social problems. Victims of such brutality may resort to committing suicide because they may not have received proper counselling on how to handle and recover from such traumas.

In “King of the Dump” (2005) reference is made to women as sex objects. This is evident from Scene 6:

DRIVER: (Sex hand gestures) I say, what about a... doodle?

EVA: Go doodle yourself. (p. 29)

The dump truck driver takes advantage of vulnerable women like Eva who are helpless and have no access to protection from either the police or any other protective units that care for women’s rights. From this excerpt, it appears that disadvantaged women are more likely to be sex-exploited by men like the driver. Victims will be traumatised for the rest of their lives as it is unlikely they will receive any kind of help.

Another incident is when Eva is exposed to sexploitation is perpetrated by her husband. Thus, it may be concluded that most women in marriages suffer at the hands of their exploitative husbands as revealed in the following excerpt from “King of the Dump” (2005) Scene 11:

EVA: ...One night he [Willie] forced me to have sex for fun with one of his skinhead friends. It was so humiliating. That was the last straw. I left him for good. (p. 40)

The act itself is dehumanising, seeing women as sex objects and men feeling like they own the woman and hence they can do whatever they want with a woman’s body. The woman’s body is thus viewed as a property that can be owned and hence controlled by the man. Even the child that she had with Willie was seized from her as revealed in the following excerpt from Scene 11:

POMPIE: What happened to the child you had with that white man before he forced you to be sterilised?

EVA: With the divorce Willie got her (p. 40)

Women are denied rights to their children when a divorce is filed and the courts rule in favour of the man. The flashback in Scene 12 gives more details about how Eva lost her baby to Willie who used divorce papers to separate a mother from her child. This action by Willie is more or less a double edged sword where upon separation the child is denied from bonding her mother and the mother is denied nurturing her own child. Furthermore, the idea of women being controlled by men, to the extent that Willie forced Eva to be sterilised then taking her child away that she had borne, is noted with great concern. These are the problems that women and children suffer at the hands of men who are supposed to be husband and father figures. Instead of protecting the woman and the child, the man is actually the perpetrator of cruelty to the wife and the child.

Moreover, domestic violence is prevalent in most societies and women mostly suffer as they are normally powerless, though there are some women who instigate domestic violence with the men being on the receiving end. However, in “King of the Dump” (2005) Eva is the victim of domestic violence at the dumpsite as presented in Scene 11:

EVA: Pompie haven't you hurt and humiliated me enough? You have beaten me up, jumped onto me and force me to drink spirits. (41)

Again, violence against women comes in different shapes and forms. In this case other than just domestic violence, alcohol abuse is also evident when Pompie forces Eva to take spirits. Eva questions the life in extremities of poverty at the dumpsite as noted in Scene 11 “(Prayer gesture) God what have I done to deserve this?” (p. 43). She is conscious that her poverty is

not normal and that it actually strips her of her identity and therefore decides to leave the dumpsite:

EVA: ...There is absolutely nothing meaningful to stay here for and I will never regain my self-respect you forced me to lose her. (p. 44)

Thus, Eva's decision to leave the dumpsite is a hint to the nation that Philander warns the society that in whatever horrible situation one may find self in, it is up to the individual to take the initiative in instigating change and also that complaining without action is useless.

### **4.3 Post independence**

Post-independence Namibia is a time after the country gained its independence from the repressive system of residual colonialism and apartheid. It appears that numerous socio-political issues are the order of the day for the majority Namibians, where the fellow black skinned leader is in power. Scholars such as Melber (2005) argue that "The infamous system of apartheid is responsible for the gross inequalities still characterising the current post-colonial social disparities" (p. 306) (see Section 2.3.4 Post Independent Namibia of the present study). However, through the two plays: "The Porridge Queen" (2010), and "Victim of Love" (2005) Philander highlights and explores these socio-political issues.

#### **4.3.1 "The Porridge Queen" (2010) summary**

The play is about Handjievool, the famous 'porridge queen,' who meets a seemingly endless flow of characters who come on different missions which include purchasing her various types of porridge, some just for the sake of passing by, to try to sell stolen phones and watches or to interact in one way or another but with her. The dialogues between the Handjievool and the rest of the characters at her porridge stall allow the audience a glimpse of the social reality of both Handjievool and the people she interacts with on a daily basis.

Through the conversations Handjievoll still cannot grasp the meaning of life as a typical street vendor and still cannot comprehend the gains brought about by independence. Her life and that of the majority in society is still a struggle to make ends meet. Again, through the dialogues between the characters in the play, “The Porridge Queen” (2010) is to a greater extent a critique of the Namibian administration and the true meaning of what independence is all about.

#### **4.3.2 “Victim of Love” (2005) summary**

“Victim of Love” (2005) is about a woman and her daughter in a post-independent Namibia and their dialogue with other characters exposes the socio-political issues that are impacting independent Namibia. Problems such as single parenthood, root causes of accommodation problems, poverty, racism, high crime rate and HIV/AIDS are highlighted in the play.

#### **4.3.3 Nepotism**

Nepotism is a form of segregation and it discriminates on the basis of relationship background. Nepotism is the practice among those with power or influence of favouring relatives or friends, especially by giving them jobs (*Oxford Dictionary*, 2017). Nepotism is emphasised in the play “The Porridge Queen” (2010) Scene 5:

HANDJIEVOL: ...After that affirmative action could not land me a job in the Government Service, not even as a tea-girl nor cleaner. (*Shows*) My skin colour, the fact that my name wasn't Washilonga and I couldn't show a membership card of the ruling party, saw to that (p. 102)

Thus, due to nepotism, many people are denied access to employment as they do not belong to the same family as those in power. Therefore, nepotism leads to unemployment and is a

major socio-political problem even in a post independent context. This thus questions the true meaning of independence.

Furthermore, The Reconciliation Policy is considered as something nonsensical as even with the policy in place. Some people still stick to the apartheid ideology of pre-independence Namibia. The dialogue between Handjievoll and Oshikapepi refers the policy in “The Porridge Queen” (2010) Act 1, Scene 7:

OSHIKAPEPI: This reconciliation policy of the government is shit, shit I tell you.

HANDJIEVOL: That’s a fact of life. Reconciliation is one way traffic, the Whites want US to reconcile with THEM, but they don’t want to do it with us.

OSHIKAPEPI: It is so unfair and unnecessary. We can all live in peace and harmony together.

HANDJIEVOL: Not while the rich is getting richer and the poor remains poor. The White people still control the economy, although the outside world beliefs otherwise. (p. 109)

That is to say, even after independence, apartheid is still deep-rooted in the Namibian society as the White people still cling to it and following its philosophies. Thus, The Reconciliation Policy is a policy on paper but not in practice as apartheid still reigns.

On a superfluous level, segregation is noted as well in the play “Victim of Love” (2005) where in Scene2 Emma had fallen for a man of different skin colour and was rejected by her family. She says, “They made me feel like an outcast. But whatever they did and their feelings then, it was the reality of my situation; me falling in love with a man on the wrong side of the colour line...” (p. 110). In other words, the advent of independence did not eradicate the problem of racism, segregation and discrimination based on the colour of the



skin. It appears for the character Emma, “Black or White. True love does not know any boundaries” (p. 110).

#### **4.3.4 Corruption in independent Namibia**

Corruption as mentioned and defined earlier involves the dishonest or fraudulent conduct by those in power. This kind of conduct promotes the decline of the country’s economic development with the people involved operating under the cover of darkness. Corrupt activities are also prevalent in post independent Namibia and impact on the general public. Some civilians operate as syndicates with the police as presented in “The Porridge Queen” (2010) where the character Ou Six sells stolen watches. Act2, Scene2:

HANDIEVOL: You will be surprised to know what other sorts of dubious things are being done in the country under the disguise of doing business.

OU SIX: The police are our friends. Some of them also get a cut from what we sell. We are partners.

HANDIEVOL: Many others and I have always suspected some sort of Mafia-connection existing in the police-force. The only problem is nobody can really lay a finger on the truth. No wonder you and certain shebeen queens never get arrested. (p. 123)

Law makers and law enforcers are the ones involved in illegal activities and they promote and perpetuate crimes. The government lacks transparency and is hence labeled as “cowards” (p. 120) by Handjievola in Act 1, Scene 12.

### **4.3.5 Control over the means of production in independent Namibia**

Unlike in pre independent Namibia, in post independent Namibia, the black government is now in power. However, the question is on how the black leaders are managing and mismanaging the running of Namibia. It appears that the nation is not happy with the way the country is ruled by the Swapo party. From “The Porridge Queen” Act 1, Scene 2:

HANDJIEVOL: ...Many people are sick and tired of the suit and Italian Gucci-shoe brigade. The only honorable thing for you to do is to show your dissatisfaction with Swapo in the next election by voting for the ... (p. 96)

The public is now seeing the corruption in a government and are waiting patiently to get rid of it through the ballot, and may infer gross mismanagement on the part of the leaders. It may be interpreted that the suffering of the masses is prompted by poor governance. Instead of taking care and attending to the civilians’s needs, the leaders are just followers and addicts of fashion hence the name “Italian Gucci-shoe brigade”. Such bad governance results in high rates of unemployment and consequently poverty which again contributes to other socio-political problems such as high crime rates.

#### **4.3.5.1 Unemployment**

Where there is high rate of unemployment civilians try almost every activity legal or illegal as a way to make a living. In the process of trying to make ends meet, other social problems emerge. In “The Porridge Queen” (2010) the issue of unemployment is emphasised and Handjievool questions the meaning of independence and democracy in Act 1, Scene 5:

HANDJIEVOL: ...Walk into any house in Katutura. They all still look the same, (Shows) matchbox-sized, I tell you; four walls and a roof with still ten mostly

jobless and starving people behind each door. Oh, yes, Namibian democracy has some disadvantages, too. (p. 101)

Philander subtly attacks the government by exposing the shortcomings of its operations such as how accommodation and employment issues are being neglected hence the situation pointed out particularly in Katutura. Thus, the government is failing to provide for the people who voted them into power. The country is in “MISERY, everywhere from Cunene to the Orange River” (Philander, 2010, p. 101). The problem of unemployment is affecting the whole country and it is a critical problem as it leads to high rates of crime. Handjievoll further states that “to most people, it is a bloody nightmare finding a job to make ends meet and to survive. No wonder the crime rate is so high in this country” (p. 101).

In a way, Philander is showing to the audience/reader that unemployment triggers higher crime rates. Moreover, the politicians use rhetoric inclined to issues of employment in order to persuade the people to vote them into power. Thus, Handjievoll expresses her argument:

HANDJIEVOLL: ... It is now twenty one years ago when we were told to be patient and promised jobs after voting THEM into power. Where are the promised jobs, I ask you? (Audience) Every time they announce with glitter and media fanfare this or that big multinational company from overseas is to open a business here, there, everywhere in the country to provide work for the thousands of jobless people. Including the former PLAN fighters. Nobody knows whom to believe anymore. (p. 102)

The masses are always fed with empty promises that eventually become lies. The irony of it is that former PLAN soldiers are amongst the unemployed and live in extreme poverty like the character Oshikapepi who makes a living by being a rubbish operator yet he participated in the struggle for the independence of Namibia. Oshikapepi states that, “...I tried many

times to get a government job but all in vain” (p. 107). The government is letting down its people.

The government could have come up with a way to recognize the sacrifice of former PLAN fighters, employing them as government, but the government opts not to recognise its liberators but rather as suggested by Handjeivol that “they specialise in jobs-for-pals. Affirmative is also only for the lucky selective few” (p. 107). Thus, the government itself is promoting segregation which is again against its reconciliation policy.

It appears that high unemployment rate fuels higher crime rates in a nation. Citizens now live in fear of fellow citizens who are unpredictable on what criminal moves they may likely to make. From “Victim of Love” (2005) Emma warns her daughter on the dangers now surrounding them. Scene 3:

EMMA: I will neglect my holy and parental duty if I don't warn you that of late the location has become very dangerous place with botjotjos roaming the street, night and day. Anything can happen; you can get mugged or something worse.  
(p. 111)

As a result of being unemployed, people live in poverty and eventually engage into criminal activities in order to make a living and get something to eat. Hence there are “botjotjos roaming the streets day and night”.

#### **4.3.5.2 Poverty**

Mchombu and Mchombu (2014) view poverty as an intricate phenomenon that can be explained from various standpoints. The presence of poverty drives people to do some activities that may haunt them for the rest of their lives. And for those who do not confess will actually go to the grave with their secrets. From “Victim of Love” (2005) poverty

dehumanises people and lowers them down to the level of animals as illustrated in the excerpt from Scene 2:

EMMA: What else could I do? The money we earned per night was much better than the night club and the fish factory...

ANNA: Are you telling me that you were...

EMMA: ...sleeping with men for money, is that what you wanted to ask? To answer you, Yes. It was a means of survival. (p. 109)

Emma's poverty drove her into prostitution which is an act shunned by most communities, but that was the only option at hand as "It was a means of survival". From "The Porridge Queen" (2010), at the hospital where people are grossly underpaid as if they were still under repressive systems such as colonialism and apartheid, they are driven into activities that help them subsidise the low wages they get paid as illustrated in the following excerpt from Scene 3:

HANDJIEVOL: Lazy nurses, securities and cleaning staff who steal the hospital bankrupt.

BOOI: There are more cakes of soap and towels leaving the hospitals than healthy patients walking out, ask me. I was lying in the state hospital for a long time but felt like uncared for and stateless person. (p. 137)

Poverty is seen driving hospital staff cleaners stealing of state property. So, if the government does not consider revisiting and revising the salary of grossly underpaid employees then poverty will be a lifetime challenge, and the theft of government property will continue.

Also, poverty leads to alcohol abuse as one sees the victims of poverty abusing alcohol to forget their sorrows.

#### **4.3.6 Women and children**

The HIV/AIDS pandemic remains a social issue until a cure has been discovered and though information dissemination has improved these days, the pandemic still remains a challenge. In “Victim of Love” (2005) the character Anna is infected with the pandemic and is impregnated at the same time. Thus, the issue of HIV/AIDS is still a challenge in Namibian society where school age girls engage in premarital and unprotected sex hence Anna falling pregnant as revealed in Scene 5.

In addition, national events such as the presence of UNTAG had a negative impact on vulnerable women in Namibia. The presence of UNTAG saw some “women who sold their bodies at high prices” (“Victim of Love”, 2005, p. 107). As a result, many women became single mothers as pointed out by the character Emma when she talks about the sexploitation of some Namibian women, Scene 2:

EMMA: ...I am disturbed about the social suffering from the baby boom they [UNTAG] caused, especially in the North of our country. Just look around you know many bastard children you see today. Now all those men are gone; disappeared into thin air (p. 107)

Women still suffer at the hands of abusive husbands where man would drink beer then start beating the wife. In “The Porridge Queen” (2010) Act 2, Scene 5, the character abuses alcohol and starts beating his wife, Ghabas (pp. 126-128). Domestic violence remains again a social problem that affects numerous households, despite the ceaseless campaigns against domestic violence.

#### **4.4 Conclusion**

This chapter (Chapter 4) was an analysis of the selected plays paying particular attention to how the socio-political issues are portrayed in “Election Fever” (2010) and “King of the Dump” (2005) and how they are represented in post-independence in “The Porridge Queen” (2010), and “Victim of Love” (2005). Numerous subheadings have been used for an in-depth analysis to which some of the major themes have highlighted in the selected plays. The next chapter (Chapter 5) is on the conclusion and recommendations for this present study.

## CHAPTER 5

### CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### 5.1 Introduction

The previous chapter (Chapter 4) gave an analysis of the selected plays. This chapter, (Chapter 5) sums up the study and provides some recommendations for potential future studies in this area of study. Through the plays: “Election Fever” (2010), “King of the Dump”(2005), “The Porridge Queen” (2010) and “Victim of Love”(2005), human experiences can be viewed through literature. Literature acts as a mirror which reflects people’s lives. (see Ngugi (2012) Section 1.5 Significance of the study for the present study).

#### 5.2 Findings

WaThiong’o (2012) asserts that a novel/play “helps organise and make sense of the chaos of history, social experience, and personal inner lives” (p. 16). The following findings are underscored which are an attempt in answering the research questions which motivated the carrying out of the present study.

The research questions remain as follows:

- a) How does Philander present socio-political issues in pre-independent Namibia?
- b) How does Philander present socio-political issues in post-independent Namibia?
- c) How do the selected plays succeed in arousing people’s socio-political consciousness?

Firstly, segregation was prevalent in pre-independent Namibia and deprived the segregated group access to basic life needs like accommodation as in the case of Eva who could not secure a flat in the city though it later became theirs after Willie, the white husband, got it. In post independent Namibia segregation took up a new name, nepotism, and a discriminatory



system where people in power are favouring relatives or friends, by giving them jobs. Thus, the character Handjievoll (see Section 4.3.3 Nepotism of the study) could not secure a job even that of a tea-girl as she was a coloured, but not Oshiwambo speaking and she did not have a Swapo party membership card. It may therefore be asserted that discrimination will never contribute anything towards the development of the country as it maintains the separating lines amongst the multiple races and tribes in Namibia. Drawing examples from “The Porridge Queen” (2010) which mentions the reconciliation policy in particular and how it is doomed as some societies are against it. That is to say, even after independence, apartheid is still deep-rooted in Namibian societies as the White people still cling to it and following its philosophies. Thus, The Reconciliation Policy is probably just a policy on paper but not in practice as apartheid still reigns in independent Namibia.

Secondly, corruption in all its formulas and engagements be it in pre or post independent context, remains a major challenge for any country’s economy. According to the *Oxford Dictionary* (2017) corruption is a dishonest or fraudulent conduct by those in power, typically involving bribery. Corruption fuels the suffering of the ordinary people as it is mainly appearing to be perpetrated by those in power. The law cannot touch them and the powerful people remain in power and further perpetuating corruption for personal aggrandisement. The responsible authorities, the law makers and the law enforcers are the ones forming syndicates with ordinary people at lower societal levels by playing a hand in the degradation of the country’s economy. Corruption allows the procreation of a nation of thieves.

Thirdly, on the aspect pertaining to the controlling of the means of production, unemployment and poverty are the major concerns in the Namibian society. Although the country is now being ruled by the black leaders, it appears that problems of unemployment and poverty are difficult to deal with hence the government failing to address the problems. Or it may be true that the government is just turning a blind eye on this critical issue.

The government could have offered its former PLAN fighters a job in government, but the government opts not to recognise its liberators but rather “they specialise in jobs-for-pals. Affirmative is also only for the lucky selective few” (p. 107) (see Section 4.3.5.1 Unemployment of this study). Thus, the government itself is promoting segregation which is again against The Reconciliation Policy which calls for ‘One Nation, One Namibia’.

Moreover, unemployment is a major socio-political issue that if not given adequate attention may change societal behaviour to unpredictable directions and levels. The unemployed people will find means to make a living and thus engage in mostly illegal activities that harm them and their communities. Also, for those with very low income, if the government does not consider revisiting and revising the salary of the grossly underpaid employees, then poverty will be a lifetime challenge and the theft of government properties will continue. The people will turn out to be a nation of prostitutes, thieves and drug dealer to name but a few. Handjievoll comments that, “I am only saying democracy has become a mockery for look how the crime rate has risen after independence, housebreaking, thieving and burglaries are topping the list” (Philander, 2010, p. 110). Thus, unemployment instigates poverty and consequently a variety of criminal activities. Poverty is dehumanising as presented particularly by the life at the dumpsite where people look for food among the rubbish.

Lastly, Philander uses fictional characters to comment and criticise the socio-political issues that people may find difficult to comprehend in general. The scenes in the plays explore and expose opaque occurrences by showing “connections and causes which are hidden” (see Fairclough (1992) Section 2.2 Theoretical framework of the present study).

### **5.3 Recommendations**

This study analyses literary representations of socio-political issues in the Namibian society as presented in Philander’s selected plays: “Election Fever” (2010) and “King of the Dump”

(2005) as well as “The Porridge Queen” (2010). The scenes in the plays expose the socio-political issues that affect and impact on Namibians in their daily lives. The sources of the socio-political problems have been established, and their roots are linked to colonialism and apartheid systems. The problems can be traced back to these repressive systems and how upon independence what only changed was the ruling skin but the system remained the same. Therefore, this study recommends that for future researchers in the similar field of study may consider the following:

- Comparative researches on socio-political issues from other countries and see whether the other countries would have the same results as those in Namibia.
- The use of other literary theories in exploring socio-political issues in the Namibian context and/or beyond Namibian borders.
- Merging all three genres of literature; drama, poetry and prose, in the exploration of socio-political issues in Namibia or elsewhere.

#### **5.4 Conclusion**

Writers like Philander, as noted by Beyer (2012), write in response to certain socio-political events and experiences from their surroundings. For that, communities get to understand themselves (see Ngugi (2012) Section 1.5 Significance of the study for the present study). Philander delegates to his characters that they may help him sensitise society on socio-political issues and through his plays, he maps where the nation is coming from, where it is today and where it will be tomorrow. The selected plays: “Election Fever” (2010), “King of the Dump” (2005), “The Porridge Queen” (2010), and “Victim of Love” (2005) sensitise the people to the oppression of their leaders. They protest against dehumanisation perpetuated by fellow human beings. The plays are, according to Nashongo (2016), powerful tools to voice the unvoiced. Contemporary socio-political issues have their roots in the pre-independent

Namibia under colonial and apartheid rule. The research also found out that socio-political issues such as high unemployment rate result in poverty which in turn triggers high crime rates in a country as substantiated by the selected plays: “Election Fever” (2010) and “King of the Dump” (2005) as well as “The Porridge Queen” (2010).

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