

AN INVESTIGATION INTO THE MEDIATION OF THE
REPRESENTATION OF GENDER ROLES IN
GOD OF WOMEN: A CRITICAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS
OF PEDAGOGIC PRACTICES IN SELECTED NAMIBIAN
SCHOOLS

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ABSTRACT

This is a qualitative study designed to investigate the role of pedagogical practices in the mediation of stereotypical gender representations in the drama *God of Women* by Sifiso Nyathi (1998). This drama is one of the literature set-works for Grade 9 English Second Language learners in Namibian Secondary schools. Fairclough's (2012) Critical Discourse Analysis was used as a research design, as well as the conceptual and analytical framework. The analysis of this drama by teachers during the teaching and learning process, pedagogic practices they employ, learners' engagement in classroom activities, and the nature of comments that teachers write on students' assignments, based on *God of Women*, formed part of the unit of analysis. The study explored teachers' pedagogical practices during English Literature teaching to gain insight into whether and how teachers shape learners' engagement with literature to promote critical thinking. Focus on the mediation process ('teacher talks around the text') concerned a close analysis of teachers' engagement with the text during lessons. Semi-structured interviews, classroom observation and documentary evidence were used to generate data. The research site and study participants were purposively sampled.

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DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my husband and son, as African men who may live to challenge and critique the patriarchal domain in African societies.

CHAPTER 1

CONTEXT OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this study was to investigate the mediation of the representation of gender roles in the prescribed Grade 9 drama *God of Women* in two selected Namibian schools. The primary purpose was to analyse how *God of Women* represents gender roles and how gender representations in literary texts are mediated by teachers. The study also critically analysed ways in which teachers' mediation practices concerning gender roles shape learners' understandings of gender relationships. In order to understand the way drama (as part of 'literary category', see Mqquwashu, 2007) is used to construct gendered cultures in the classroom, this chapter includes a review on the theory of mediation concerning the ways in which drama is read, understood and interpreted by both teachers and learners.

African feminists thinking have sporadically combined insights of second and third wave feminism. For instance, the Kenyan researcher Ntarangwi (2003) depicts socio-cultural phenomenon that is constructed and performed in different ways, including music. He argues that for people to construct gender, it has to be performed and it is such a performance that determines and maintain gender identity. Although a number of African academic women agree on the concept of feminism that has to do with the struggle for justice and equal socio-economic and political society, they continue to question the relevance of some western feminism and caution against the risk of interpreting African gender identities through the western lens. For instance, they challenge the western radical feminism for devaluing motherhood and maternal politics in Africa while capitalising on sexuality (Nnaemeka 1994, & Nwapa 1998).

Buchi Emecheta, a female Nigerian writer, is well known for her criticism of women's subordination through patriarchal system. Of course, patriarchy is a key concept within all branches of feminist thinking, however, it is certainly crucial within radical feminism. For many African feminist critics, the problem of the subordination of women is not only linked to dominance of men as argued by western feminists, but it is also squarely linked to colonialism.

African authors seem to use literary texts, drama included, as lenses to construct an African identity based on traditional construction of gender relationships in society. The motivation for this study is born of my interest in the contribution of tradition to social development in Namibia, particularly to the goal of equalising power imbalances between men and women and enhancing the position of women in society.

It is obvious that gender discourses are not merely constructed through literary texts that are prescribed for schools, but also through the gendered interactions which take place in classrooms. This study therefore used Critical Discourse Analysis as a research design and conceptual and analytical framework to study the construction of gender relationships through classroom interactions in a Namibian context. Highlights of Critical Discourse Analysis will be discussed later in Chapter 3.

This study was prompted by the magnitude of the role which gender inequality plays in the classrooms of Namibian schools, where traditional views on gender roles and gender relations appear to be a problematic (see also Masule, 2014). Most literary texts, particularly by African authors, see women assigned to subordinate roles as characters confined to

stereotypical representations of uneducated, unintelligent, housewives and to some extent, sex objects (see Nashongo, 2016). Nowadays, gender equality is at the forefront of society's preoccupations and it is anticipated that this study will contribute to literature on the mediation of gender representations in the drama *God of Women*. Significantly, the study may change the perspectives of educators and readers on issues of gender roles and relations. Despite the struggle for men and women to have equal power in society, it seems the struggle will continue endlessly.

It appears that society stereotypically portrays certain desirable behaviours as more likely to be demonstrated by one sex or the other. Often, society depicts qualities such as gentleness and compassion as stereotypically feminine, while independence and analytical thought are seen as stereotypically masculine (Schwendwenman, 2012, p. 17). Through such discourse, males and females are conditioned not only by biology and genetics, but most crucially for this study, by "socially learned roles, functions, norms, behavioural patterns and expectations that are associated with maleness and femaleness in the concrete society" (Guledani, 2011, p. 2). Campell (2010, p. 13) argues that gender is naturally "rooted in societies" beliefs that the sexes are naturally distinct and opposed social beings".

Global debates on gender issues and gender roles in society have received much attention from different scholars and organisations. Blumberg (2008), for example, analysed school textbooks (English Primary textbooks) in Canada. He concluded that gender stereotypes and female underrepresentation are still rampant. Similarly, Gooden and Gooden (2001) in Yang (2010) examined 83 Notable Fictional Books for Children and concluded that, although gender equity had greatly improved with the increase of females represented as main characters, gender stereotypes were still prevalent.

Often, in the classroom context, teachers may unconsciously perpetuate these gender stereotypes. In such cases, discourses pertaining to the need for equity in society often tend to revolve around broader societal politics, and often construct boys as having a greater role to play in society than girls. Teachers are generally unaware of instances such as this one. Part of the reason for this is that, traditionally, society tends to differentiate the roles of both men and women based on biological differences, and often women are taken out of societal responsibilities considered to be difficult and complex, such as decision making in politics and business (Schwendwenman, 2012). Thus, terms such as ‘feminine’ and ‘masculine’ continue to be used to signify the traditionally expected behaviours for both women and men.

While it cannot be debated that the need to raise awareness on issues relating to gender roles and representation in our classrooms is a global concern, in some countries, exposing learners to issues around gender roles and representation is more urgent. Most countries, especially in the developing world, demonstrate societal worldviews that perpetuate patriarchal power and authority. Societies that still hold traditional views on the roles of women and men tend to entrench such views through various socio-cultural practices and ceremonies such as weddings, rites of passage, special dedications of the male child, gendered coming-of-age ceremonies, and such like. Thus, in such contexts, learners often enter schooling with belief systems and values engendered and reinforced by such cultural practices. This is partly the reason why, in societies where such practices are a dominant feature of the socialisation of the young, schooling remains one of the sites where gender stereotypes can either be challenged or perpetuated. This is because textbooks used in schools can play a powerful role in the socialisation of the youth. Such power may alter learners’ opinions and beliefs regarding many gendered socio-cultural assumptions.

Despite being separate individuals, collectively, teachers may either perpetuate patriarchal, oppressive and male-biased ideological worldviews, or subvert these through (among others) their pedagogical practices and their mediation of such world views (Bhana, 2005). The way learners look at gender relations, history, roles and classes as represented in texts may therefore partly depend on how schooling (and in particular, teachers) mediates meanings in such texts. It is against this background that the study investigates pedagogic practices which teachers use to teach *God of Women* by Sifiso Nyathi (1998), a drama prescribed for Grade 9 English Second Language classrooms in the Namibian Junior Secondary schools.

As with all drama texts, *God of Women* is a unique literary form because it is designed to be acted out on a stage before an audience. As Howard (2014) puts it:

The word ‘drama’ comes from the Greek word ‘dran’ meaning to act or to do. As “literature in action,” drama brings a story to life before our eyes. Unlike most works of fiction that rely heavily on narration, the story of a play or drama is told through dialogue and action and is integrated with the setting that the audience observes – largely from scenery and props. Knowing about these elements can help you appreciate and discuss plays that you see and read. (p. 3)

As the above quotation indicates, *God of Women*, although it is a drama, is a written drama. Within the English Studies field, a written drama (or play) falls under the broader ‘literary category’ (Mgqwashu, 2007). However, this does not mean that the analysis of drama necessarily dismisses ways in which story telling within this genre is “through dialogue and action, and is integrated with the setting that the audience observes” (Howard, 2014, p. 3). On the contrary, these will be taken into consideration in data generation on how teachers mediate the text, and the analysis of such mediation is also undertaken in this study. In his “A comparative analysis of the depiction of women in Sifiso Nyathi's *God of Women* and *William Shakespeare's Othello* (2014), Masule evaluated the use of literary techniques which the respective authors use in their portrayal of the female characters in their plays. The study

concluded that both “Nyathi and Shakespeare largely portray women characters negatively in their works albeit in different ways that are typical of the cultures and epochs in which the authors lived” (Masule, 2014, p. 2). The ways in which teachers engage with instances constructed through such imagery in the text, and how mediation is undertaken, is thus part of data that will be generated and analysed in this study.

As Masule’s (2014) study seems to suggest, *God of Women* uses specific literary techniques to portray and construct gender and gender relations in problematic ways. It is such texts that have an immense power to shape the next generation’s views on gender roles and relations. The latter is particularly true in the context of Namibia, where *God of Women* is a Grade 9 prescribed text, a country where traditional and problematic views on gender are still dominant (Masule, 2014). It is thus important to investigate the extent to which teachers’ mediation processes through their pedagogic practices in teaching this text in Grade 9 English Second Language in Namibia shape learners’ construction and understanding of gender roles.

In defining mediation, Lantolf (2006, p. 2) asserts that mediation is a procedure through which individuals organise and transfer their culturally constructed skills, beliefs, and activities to self-regulate. In this context, mediation is seen as a process of interaction which is required to facilitate the communication process, thereby promoting learning outcomes (see Mellati, Khademi & Etela, 2015). Mediation is likely to provide a means of studying social processes and even classroom activities to engage with ways in which language shapes learners’ world views within learning contexts (Gibbons, 2006). A teacher is thus seen as a monitor or mediator of the interactions and is expected to act when some type of intervention is required in order to help the communicative process. In some instances, the teacher is central to influencing learners on the outcome of learnt skills and/or beliefs. Thus, the

teacher's role as a mediator is fundamental in terms of the cultural dimension of the language, as the language teacher needs to raise awareness of cultural patterns and prepare learners to embrace them in intercultural encounters (Mellati, Khademi & Etela, 2015, p. 1664). This is because learning occurs in a social context through interaction with teachers, parents and other pupils.

By studying classroom interactions among learners themselves and between teachers and learners, the study will focus on how teachers teach the text, what they do with it, how they deal with male and female issues and representation, and how they mediate gender issues presented in this text. This is crucial to this study, as the way in which teachers teach in some respects prepares learners for the world we live in. To realise its objectives, the study focuses on different school types within the Namibian context. Such different school types include a state school, Haimbili Haufiku Secondary School in the Ohangwena region, and a private school, Oshigambo High School in the Oshikoto region. The reasons for this choice of schools are (a) these two schools are convenient in terms of accessibility, and (b) these are two different school types, which may provide a comparative dimension to the study.

In the 1980s, substantial efforts to eliminate sexual stereotypes in school textbooks and promote co-education were implemented in the developed countries (Stromquist, 2007). According to UNESCO's report on Education for All Global Monitoring prepared by Stromquist (2007), it is within that context that schools have begun to be seen as major engines of gender transformation. According to Bhuiyan (2007):

The child starts to understand his/her gender identity beyond the family, the role that each one in the society assumes, through friends, teachers in schools and most importantly, books that they read in the classroom. (p. 1).

In addition, schools are seen as ‘factories’ or ‘laboratories’ where masculinity and femininity are mainly learned as part of the process of differentiating societal gender roles (Stromquist, 2007).

It is in these ways that as learners come from homes with some gendered roles embedded from their social organisation, schools need to play an active role in developing learners’ skills to critique assumptions about different sexes. This is because learners come to school already having been prepared to do certain household chores depending on their gender. As in most developing contexts, in Namibia, girls are taught to cook, pound *mahangu* and take care of children and the sick, whereas boys are taught to herd cattle and do work such as mending the fence, making kraals and building houses. If schools do not play a role in destabilising these gendered societal roles, such roles can instead be strengthened through schooling, inadvertently reproducing the values and privileges of the dominant male culture (Campell, 2010).

This is the reason why Stromquist (2007) sees classrooms as prime sites where the formation of beliefs about gender femininity and masculinity have necessitated close attention every day. Indeed, it is at school where learners spend much of their time interacting with teacher talk, peer culture, curriculum content and school messages. A school is deemed the gatekeeper of those social settings where gender and “sexual identities are constructed, negotiated and officially sanctioned” (Stromquist, 2007, p. 20). Indeed, gender issues appear to manifest in the curriculum. It is through a curriculum process that teachers, learners and knowledge interact.

Here, curriculum is used in terms set out by the American curriculum theorist, Pinar (2011, p. 4), who defines curriculum as “the interdisciplinary study of educational experience”. For Diaz (2005, p. 25), every textbook has a “hidden curriculum” and defines it as “[a] set of social and cultural values which are inherent in their make-up”. The nature of the curriculum materials used in schools and their relationship to the world of learners give a critical window into what knowledge is being conveyed by schools (Stromquist, 2007, p. 140). Gwajima (2011, p. 40) on the other hand, argues that “gendered discourses are not simply constructed through the curriculum, including the texts which are used, but also through the gendered interactions which take place in the classroom”. This is the reason this study involves classroom observations of teachers in order to understand their analysis of the drama (*God of Women*) and what they say about characters as portrayed in the drama, and what embedded meanings might be deduced therefrom.

Phrases used by teachers, the way they convey them, the way they mediate and interpret the drama during classroom discourse, and how they draw on discursive resources when they talk, are all part of data generation to be utilised. Such events are understood in terms of powerful and subordinated discourses which constitute social realities. In other words, the study focuses on issues of deconstruction by exposing how patriarchal interests are constructed through language and discourses preserve gendered social inequalities. This is because meanings constructed by teachers about the text are experienced by learners via the language of the classroom. Therefore, language enables people to think, speak and give meaning to the gendered world around them (Bhana, 2005).

Abrahams & Sommerkorn (n.d.) studied gender bias in the transmission of knowledge in co-educational institutions of learning in Germany. They designed a Hamburg Network LINT

project to sensitise teachers and educational administrators to gender inequalities. The project addressed the problems of gender awareness in teacher behaviours, classroom dynamics, curriculum materials and single-sex vs co-educational settings. Their study revealed that no matter what level of education learners have reached, there are still inequitable practices where “boys receive more of the teachers’ attention than do girls” (Abraham and Sommerkorn, n.d., p. 14). Thus, teachers may not be aware of the attention that they may be giving to one gender over the other. According to empirical evidence such as participant observation and videotaping, in Germany, boys get about 60% of the teacher’s time (Abraham & Sommerkorn, n.d, p. 7).

The Namibia Institute of Education Development (NIED) designs the curriculum and prepares the syllabus for schools in Namibia according to the given policy and suggested list of textbooks. The purpose of the curriculum is to provide a coherent and concise framework to ensure consistency in the delivery of the curriculum in schools and classrooms throughout the country. It further describes the goal, aims and rationale of the curriculum, the principles of teaching, learning and assessment, the language policy, and curriculum management at the school level. The curriculum also provides a framework for the development of syllabuses, learning materials and textbooks for various subjects and areas of learning, from which teachers’ schemes of work and lesson plans can then be developed. When asked what criteria they use in selecting literary texts for Grade 9, the official had this to say:

The literary texts are selected by the directorate of education from each region. These 14 members join the NIED curriculum panel, which selects all textbooks for schools in Namibia. The teachers are also involved in the curriculum panel that makes the final decision on the selection of literary texts for schools in Namibia. In the past, the Subject Advisory teachers

select the best English teacher based on Junior Secondary performance. However, this year the region is not represented by any teacher.

There are 14 educational regions in Namibia. Each region has a member to represent it at NIED. Previously, the teachers were selected based on their teaching experience, with a minimum requirement of three years of teaching experience. Currently, one has to apply to be involved in the curriculum panel. This also meant that the Subject Advisory teachers are not automatically involved in the selection of such literary texts. However, they select teachers based on commitment, exam settings, workshops, activeness, subject knowledge and performance.

When asked to describe the gender representations in the prescribed Grade 9 drama *God of Women*, the English Subject Advisory asserts that:

I have not read the book. I do not have a copy and have no knowledge of the content. I cannot describe any gender representations in the drama because I have not read about it. I could not even describe any character in the play as I indicated earlier that I had not read the play.

The responses above indicate that the official involved in overseeing the teaching of English in school had no knowledge regarding gender issues. However, I should immediately indicate that the selection content on textbook and material evaluation instrument allowed the selection panel to indicate the extent to which the material encourage a positive attitude towards gender (see textbook instrument 2.9). The textbook and material evaluation instrument is necessary to ensure the general quality of education in Namibia. The evaluation of the texts is to determine if they conform to the set syllabus and their adherence to the socio-cultural values of Namibia, integration of Life Skills and teaching across the curriculum. NIED recommends the literary texts as they work closely in the area that develops teaching

materials for schools with the subject teacher and the Subject Advisory from the various regions.

In the context of Namibia, there seems to be no serious attention paid to how teachers position themselves in relation to gender issues (Masule, 2014). The Ministry of Education simply approves textbooks on the basis of the didactic and social objectives to be achieved, and no discussion is opened around how such textbooks present, and therefore construct, gender roles (Mugisha, 2013). The absence of such discussions at ministerial level means there is no guarantee that learners' worldviews on gender relations are engaged and challenged within the classroom context. This is partly the reason why Namibian teachers may be generally unaware of their own biased teaching behaviours, because they are simply teaching how they were taught themselves, and "the subtle gender inequalities found in teaching materials are often overlooked" (Mugisha, 2013, p. 7). It is against the context of these ideas that this study asks the following research questions:

1. How does *God of Women* represent gender roles?
2. How are gender representations in literary texts mediated by teachers?
3. In what ways do the teachers' mediation practices shape learners' understandings of gender representations?

These three research questions were designed to generate insights with regard to:

1. How teachers analyse *God of Women* during the teaching and learning process,
2. What type of pedagogical practices teachers employ to mediate gender representation in *God of Women*,
3. How learners engage in classroom activities, and
4. The nature of the written comments which teachers write on learners' assignments based on the drama.

The contribution to this study is to justify on the ground of wanting to create an awareness and contribute to the general discussion of gender equality among African society. It is through the mediation of gender roles that today's generation might stand out to critique the gender

inequality in society by promoting gender equality and empowering many African women who have, for the past decades being disempowered by patriarchal society. The main contribution of this study, therefore, is essential to consider issues related to mediation of gender roles in the classroom, as schools are deemed as sites where gender are either constructed or deconstructed in some Namibian schools. If the recommendations of this study are read by those interested, it is likely to contribute in empowering literature teachers and be able to conduct critical classroom interactions regarding gender representations in literary texts.

1.1 Outline of the study

This study consists of nine chapters. Chapter 1 gives the context of the study, the purpose, objectives and goals. Chapter 2 provides an understanding of the phenomenon whereby mediation theory and critical literacy are discussed. Chapter 3 provides the conceptual lenses to engage with the phenomenon under study, where Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) is discussed as a paradigm and analytical tool of this study; it also explicitly justifies the choices of CDA.

Chapter 4 contains strategies to generate data. Chapter 5 deals with teachers' mediation practices while Chapter 6 looks at teachers' thoughts on their practices. Chapter 7 gives learners' experiences of classroom practices and Chapter 8 looks at what learners' written work tells us. Finally, Chapter 9 provides pedagogical practices for gender equity, and implications from the study.

CHAPTER 2

CURRENT THINKING ON THE PHENOMENON

Chapter 1 presented the context and reasons for this study. In the process, it presented a considered discussion of studies on gender representation in literary texts such as short stories, novels and drama. Such a discussion set the context for the study by focusing mainly on ways in which studies in this area tend to reveal how pedagogical practices contribute in the mediation of gender roles depicted in these literary texts. As this contextualisation reveals, most studies showcase the extent to which literary texts prescribed for schools are powerful agents of socialization, and the manner in which pedagogic practices can either challenge or reinforce problematic gender constructions. Given the fact that learners from the selected schools for this study come from predominantly patriarchal communities where gender stereotypes are rampant, the chapter also discussed how classroom interactions are potentially central spaces where these could be tackled. Chapter 2 takes this discussion further by presenting a detailed overview of studies on the ‘place’ of pedagogic practices in reinforcing and/or challenging gender constructions in prescribed school textbooks, and the role they play in mediating meanings.

Chapter Two thus begins by discussing literature on how gender representations in literary texts are mediated by teachers, and ways in which such mediation practices shape and influence learners’ understandings of gender issues. The chapter then offers relatively elaborate details on the nature and characteristics of each study under review with regard to gender stereotypes and gender roles as represented in literary texts. The chapter then moves to discuss the gap in the existing knowledge, which this study is designed to fill. The emphasis in this instance is the extent to which each study opened opportunities for further study, and how this study responded to areas for further study as suggested by these studies. In relation

to mediation of gender roles in prescribed texts for schools in Namibia, it appears that there is no study that looked into such gender mediation in Namibian schools. The mediation of gender roles in this study, may reveal how the drama *God of Women* may reveal the attitudes of characters in relation to reality. Moreover, learners' interpretive of fictional characters through document evidence may reveal the way they understand their figured world. This is crucial in the sense that learners may perceive gender representation differently in their society. There is a need to understand the school culture as a 'pattern of values, beliefs and traditions that have been formed over the years within a school' (Higgins & Sath, 1997). Therefore, this study is such an attempt.

Bhana (2005) argues that despite being separate individuals, teachers may unconsciously and unwittingly perpetuate patriarchal, oppressive and male-biased ideological worldviews. They could, on the other hand, subvert these in their pedagogical practices and mediation of such views on gender stereotypes in the classroom. The latter, however, is often a conscious, deliberate act that individual teachers must choose to embrace. Within the context of Namibia, research on these issues is crucial, considering that (as is the case in most Southern African countries) the majority of learners come from highly patriarchal communities and homes. Their classrooms effectively become the only spaces where issues around gender roles and representations can be addressed, tackled, and hopefully revised. While Stromquist (2007) seems to indicate that schools, particularly classrooms, are sites where the formation of beliefs about femininity and masculinity occurs, the view adopted in this study is that gendered worldviews among learners are firstly learned at home and in local communities, where different household chores are divided according to gender. In other words, gendered roles are embedded at home through the social organisation within societies. Schools or classrooms

remain potential sites for the critique of patriarchal gender constructions, where gender stereotypes can be challenged and/or perpetuated.

To engage with ways in which dramatic texts are mediated and ways in which such mediation constructs gender views and cultures in the classroom, this chapter includes a review of literary theories concerning the ways in which drama/plays are read and understood. Such theories include mediation theory adopted by Feuerstein, with a particular emphasis on the relevance to the African context. It is often argued that African authors use literature as a mirror to construct an African identity, which is based on traditional construction of gender (see Ntarangwi, 2003; Nashongo, 2016). It is however, necessary for Grade 9 learners to either embrace or reject the gendered discourses mediated in the classroom. Of course, gender discourses are not merely constructed through the curriculum, including the drama which is used, but also through gendered interactions that usually occur in the classroom. The next section discusses mediation, one of the concepts used in the study.

2.1 Mediation

Sunderland (2000b, p. 205) defines mediation as “teacher talk around the text” and sees teachers’ behaviour in relation to texts to be influential in learners’ interpretation thereof. It is for this reason that this study aims to unpack how gender representations in literary texts are mediated by teachers and in what ways teachers’ mediation practices shape learners’ understanding of gender representations. Given the fact that mediation is central to the study of collaborative (teacher-learner) interactions, as a starting point of this dissertation, my interest is to unveil the way gender issues are handled in literary texts in Namibian secondary schools. Gibbons (2003, p. 249) used the term mediation “to characterise the linguistic and discourse choices made by teachers in the content-based English Second Language (ESL)

classroom” and stresses that language learning is mediated by language use in the collaborative interactions between teachers and learners. For learners in countries like Namibia, where English is a second language, it can be argued that the text and the teachers are the most important linguistic and cultural links between them. In other words, language learning is likely to be realised through a collaborative interactional process in which learners begin to appropriate the language of the interaction for their own purposes.

Furthermore, Sunderland (2001, p. 26) argues that the “mediation of gender in textbook texts by teachers ... in the form of treatment of those texts is likely to be one factor in shaping the learners’ response” to gender identity. Teachers may mediate the texts with either “endorsement” or “subversion” of gender stereotypes. The gendered texts that maintain the traditional gender roles are endorsed by the teachers through explicit positive comment, dealing with the texts uncritically, or simply teaching the text (see Sunderland, 2001, Yasa, 2010). On the other hand, when mediating gender roles, the traditional roles portrayed in gendered discourse can be undermined by simply omitting the texts or ignoring some parts of the discourse.

As humans, our activities and mental functioning are mediated and facilitated tools, cultural practices and artefacts, the most extensive tool being language (see Vygotsky, 1981). The mediation of the drama *God of Women* by teachers is seen as more relevant and in effect, crucial to any ‘effect’ of the text than the text itself (Sunderland, 2000b, p. 11). Learners are likely to accept what has been mediated by the teacher in the classroom and negotiate own meanings therefrom. This would mean that learners require intervention by a teacher within a constructed zone of development in order to negotiate meaning.

According to Feuerstein's mediation theory, a teacher who mediates content is supposed to promote and enhance learning. However, researchers found that every language teaching context is unique and mediation is rather a much more complex process. The mediation of content with stereotypical gender representations could be even more of a challenge (Feuerstein, 1991, p. 2). Dendrinis (2006) sees a teacher through mediation as:

A social actor who monitors the process of interaction and acts when some type of intervention is required in order to help the communicative process and sometimes to influence the outcome as facilitator in social events during which two or more parties interacting are experiencing a communication breakdown or when there is a communication gap between them. (p. 10)

Another view of a teacher expressed by Dendrinis (2006, p. 11) is that of a "meaning negotiator operating as a meaning-making agent" especially when s/he intervenes in situations which require reconciliation, settlement or compromise of meanings. This is the reason the theory of mediation puts emphasis on the importance of "sociocultural forces – parents, teachers, pupils, and communication between them in society, in shaping a child's development and learning" (Mellati, Khedami & Etela, 2015, p. 165). Such communication determines the type of interaction occurring between learners and their near or immediate environment. Feuerstein (1991, p. 4) points out that the main roles of the mediator include "the stimulus, the organism, and the response to interpret, regulate, elaborate, and reinforce the learner's experience". These concepts will be used extensively in the generation and analysis of data in this study. Since all literary texts carry messages about power (Who has power? Who doesn't?), an analysis of classroom practices using these concepts could enable the researcher to unpack power relations embedded in the classroom and in the set drama, revealing ways in which *God of Women* influences and shapes a reader's view of the world.

This is crucial in this study, for teachers' attitudes on gender roles may reflect biases towards girls and boys alike. Often, biases are more subtle than visible discrimination and may result

in unconscious behaviours, such as giving more careful attention either to boys or girls. The teacher's role as mediator and facilitator is therefore fundamental in this context. When mediating instances in literary categories such as fictional texts, Mellati, Khedani and Etela (2015) suggest that teachers need to take into account the cultural dimension of the language. This means that the language teacher needs to be able to raise learners' awareness of the cultural patterns in texts and prepare them to embrace these in intercultural encounters. Occasionally, learners may experience power relations from home. Therefore, if teachers do not engage in debates about gender roles and representation in dramatic texts, it will have an impact on learners' understanding of gender issues in their communities. In other words, if teachers fail to critically engage learners about gendered discourse in their classrooms, then it is likely that learners may not exercise their responsibilities in these issues.

Lande (2000) suggests that a facilitative approach is a good tool for teachers (as mediators) for many reasons. Facilitation emphasises that mediators do their own critical evaluation and creative problem solving. Lande (2000, p. 23) further explains that "mediation is not useful for everyone and it is not a cure-all, but mediation truly offers a distinctive opportunity for parties to exercise responsibility over their own disputes and their own lives". Other dispute resolution processes, furthermore, may not generally promote mediation as a social value. Moreover, teachers' mediation on literary texts may be useful to learners in more ways than one. For Cheng and Kia (2011):

Learners reach their potentials in the subsequent four dimensions: teachers as mediators interact with students, teachers as mediators facilitate learner-learner interactions, teachers as mediators develop interactive classroom tasks or activities, and teachers as mediators generate new classroom tasks or activities. (p. 18)

These scholars believed that the teacher's role of mediator is theoretically acceptable and practically feasible, but that there is a long way to the interactive society settings. Teachers as

mediators can play a significant role in learning through mediation, as indeed the method of mediation is culture-bound as every educator, learner and context is unique. As such, application of mediation theory needs special skills on the part of teachers. In other words, it could mean that the notion of mediation can have different meanings in different contexts.

2.2 Studies on gender stereotypes

Public and international discourses on the debate for gender equality tend to focus on the oppression of women, as they rightly should. However, the influence that traditional male stereotypes have on the perpetuation of gender inequality at a transnational scale also needs to be addressed. Stereotypes are a common phenomenon in many societies. The practice of male characters dominating women in many literary texts needs to be looked into. We are not born patriarchal but we are socialised into becoming so. The process that cements patriarchy in our minds and subsequently in our attitudes and behaviour begins early in life (Sommers, 2000).

Women in early European cultures were treated worse than African women (Emecheta, 2007). For instance, in Medieval English times, History Learning Site (2013) reports that women had no ‘say’ within the socio-political administration of their society. According to Ogunyemi (1985), women were subjected to cruelty whereby they were beaten when they disobeyed men within the family. Both women in Africa and Europe were taught to be subservient and were raised to believe that they were inferior to men (see, Collins, 2001; Somolu, 2007; Amos & Parmar, 1984; Emecheta, 2007). They were made to depend on their men and had no opportunity to attend school. According to an article in *Victorian Women: The Gender of Oppression* (2003), women were assigned a position that completely removed them from the public domain and were thus assigned to be home, limited to being wives and

mothers to their husbands' children. In other words, women were regarded as child-bearers and available only to quench their husbands' sexual desires.

African women are no exception to mistreatment by men. Black women, for instance, had no access to western education (Collins, 2001). While there was education in Africa, this was based on how to survive. Men and women, boys and girls received education relevant to them so that society could function properly. For black women in particular, theirs was to find a man, marry and bear children and if a woman was barren, she was expected to return to her parents' home as she failed to produce offspring (see Nashongo). Jha (2017) believes that the deepening of such a gendering of subjects has led to one of India's premier universities, the University of Delhi, having Psychology Honours offered in most women's colleges, while boys wanting to study the subject are left with little choice. This is why it is essential to introduce feminism in our schools and particularly in English classrooms, where most of the literary texts that are taught portray gender representation unequally.

Classrooms, as places where learners learn the basics of grammar and science, should also be places where they learn the basics of co-existence. There is a need for our Namibian learners to know that equality of all genders should be a reality. Liu (2015) stresses that while all children naturally develop gender stereotypes, classroom demographics and teacher practices can make a big difference in how and whether students develop sex-based stereotypes and prejudices. More importantly for this study is that learners deserve to live their lives as naturally as they want to, and not by norms made to impose hierarchies on their existence. Therefore, it is important to investigate the extent to which the mediation of gender representations in the drama *God of Women* allows learners to think independently about what gender representation means in the 21st century.

People often use stereotypes to make quick judgments, despite the fact that the stereotypes themselves and the judgments concluded therefrom are commonly incorrect. Stereotypes pervade all avenues of life, including gender, occupations, races and ethnicities, as well as sexual orientations. Gender stereotypes are culturally ingrained ideas about appropriate behaviours for males and females. Common narrow gender stereotypes can include: that it is not good for men to cry; that men are naturally aggressive; that females should be submissive and 'pick up the pieces' (see Renold, 2005). In the past, women played the damsel in distress, while men came across as strong and bold characters. These outdated views still exist in today's world. Cracking traditional gender roles has always been a tough issue to handle (Connell, 2009; Collins, 2013). Although society has embraced total role changes in the new view of the world, stereotyping is still apparent everywhere, particularly with women being viewed as the weaker gender. Whether it's shown in advertisements or at school, society seems prone to reverting to old gender labels (Kimmel, 2000; Griffith, 2009).

Young people (and especially learners) may largely not be aware of gender stereotypes by this age and are likely to accept some of these as universal truths. Rigid gender stereotyping promotes inequity between the sexes and can set young people up to expect and accept power imbalances within relationships later in life. Accepting gender stereotypes and roles can have longer-term negative influences on children's beliefs, attitudes and future behaviours. Hall, et al. (1988) defines stereotypes as personifications which are widely accepted and shared among members of a given society and are handed down from one generation to the next. Fung and Ma (2000) stress that stereotypes are subjective perceptions, which may be intuitions, prejudices, imaginings or past impressions of what a person has been. Martin and Halverson (1998, p. 231) are of the view that gender stereotypes are a "subjective perception of what a man or woman should be or how people should behave".

As alluded to earlier, this study is crucial for the fact that learners from the two selected schools in Namibia come from different backgrounds where patriarchy is dominant. Patriarchy often perpetuates gender roles and limits women's freedom and creative power. Most of these stereotypes often describe men as intellectually competent, strong and brave, while women are seen as homely, warm and expressive, incompetent and passive. They portray the male as the strong, dominant person with leadership traits, one who works outside the home in often prestigious occupations, while the female is usually portrayed as being subordinate and confined to the home (Fiske, 1993; Stangor & Lange, 1994). According to Ifegbesan (2010), there are various types of gender stereotypes that include: self-stereotyping, school stereotyping and family/cultural stereotyping by gender. Given the fact that teachers mediate text through what Sunderlands (2000) terms "text and talk", this study is essential to unpacking the ways in which teachers' mediation practices help Grade 9 learners to generate new ways of thinking on issues of gender representation.

The issues of gender representation and gender inequality have been publicly reflected upon throughout society for decades. For the purpose of this study, the word 'gender' is used to relate to stereotypes of others (females) as a means of lowering their social standing in society, as reflected in some literary texts with some negative connotation toward women. The society we live in seems to be shaped historically by male dominance. Given the fact that this study is looking at the mediation of gender representation, it is equally essential to recognise that masculinities and femininities are situated in relation to one another and in some discourses (Coles, 2009; Connell, 2005; Jackson & Salisbury, 1996). Being masculine holds more social status and power than other states, depending on the particular social context. Gender is one of multiple meanings which construct our personal identities, which are then strengthened by social power. Cusack (2013) defined gender stereotyping as the

practice of “ascribing to an individual woman or man specific attributes, characteristics or roles on the sole basis of her or his membership of the social group of women or men” (p. 9). At times, many people may recognise the dangers of gender stereotyping, yet they continue to generalise gender based on the roles of an individual.

Traditionally, and particularly in the African context, the female stereotypical role is to marry and have children (Nashongo, 2016). Equally, she is to put her family’s welfare before her own, being loving and compassionate, caring, nurturing and sympathetic and even finding time to feel beautiful. For the male, the stereotypical role is to be a financial provider whereby society expects him to be assertive, competitive, independent, courageous and always an initiator of sex (see Cusack, 2016). All these stereotypical attributes can prove to be harmful to one gender because they can stifle individual expression and creativity, as well as hinder personal and professional growth.

Gender is learned not only from school but, as the weight of scientific evidence demonstrates, from adults. As with gender roles, “socialising agents – parents, teachers, peers, religious leaders, and the media pass along gender stereotypes” from one generation to the next (Srichand, 2016, p. 12). Generally, gender appears to be one of the fundamental ways that we classify people whether consciously or unconsciously. In the early 1960s, the feminist movement emerged as a powerful socio-political force that began to lobby for the rights of women and minorities (see Srichand, 2016). In other words, the feminist movement has fought to challenge and redefine traditional stereotypical gender roles. The feminist movement, among other groups, has been vocal and has led efforts to change aspects of prevailing gender roles that are believed to be oppressive or inaccurate. Currently, there is an ongoing debate as to what extent gender roles and their biological aspects are determined, and

to what extent they are socially constructed. For example, in a Turkish English textbook, *The Other Side of the Mountain* (2000), a girl is pictured dreaming of her wedding day while a boy is pictured imagining becoming a doctor. It is due to such stereotypes that it is crucial for learners to understand what it means to be a boy or a girl in society, and how such gender perpetuation may be overcome through education.

According to a UNESCO report, Flood (2016) concludes that gender bias is rife in textbooks around the world and is undermining girls' motivation and achievement in schools. As alluded to earlier in Chapter 1, schools often operate with the intent to reproduce the values and privileges of the dominant culture. I chose two schools grounded on the power and roles which textbooks carry in terms of gender representations, as well as the potential impact of the issue under investigation, namely the socialisation of Namibian learners.

According to Christine (2000), human beings are perceived through a mirror of gender polarisation and assign certain norms and expectations about verbal and social behaviour to males and females. As a result, there seems to be a strong tendency for gender stereotyping and gender bias set in some literary texts prescribed for schools in Namibia. Occasionally, gender expectations or stereotypes shape our thoughts and interactions with others in subtle, yet perceptible ways. As an English classroom practitioner, I chose to investigate gender mediation in order to reveal how schools, teachers and learners may engage in a discourse of gender bias unknowingly, and to investigate how one might create an awareness of gender issues as portrayed in schools' textbooks. Stromquist (2007) states that the attention to gender in society has passed through several phases. Initially, according to Stromquist (2007, p.5), this was a concern with differences between men and women and the extent to which these

might be “based on biological attributes.” The attention further centred on the socialisation processes women and men experienced in various societies.

Scholars, such as Ferree and Hall, (1996, p. 935) referred to gender socialisation as “ongoing, multi-level processes of social expectations, control, and struggle that sustain and subvert gender systems”. By such a conceptualisation, gender is not merely characteristic of individuals but of societies (Connell, 1993; Connell, 1996; Ferree & Hall, 1996). As a result, one is likely to believe that multiple institutions impact on gender formation viz; the family, the peers, the workplace, the school and also mass media. In the Namibian context, and as a developing country, gender representation is still a matter of concern. Therefore, this study is crucial to unpacking the multiple discourses in question, using Critical Discourse Analysis to understand how teachers inform learners’ beliefs and understandings of masculinities and femininities in a literature class.

Generally, gender stereotypes generate belief systems that serve the purpose of demystifying human relationships (Horner, 1997). Such belief systems could mean that men and women welcome stereotypical roles because they may offer explanations on why they accept gender the way it is generally portrayed. At times, women may see their culture and traditions through a positive and negative lens. This is to say, that their culture and tradition are seen as life-giving but at the same time, a restriction of their rights. Wilentz (1992) stresses that “women are powerful figures, economically secure and socially vibrant, yet they are limited in their choices by restrictive cultural milieu” (p. 7). For instance, in some societies it is accepted that a woman should never challenge a man because it is believed to show disrespect to men. Wilentz (1992) claims that sometimes young women are silenced by an elder woman who warns of the possibilities of disaster arising from disobeying one’s husband. Equally,

some women's problems and issues do not get much consideration in the whole cycle of male-dominated structures. Davies (1986, p. 242) argues that "[t]he condition of women in African society is fraught with contradictions, tensions and oppositions, most arising out of male domination whereas others intrinsic to the organizational structures of particular societies." Women are sometimes portrayed as easy-going regarding sex.

At times, women are not represented in a respectful way in some fictional literature. Although they may want to reflect social reality in some cultures, some authors failed to hide the traditional patriarchal mentality of looking at women as loose and easily engaged in sexual relations. Some cultural practices also seem to disadvantage women as they have no choice but to be exchanged as a commodity. For example, a young woman could be arranged for marriage by her parents to alleviate poverty in her family. Usually, the young girl is forced to marry an elderly man (even the age of her father). As Weedon (1997, p. 21) puts it, "Gender is not innate, not genetically determined, but socially produced." Therefore, the meaning of gender is produced in localised contexts and through power relations. In addition, gender is seen as a product of social doings which according to Gal (1997, p. 176) are a "system of culturally constructed relations of power, produced and reproduced in interaction between and among men and women". Given the fact that gender is viewed as a social, cultural and historical construct, it is not surprising that normative masculinities and femininities, as well as beliefs and ideas about relations between the sexes, may vary across cultures (see Pavlenko and Piller, 2001, p. 22). For instance, in every culture or society, some specific roles or characteristics are attributed to either men or women, resulting in gender differences.

There is no doubt that power relations exist between and within all groups. Societies tend to divide the social world into 'us' and 'them' and identify with certain groups and categories

(2007). What will become evident is that not only is all knowledge historically situated and power relations existent between and within all groups, but also that the dichotomies of agency/structure and individual/society are not as clear-cut or as helpful as we might imagine. A social psychologist, Brown (2007), views the individual as one whose thought processes are at once formed by and help to create the world they occupy. On the other hand, the person and their social world are comprised through social practices and language. People have a wide range of sources from which they interpret the world in which they live. The information about our world comes from personal interactions with others, from our knowledge and experience, cultural conventions and precedents in our social world. The way in which people make sense of the world is therefore discursively mediated (McGregory & Threadgold, 2003).

One may look at how the social world of objects and events is constituted in talk and text and how social identities are constructed using cultural discourses already in existence. For social discourse, the focus is on what people say and how they say it. They are interested in what existing cultural discourse resources are employed by individuals and how they are being used. The focus is on interpretive repertoires, subject positions and ideological dilemmas (Langdrige, 2007). Gender in this context is seen as an organised principle in all social institutions. As a result, gender dynamics in our societies are likely to remain both obvious and often overlooked. Human beings tend to generalise about gender attributes, differences and roles of individuals and/or groups (see Cusack, 2013). Gender stereotypes are often perpetuated when people automatically apply gender assumptions to others, regardless of evidence.

2.3 Studies on gender stereotypes in education and schooling

Schools, classrooms and educational practices are useful sites for studying not only the micro-dimensions of classroom talk, but also the ways in which social structures are reproduced at macro-levels (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977; Gee, 1996; Collins & Blot, 2003; Collins, 2009). Schools are the first places where children are exposed to and interact with people with various identities. At these abodes of learning, enforcing gendered identities and roles is detrimental to not just children but also to society as a whole. Conveying to girls that their bodies serve as “distractions” tends to alienate their physicality from their being. They begin to question, undermine, and negate their own selves (Jha, 2017, p. 3). Schools thus become agents of violating individuals’ sense of dignity rather than upholding it. The absence of such scornful comments for their male counterparts drives home the essence of patriarchy. On the other hand, it makes boys aware that they are in a privileged position, for their bodies are not meant for scrutiny or reprimand. The moment when children enter primary classrooms should be when a conversation on gender begins. Acknowledging this identity is the first step to doing away with false assumptions and generalisations based on it.

Some schools’ prescribed texts still show power relations where males are overrepresented and are likely to take more powerful roles than women. Gender bias manifests itself in all spheres of people’s social life, such as education, family and even at the workplace (Skliar, 2007). There seems to be an imbalance of gender representation in some schools’ prescribed books. Ifegbesan (2010) gave evidence of some primary schools’ English textbooks used in Nigeria, showing only males in exciting situations, with males being the possessors and females the possessed. For example, boys were shown in active behaviours, girls in passive, and the importance of male characters became greater as the level of the reader rose. In a related study, Subrahmanian (2002) found that teachers and curricula in general reinforce

social bias and discriminatory practices against women through the content and methods of teaching employed in schools. He further observed that in Ethiopia and Guinea, girls spend more time on fetching water and cleaning classrooms than they spend on other educational activities. Biraimah's (1982) study of teacher-student interaction patterns over a period of several months in a co-education secondary school in Togo found that teachers had little regard for the ability, character and potential of female learners.

Unconsciously, one may witness teachers most often describing their female learners in negative terms with phrases such as "disruptive behaviour" or "lack of interest in school", while the male classmates are acknowledged in the positive with words or phrases such as "responsible", "hard working" and "scholarly" (Ifegbesan, 2010, p. 14). One may find that in many schools, female learners do all the sweeping work before class. According to Sadker and Sadker (1982), many teachers operate with preconceptions about the skills, behaviour and performance of girls and boys based on their gender. From these reviews, it could be inferred that most studies have focused on content analysis of textbooks and curriculum materials and gender differentiation in academic achievements, while teachers' gender stereotypes, beliefs and classroom practices have been neglected. However, it has become a priority to develop studies oriented toward understanding the nature of teachers and learners in classroom interactions.

Of significance is the work put forward by Fairclough and Wodak (1997), referring to "particular ways of representing and constructing society which reproduce unequal relations of power, relations of domination and exploitation" (p. 275). Consequently, education and whatever is involved within it are deemed to be the important elements capable of maintaining social power and perpetuating inequality (Mkuchu, 2004).

One of the primary elements constituting the curriculum is that of schools' prescribed textbooks, which can manipulate social power and gender stereotypes (see Kobia, 2009, Mineshima, 2008). Igene (2013) examines the gender stereotypes in elementary English textbooks in Nigeria with respect to their validity in representing the reality of sex roles in the society. The problem with gender stereotyping is that certain assumptions are made regarding males and females in schools' prescribed textbooks. The drama *God of Women* is no exception in terms of perpetuating issues of gender stereotyping.

Learners learn about gender roles and identities from their role models (teachers) and carry them for the rest of their lives. In other words, a school seems to be a factory for creating patriarchy, where inequality in gender representation is more male-dominant. Much of the "gender construction in schools creates very distinct notions of what it means to be a man and a woman, with polarised attributes for femininity and masculinity" (Stromquist, 2007, p. 30). Women are found to be represented negatively in some literary texts and are often the subject of literary works. In most literary texts including plays, according to Gwajima (2011), female characters are claimed to assume subservient roles such as housewives. All these can be directly related to the way learners are taught about gender representations and roles at school.

Some schools' prescribed textbooks, literary texts and dramas/plays appear to contain gender bias. For instance, some literary texts show a distorted view of women by portraying them unfairly, inaccurately and negatively, resulting in opting to describe their sometimes less influential male counterparts. Schools may not only be seen as agents in teaching and reinforcing cultural expectations for males and females, but should also be seen as a site with a considerable degree of autonomy to produce new and progressive identities on gender representation at all levels of society (Apple and Weiss, 1998).

2.4 Studies on gender stereotypes in teaching of English as a subject

Some of the English language textbooks used in schools appear to reinforce gender stereotypes which are prevalent in some societies. English Foreign Language/English Second Language (EFL/ESL) textbooks can be one of the great influences in contributing to cultural prejudices and personal biases that learners can absorb in their learning (Dominguez, 2003). School textbooks can be powerful influential tools which construct social identities. Kobia (2009) further explains that schools' prescribed textbooks play a vital role in forming the learners' worldview of gender in society. As a result, the manner in which genders are portrayed in literary texts can highly affect the images that learners develop of male and female roles in society.

Of the utmost importance is literature, specifically appropriate ways of teaching a selected text/drama and how these play a role in shaping the way learners think and relate to events in their own situations. It is likely that learners are introduced to different environments through literature and as a result, they are also introduced to new ideas, concepts, cultures and traditions that may be foreign to them. Madondo (2012, p. 6) contends that "through the teaching, learning and studying of literature, teachers are presented with an opportunity to develop learners' critical engagement with the relationship between the past and the present". In other words, the art of literature plays a vital role in empowering learners to understand and interrogate the past's relation to the present, through teachers' pedagogical practices and their knowledge of literature. As a result, and if taught and studied critically, the teaching of any literary text (that includes drama) can be a source of knowledge which will enable learners to make critical judgments about the society they live in. Learners need to challenge some of the gender roles portrayed in texts. This can be a way of negotiating their gender differences, a means of constructing the self and equally a way of relating to others as fellow humans.

In the classroom context where literature is taught as a subject, learners can widen their understanding of their own culture and also learn to accept and accommodate the culture and traditions of others. Thus, it is of importance that learners put effort into interpreting the literary texts at their disposal. It is also equally important for English Literature teachers to instil the skills in learners necessary for them to interpret the literary works presented to them. However, this might be challenging as some English teachers, according to Mabunda (2008), find it difficult to bring their learners to an appreciation of English literature. Bracken (2006) is of the view that literature explains human nature themes in literary works which inform learners to critically reflect on humanity and understand possible reasons why people act in a certain manner in different situations. Therefore, the mediation of literature in any English classroom should serve as social and imaginative engagement with learners to shape their understanding of different themes (particularly those related to gender) presented in literary works.

It is a fact that often authors attempt to confront the realities and challenges facing communities through their art of writing. Thus, literature can be seen as a tool to help learners study and explain societal phenomena and use imaginative engagement to either accept or challenge the presentation of females and males in literary works. Of interest for this study is how teachers teach the drama *God of Women* and how learners engage with the portrayal of male and female issues presented therein. Again of interest for the purpose of this study is to explore and critically interrogate the way in which learners engage with the drama in the classroom, and gain an insight into how the drama fosters their critical thinking.

If gender inequality appears in textbooks, “EFL students will be led to identify themselves with gender bias” (Liao & Huang, 2003, p. 124). Language is seen as the main mode through

which most sources of information about the social world are provided (see Kress & Leeuwen, 2001). Language, as a discursive process is the only means by which people make sense of the world. For example, (Jewitt & Kress, 2003; Norris, 2004; Taylor, 2006) indicated that modes of meaning making such as gesture, intonation and image are crucial because instead of drawing meanings passively from pre-existing knowledge of the world, language plays an active role in classifying the phenomena and experiences through which individuals construct, understand and represent reality.

For example, in their article *The Representation of Gender in English Textbooks in Uganda*, Sakwa and Barton (2012) revealed how positive female role models are underrepresented and how the language of the text is not inclusive to females. The words and phrases that are used to represent women in literary texts carry some strong messages and implications which devalue women in society. In an essay, *Gender roles in Education*, St Rosemary Educational Institution (2017) claims that textbooks show males being more successful than females. Moreover, teachers set assignments which reinforce gender stereotypes and sex roles. A further claim indicates that “masculine” behaviour is reinforced while “feminine” behaviour is condemned (p. 3).

Contrary to some studies on gender representation in literary texts, Yasa (2010) on “Gender Stereotyping and Gendered Discourse in a Hong Kong Primary English Textbook Series”, analysed the content and language of published Hong Kong English language textbooks for grade 7 and revealed that males and females were almost equally represented in both illustrations and texts. Another finding revealed that those who selected textbooks for schools were aware of the gender stereotypes and biases in text contents and illustrations. However, Yasa (2010) observed that in the exploration of the treatment of women in texts, women were

often assigned stereotypically emotional reactions and were also represented with stereotypically different characters or personality traits and occupational roles, as opposed to their male counterparts.

Using content analysis on three international and local ELT literary texts, Tajeddin and Enayat (2010) conducted a study on “Gender Representation and Stereotyping in ELT Literary Text: A Critical Image Analysis”, and revealed that gender as an important social issue has been invoked with hidden ideologies, by which a specific gender is shown to be superior to the other. The three international and local ELT literary texts include: New Headway, Top Notch, and Iran English Literature. Analyses were used to find gender presentation in ELT literary texts and it was revealed that men were represented as more active, competent, socially important and powerful. In contrast, Tajeddin and Enayat (2010) found that women appeared as less active and “more reactive, objects to be scrutinised, objects of desire, bread-takers, and socially less powerful” (p. 63).

The question one would pose is, who is responsible in prescribing literary texts for schools? Those that are in the selection committee, are they aware of the gender stereotypes that certain textbooks carry? In some instances, prescribed texts for schools are selected by a Language Advisory Committee and the teachers who would teach them have no say in the selected texts, nor on the learners who will read them. Although there are exceptions, gender representation in literature generally depicts more power and better social status for men. Gender is part of our identity which consciously and unconsciously affects our self-image and interpersonal attitudes (see Kendal 2004). As Butler (1993) pointed out, gender is a pervasive social and cultural regulating mechanism that is part of our everyday life, our thinking and our speaking.

Bhuiyan (2007, p. 3) claims that textbooks are full of stereotypical representations of “man’s and women’s role, many a time wrong historical facts are mentioned and very patriarchal in its approach to education for children.” For instance, men have been dominating societies for centuries and women became subordinate to roles assigned to them by men. When learners consume a text which reflects a certain society in which one gender dominates another, learners tend to conform to the behaviour of the characters as portrayed in the text and/or drama. In many examples, a world is described in which boys and men are smart, brave, intelligent, inventive and powerful, but girls and women are silent, passive and invisible. The words, phrases and images displayed in literary texts, dramas and textbooks may have an effect on learners’ views on gender issues. The way characters are portrayed in dramas may have infinite messages or values that may be passed on to learners, and if unmediated, these may result in stereotypical thinking, inevitably building into hatred and intolerance.

2.5 Studies on gender stereotypes in the teaching of drama

Drama is a species of literature whose basic medium is spoken language. Dramas depict a reality that is sometimes contradictory with actual social reality. As a mimetic form, drama is believed to imitate life. Elfa (2015) posits that drama has the mimetic impulse of literary art, which makes it appeal to people and sees it thrive on action. Drama offers an arena to judge and question the idea of female empowerment (Haq, Munawar, Ghaffar & Ali, 2013). Drama activity is believed to put learners’ imaginations to work, and teachers experience drama’s value as “a powerful teaching and learning strategy that invites learners of all ages to move collaboratively inside classroom content, human issues, and significant events” (Dowdy & Kaplan, 2011, p. 2). When teachers harness drama’s power with accurate learning outcomes, a precise structure, and appropriate drama techniques, drama activity can become a fertile method for integrating reading, writing, speaking, listening and art experiences. Inside the

imagined space that is drama's domain, students use their own lives and perceptions as a supply of ideas for taking on roles, and through their interactions with others, dramatize and reflect on the experiences and circumstances which people face throughout a lifetime. The ways in which teachers themselves mediate meanings embedded in drama is even more critical. At times, teachers may feel that they treat both boys and girls equally and that their gender is irrelevant, a position Stromquist (2007) calls "gender blindness", as it provides a false sense of objectivity and impartiality often at variance with actual practice.

Drama has a close relationship with the teaching of the English language and its link to literature. Drama is a powerful tool in developing learners' communicative ability. Generally speaking, drama is learner-centric because it puts the learners in a position to do most of the communicating and interacting instead of their teacher. Drama plays a critical role in gender socialisation of learners and entrenching of attitudes and perceptions relating to how learners view themselves as human beings, as social beings and most importantly, as males and females.

Drama, in itself encourage learners to learn how to influence others and how to be empathy. It provides learners with an opportunity to work together cooperatively on a shared life as it is deemed as a 'centre of existence' (Sunderland, 2001, p. 7).

Moreover, in dramas where a conversation is mainly in dialogue form, females were found to speak less and perform a narrower range of discourse roles (see Sunderland, Cowley, Rahim, Leontzakou & Shattuck, 2000). It is indisputable that gender representation in society and particularly the mediation of gender representation in the classroom has a significant role in our social interactions.

For instance, the drama *God of Women* is to be analysed in terms of imbalanced gender representations, as there are instances of real-life conversations therein and they can be made use of in different ways in the classroom context, i.e. being role played, interpreted by learners or mediated differently by teachers. The study attempted to find out to what extent women are represented in the drama. Mustapha (2013) argues that drama written in the form of text plays an important role as it reflects certain ideological values that society holds or “a subversion of the cultural norms” (p. 18). It is for this reason that *God of Women* is chosen to investigate the mediation of gender representation. Set in a rural eastern part of Namibia where patriarchy is dominant, the drama grapples with issues of social power through language. According to Manna (2011), “drama inspires learners to grapple with different (often opposing) points of view, beliefs and values, to play out alternate solutions to human problems and dilemmas, and to understand the fundamental issues that enliven content area topics and themes” (p. 5).

In their studies on *Dramatised Representation of Empowered Women: A Critical Analysis of the Drama*, Bilquees Kaur, Haq, Munawar, Ghaffar and Ali (2013) revealed that women’s status as equal members of society has only been marginally acknowledged and there is a considerable gender disparity against women, “...a dominant factor seen as hampering women’s empowerment”. Despite numerous calls by feminists regarding gender roles and gender issues in society, Mohammad and Mehdi (2014) concluded that women are still facing all kinds of discrimination. The main reason is that, even today, when the requirements of society and women have changed drastically, the patriarchal mind-set, outdated traditions and cultural norms continue to hold ground. As a result, women’s participation in the social, economic and political spheres has been ‘substantially curtailed’ (Lazar, 2005, p. 17). It is this

kind of gender disparity which raises many questions, particularly when it comes to granting equal status to deprived women.

2.6 Gender representation in literary texts

Textbooks play a very significant role in shaping views about the roles of both women and men in social settings. Texts construct inequality between males and females through their portrayal of the two genders. In his studies on *Gender Representation in Student Textbooks in the Context of Democracy Practice using Critical Discourse Analysis*, Yasa (2016) concluded that women are described as the second and inferior party, while men are described as first and superior. In her studies in *An Analysis of the Way Black African Women in Cohabitative Relationships are Portrayed by African Female Authors*, Nashongo (2016) concludes that literary texts describe most women in traditional roles, such as cooking, washing, child-bearing and so on, while men engage in more challenging and interesting roles. Inequality between men and women in-text is part of knowledge constructed by authors to reflect the reality of a certain society. To elaborate, “cognitive psychology, the knowledge construct becomes knowledge embedded in their unconscious or long term memory (LTM)” that will be used when the students grow up (Yasa, 2016, p. 341).

The representation and construction of gender inequality cannot be separated from the ideology of the author or dominant group. However, the ideology may not necessarily reflect the author’s ideas but bring to the fore the experiences of society through literature, because literature is seen as a vehicle through which reality is expressed in the form of fiction. Authors use language to convey an ideology. Thus it is indisputable that the phrases, sentences and illustrations in many textbooks are believed to be language designed to convey ideology. According to Yasa (2016), learning language is viewed as constructing knowledge and

interaction between learners and teachers. Language, discourse and power shape who we are, how we think, and how we understand the world, and thus produce individuals as subjects (Shor, 2009).

Discourses produce certain effects like masculinity and femininity, because “women and men behave within a certain range of parameters when defining themselves as gendered subjects” Mills (2004, p. 15). Notash and Kooshavar (2013) believe that gender differences are actually a fundamental fact of sociolinguistic life and thus it is not surprising that they are often reflected in language (p. 791). As a socially constructed variable, gender seems to spread to every corner of the language classroom (Sunderland, 2000).

Textbooks are still riddled with gender bias and stereotypical representations of both females and males. Using content analysis of gender representation in foreign language textbooks, Sunderland (2001) reviewed studies in the 1970s and 1980s and found out that males were overrepresented and occupied more powerful roles than women. In other words, there is an imbalance of gender representation in most studies, with women more often presented in inferior roles. The way gender is represented in textbooks will have an effect on learners’ gender identities and language learning opportunities (Sunderland, 2001). Textbooks are powerful agents of socialisation.

Khorsand and Salmani (2014) claim that every text is conditioned and inscribed within a given discourse and ideology. By using CDA, this study will unpack the way social power, abuse, dominance and inequality are enacted and reproduced by what Sunderland (2000) describes as “text and talk” in the drama *God of Women*. CDA will be explicitly discussed in Chapter 3. Ogunsina (2006) sees literary texts as a lens that reflects particular socio-cultural realities regarded as common in society, and therefore often received uncritically:

The sociology of literature postulates that literary works do not exist in isolation from the society that produces them; neither the artist and his language, nor his ideas are independent of his society... [and therefore not immune from critique]. (p. 41)

In many studies on gender representation in the classroom, it is shown that teachers are often unaware of how their mediation of gender roles and issues in the classroom may influence and shape learners' thinking. Teachers often use pronouns 'he' or 'she' to prove their gender biasness. One may find out that the examples given mostly in the classroom is one-gendered.

Gender bias in texts will have an effect on learners' gender identity. When teachers talk around the text, they seem to focus on what is talked about in the text while glossing over those parts of it that can be seen to contain "traditional biases", what one might refer to as "gender blindness" (Sunderland, Cowleey & Shattuck, 2000). Pavlenko and Piller (2001) highlight the fact that gender representation in language teaching materials has for a long time been the focus of attention in the field of applied linguistics and teaching English as a Second/Foreign Language. Pavlenko and Piller (2001, p. 38) point out: "Content analysis of English Second Language (ESL) published in the 1970s–80s, revealed that many texts stereotyped male and female roles and excluded women from the narrative through omitting females in texts and illustrations". Literature, according to Eagleton (1996, p. 6):

...represents linguistic expressions of social and personal representations of beliefs with non-homogenous social ideologies which hold literary language as a set of deviations from a [conversation] norm.

Thus, the ideas and beliefs held by authors in the text may not be homogeneous to a particular society. "Literature", in Eagleton's (1996, p. 7) words, "is derived from strong undercurrents of social ideologies representing strongly rooted (often invisible) belief systems". This is the reason why a critical approach to mediating literary texts within the classroom cannot be

marginalised. Hardison and Karen (2013) posit that literature supports the assumptions of social ideologies by which select groups exercise and maintain power over the social construct.

When mediating issues of gender representation in a classroom, teachers need to be conscious about the messages they convey to learners regarding gender issues. For example, the negative messages teachers imply can have several effects on learners and in particular, female learners. Becoming more aware of our own stereotypes about gender and how they influence our perceptions and reactions to individual learners can help address problems of learners responding differently to male and female gender issues in a classroom. Often, gender expectations or stereotypes shape our thoughts and interactions with others in subtle yet perceptible ways. As such, gender dynamics in the classroom paradoxically remain both obvious and often overlooked.

The effect of gender dynamics may become more prominent depending on how teachers teach and how learners learn about issues of gender representation in the class. In other words, if learners read about stereotypical roles in the drama, they may think that this is the way they should behave in or react to certain situations, and at the same time, they may adjust their actions accordingly. They may think that women have different roles than men solely because of their gender. For example, in *God of Women*, the eldest wife is made not to answer to the Chief (her husband) as it shows disrespect. This is to say, she is forbidden to talk back. Women are being subjects of their husbands and should not question their partners regardless of the disrespect heaped upon them. The next part discusses classroom interactions as an environment where issues of gender are reconstructed.

2.7 Classroom interaction

The classroom is a site where gender stereotypes are unconsciously forming. Often, teachers perpetuate male dominance in the classroom by making males the focus of instructions, giving them more frequent attention (see Frawley, 2005). At times, you may find a teacher giving examples of a certain narration in a drama, and yet he/she is displaying the same gender bias in the classroom as presented in the drama/text. Many teachers may claim that they follow the principle of equity in the classroom. However, an alarming majority of teachers at all levels subconsciously reproduce stereotypes such as “male learners are good at science, whereas female learners are good at humanities” (Papaioannou, 2015, p. 2). I agree with Papaioannou that, as teachers, we need to be purposeful in how we communicate our expectations to learners.

If we continue to subconsciously perpetuate gender stereotypes, it will take great effort to discover this, identify how we are doing it, and change. Moreover, the separation of girls and boys into two distinct groups as soon as they move out of the classroom (in some cases even in classroom sitting arrangements) needs to be reconsidered. Whether in the science lab or on the sports field, choices, opportunities and affiliations cannot be pre-determined by gender. Students of all genders working or playing together as a team shouldn't be an unusual spectacle. It must be seen as natural because it is natural for human beings of different identities to cooperate and coexist. I recollect being called to the school's seminar room in Class V, along with all the other girls, and being spoken to about menstruation. On returning to the classroom and being asked by the boys about why we had been called, we found ourselves being secretive about the meeting. It was not because all of us instinctively thought of menstruation as something to be hidden; it was perhaps the result of the segregation that took place before a conversation on a normal bodily process. To keep boys out of the room

that day probably hindered a lot of them in understanding a gender other than their own. The existence of stereotypes makes it very difficult for innovation and reason to find space.

Consequently, teachers are not likely to offer the same opportunities to all learners. The reason behind this could be the education they received both at home and at school, which steadily and permanently instilled in them the given models of male and female learners. Teachers may not be aware of the role of language and emotions in affecting cultural understandings of gender. Often, they may think that asking learners to identify gender issues in the drama book would correspond to the goal of teaching critical thinking skills through literature. Sometimes, teachers talk about gender on a spectrum of empowerment that allows students who neither enact traditional gender roles nor identify with the oppressor or the oppressed in typical power dynamics to explore gender in multi-faceted ways (see also Coat and Trite, 2009).

I believe that it is best for the teaching community to awaken from this myth and change the teaching-learning process towards equity in the classroom and school at large. We must all get rid of the given models of maleness and femaleness and create a new model without bias or stereotypes in our classrooms. In every education setting, the teacher-learner interactions are considered of great importance, both in quantity and quality. In terms of classroom practices, Lo (2015) points out that teachers may shun the different ways in which learners group themselves according to gender when they are given group-work activities to do in the class. Her study revealed that teachers can create mixed-gender work groups that support the formation of dynamic gendered identified as well as promote successful cross-gender working relationships. She thus argues that it is through such relationships that learners may start to construct a non-gendered society that will not limit them based on traditional roles of gender

identity. She further believes that a teacher's philosophy of education greatly influences his or her actions towards gender stereotyping, which can either reproduce or challenge dominant gender stereotype (p. 13). The way learners look at gender relations and roles, class, history and identity are dependent on how the teacher looks at these issues.

Teachers may have separate identities outside the school, yet may carry the same ideologies about gender relations within the classroom. In other words, if a teacher is very caste biased, then the learners tend to see caste very differently, and if a certain teacher has strong and traditional notions towards girls, then the learners start learning these and inculcating them in their lives. Bhuiyan (2007) believes that a learner's understanding of gender-specific roles becomes fixed when schooling starts and reinforced every day by the behaviours of teachers. When gender bias gets reinforced at school, learners are highly likely to start being actors of the patriarchal system and carrying it forward long after they have left school.

Gender issues in the 21st century may no longer limit learners or manoeuvre them into traditional roles due to a lack of options (Paynter, 2011). In the 21st century, many countries, particularly African countries, are advocating for accessibility to education for all people in order to promote gender equality. How we conceive womanhood and manhood is no longer the same. The world we prepare for learners has an element of hybridity. Change toward gender equality is uneven, nonlinear and at times tied to patterns of feminist activism (see McCabe, Fairchild, Grauerholz, Pescosolido & Trope, 2011). Schwendenman (2012) stresses that both the teachers and learners have unique responsibilities in a 21st century classroom. However, those responsibilities should not play a dominating role over one another. This is the reason why Hook (2003, p. 16) contends that it is essential for learners to understand that the purpose of "education is not to dominate, or prepare them to be dominators, but rather to

create the conditions for freedom”. Hook (2003, p. 16) further emphasises that “caring educators open the mind, allowing students to embrace a world of knowing that is always subject to change and challenge”.

Some scholars echo concerns regarding boys dominating in the classroom space and receiving more of the teacher’s attention than girls. Gwajima (2011, p. 59) reveals that “boys are reported to be asked to contribute in the classroom more than girls and even teachers focused their questions on boys rather than girls”. Abraham and Sommerkorn (n.d., p. 20) argue that although some barriers to women’s equality were removed since the transformation of the secondary school system into co-educational schools, “girls have to pay a price, both in emotional and cognitive terms, for having to accommodate a male-oriented educational system and as a result their abilities and potentials are not being fully developed”.

The Association of Local Authority in Namibia (ALAN) (2008) analysed gender strategy for local government in Namibia. The analysis was to give effect to government commitments to gender equality at the local level, through practical steps for ensuring that gender is mainstreamed in and through local government. In his *Comparative Analysis of the Depiction of Women in Sifiso Nyathi’s God of Women and William Shakespeare’s Othello*, Masule (2014) evaluated the use of literary techniques the authors use in their portrayal of the female characters in these plays. He revealed that both Nyathi and Shakespeare use gender bias in depicting female characters in their respective plays. A further finding reveals that women are portrayed as sex objects for their husband pleasure in a polygamous marriage, and also as exchange materials for wealth (p. i).

A study by Andima and Tjiramanga (2010) explored the oppression of women in selected narratives by Namibian female authors. Another study by Ambunda and de Klerk (2008) focused on women and customs in Namibia. A recent study by Edwards (2016) investigated gender-based violence and masculinity in Namibia. All of these studies revealed that, within the Namibian context, social structure produced violent masculinities, and pointed to the need to investigate pedagogic practices used by teachers to mediate gender-specific issues embedded in texts. How teachers mediate the construction of gender in these literary texts prescribed for a specific grade is thus particularly crucial in contexts still predominantly traditional in the ways that maleness and femaleness are viewed, enacted and understood.

If teachers' pedagogic practices are uncritical of gender-biased representations in set works, there is a risk that the next generation of women will still be bound by baseless male superiority and female inferiority complexes. This is the reason why when children are old enough to go to school, their classroom becomes their biggest influence, and thus begins their exposure to the hidden curriculum of gender. Mustaph (2013, p. 24) specifically described such a curriculum as "the set of knowledge that is transmitted through the roles men and women play in the staffing of schools, the way teachers treat male and female students, the manner in which adults interact with others". No study, however, has investigated the mediation of gender representation in the drama *God of Women* and how meanings in such a drama are unpacked within Namibian classrooms.

Gender stereotypes create multiple discourses, where the discourse of masculinity is constructed and reconstructed overtly within different social and cultural domains. Although discourse theories on masculinity recognise that both femininities and masculinities are constituted in relation to one another, it appears that being masculine holds more social status

than being feminine. Marsh and Lammers (2011) argue that, unlike the discourse of femininity, “discourses of masculinity are represented as stable and non-negotiable” (p. 93). Men tend to dominate women, have confrontational behaviours towards women, are aggressive and often remind women of their only responsibility: to bear children. As a method of analysis, “Critical Discourse Analysis allows for the study of the Discourse of masculinity through an analysis of social practices” (Marsh & Lammers, 2011, p. 93). The construction of masculinity in any literary class may shape the understanding of learners on what it means to be a boy or girl.

2.8 Outline of the chapter

The purpose of this chapter was to present an overview of the literature relevant for this study. Firstly, the chapter began by defining and discussing mediation using Feuerstein’s theory of mediation. Secondly, it highlighted the assumptions of gender stereotypes generally speaking. Thirdly, this chapter examined gender stereotypes in education and schooling. Schools are seen as agents of socialisation and gender is highly likely to be perpetuated through education and schooling. Moreover, gender stereotypes in teaching of English as a subject and how gender stereotypes in teaching a drama were elaborated. Finally, the chapter looked at teachers’ mediation through classroom interactions. Chapter 3 will discuss the theories, analytical tools and concepts framing this study.

CHAPTER 3

THEORETICAL AND CONCEPTUAL LENSES TO UNDERSTAND THE PHENOMENON

The purpose of Chapter 2 was to discuss the body of scholarship available concerning the phenomenon under study in this thesis. Firstly, the chapter examines how gender representations in literary texts are mediated by teachers and in what ways such mediation practices shape learners' understandings of gender issues. Secondly, the chapter offers relatively elaborate details with regard to gender stereotypes and roles as represented in literary texts. What emerged is the extent to which such mediation constructs gender view cultures in the classroom and how some schools' prescribed textbooks perpetuate gender bias. Thirdly, the chapter engages on how drama is a powerful tool in depicting social reality. Finally, the chapter discussed how classroom interactions and teachers may unconsciously reproduce gender stereotypes.

The purpose of Chapter 3 is to introduce the theoretical lenses that were used to generate, analyse and interpret data. It begins by discussing the relationship between the research questions and the theories selected. It then discusses and offers relatively elaborate details on the nature and characteristics of each theory. The chapter then moves to discussing each concept as it pertains to each theory. The emphasis in this instance is the extent to which each concept aligns with data in terms of answering the research questions. The next section discusses feminism, one of the theories used in the study.

3.1 Feminism

Feminist theory was used to frame this study since it is concerned with issues of gender construction and representation in various social institutions, including schools. Its relevance to this study is a result of its focus on ways in which gender identities are mediated by teachers in *God of Women*, a prescribed Grade 9 drama for Namibian schools. Feminism, Womanism and Stiwanism were used to understand how *God of Women* represent gender roles. CDA

For feminist theorists, gender differentiation is the dominant discourse among competing discourses. Given the fact that the study used two schools as research sites in rural areas where traditional issues of patriarchy still exist, feminism granted the study a framework that lends itself to generating data relevant to research questions. The study made available data that facilitated an understanding of the ways in which teachers' mediation of gender representation practices in the drama *God of Women* shape learners' understanding of gender representation. In addition, feminism was chosen because it regards gender differentiation as one of the most pervasive discourses across many cultures in terms of its systemic power and discrimination between human beings according to their gender and sexuality. Given the fact that *God of Women* is a drama prescribed for schools in Namibia, the study aimed to understand how gendered issues in this literary text are mediated by teachers using a CDA lens.

Eagleton (1996) believes that feminists critique gender representation because they believe that gender and sexuality are central themes in literature and other sorts of discourse, and any critical account which suppresses them is seriously defective. Literature, according to Eagleton (1996, p. 6), "represents linguistic expressions of social and personal representations

of beliefs with non-homogenous social ideologies which hold literary language as a set of deviations from a [conversation] norm”.

Feminism is mainly associated with women’s rights and it is usually defined as an active desire to change women’s position in society in order to improve the quality of their lives. Masule (2014) defines feminism as a philosophy that seeks to remedy the injustices and imbalances that women undergo at the hands of a patriarchal society. Humm (1992), as cited in Ebunoluwa (2009, p. 227) states that “the word feminism stands for a belief in sexual equality combined with a commitment to transform society”. Within literary studies, Cuddon (1991, p. 338) sees feminism as “an attempt to describe and interpret (or reinterpret) women’s experiences as depicted in various kinds of literature.” Sircar (1995, p. 11-2) believes that “[f]eminism is the political theory and practice to free all women: women of colour, working class women, poor women, lesbians, old women, as well as white and economically privileged heterosexual women”.

By looking at definitions of feminism above, it seems that feminism rotates primarily around women’s experiences in society, which could be a perspective of feminists towards their social interpretation. Rhode (2003, p. 33) believes that “the female subjectivity lies not in femininity as a privileged nearness, the body or the unconscious, but rather in that political, theoretical self-analysing practice by which the relations of the subject in social reality can be re-articulated from the historical experience of women”. Feminists are of the view that patriarchy in all aspects of life is viewed as the source of social inequalities and injustices which are likely to affect the lives of women. Thus, feminists are seeking to remove all the barriers to equal social, political and economic opportunities for women. Feminists reject the notion that a woman’s worth is determined by her gender and that women are inherently less

intelligent than men. In a nutshell, feminism is a way of life, a value system and a means of explaining the world and women's experiences at the hands of a patriarchal domain. Feminism recognises the diversity of women's needs and experiences.

Feminism, according to Freedman (2001), is not one unified concept, but a diverse and multifaceted grouping of ideas and actions in a huge field with different modes of thinking, of which some may overlap or differ in perspective. Feminism could be a powerful tool that lets children shed stereotypes that they may hold and question those of others. A world free of prejudice and generalisation would be amenable to progress in the truest sense. The need of the hour is to introduce feminism in schools, both in terms of curriculum and practice. This will enable an exploration of the differences within and between girls/women, including their experiences of complexities and ambiguities of power, thereby offering potential empowerment of women. Sessions on principles of mutual respect and equality must be made a regular affair in schools.

Inculcating gender equality in children could go a long way towards ridding society of regressive mind-sets, attitudes, and behaviours (Jha, 2017, p. 6). Needless to say, this shall prepare the ground for children to not just be better students but also better citizens, and eventually better human beings. That is the least we can do to be able to call ourselves citizens of a "free and equal" nation.

Three categories of feminism exist, namely: socialist, liberal and radical feminism. Ebunoluwa (2009, p. 228) remarks that apart from being a biological category, social feminism considers gender a social category, and "therefore shares the view that women's oppression is tied to their sexuality". Social feminists believe that women's oppression is

rooted within the capitalist system where they provide free labour and only become consumers (see Acker. 1990).

Acker (1990) is of the view that liberal feminists believe in equal rights and opportunities for both genders and aim to eliminate any hindrance to women's development in education, politics, economy and individual rights. In addition, liberal feminists wish to empower women and create an open space where women are treated equal to men in society. Arnot and Dillabough (2006) see liberal feminism as aiming to:

...empower women to take up their rightful place in this open society through development of female anatomy and to de-gender as far as possible, the public sphere through the legal recognition of women's rights to equality on a par with that of men. (p. 167)

The feminist ideology is based on the core themes of womanhood and emancipatory intentions, and the argument about the inequality of women's position in societies (see Harding, 1987; Assiter, 1996). Echoing the same sentiment, Acker (ibid.) describes liberal feminists as:

...equal rights feminists, who try to remove barriers that prevent girls reaching their full potential, whether in the mind, the family, school or work place. They concentrate on changing attitudes and using anti-discrimination legislation providing information. (p. 92)

Acker's (1990) view is in relation to the word "STIWANISM" advocated by Molaria Ogundipe-Leslie (1994). According to Ogundipe-Leslie (2007, p. 550), "STIWA" is an acronym for Social Transformation Including Women in Africa. The new term describes the agenda of African women without necessarily having to imitate or define African women's agenda on their continent in relation to other feminisms, in particular, white Euro-American feminisms.

“STIWA” allows Ogundipe-Leslie (2007) to personally discuss the needs of African women in the tradition of the spaces and strategies provided in African indigenous cultures for the social being of the African woman. Furthermore, Stiwanism is concerned primarily with the contemporary social and political transformation of African women in Africa. Ogundipe-Leslie (2007) points out that what African women want is social transformation and not necessarily rivalling men or reversing gender roles. African women want to build a harmonious society where both genders have a social responsibility in transforming the livelihood of the entire African society.

Unlike other feminist philosophers, radical feminists are of the view that patriarchy in all aspects of life is the source of all social inequalities and injustices which are likely to affect the lives of women (see Nashongo, 2016). Most of the gender issues and inequalities between men and women are portrayed in literature where writers attempt to describe, interpret and reinterpret women’s experiences as depicted in various kinds of literary texts that also include drama (Cuddon, 1991).

3.1.1 Postcolonial feminism

Postcolonial and postmodern theories have been used by contemporary African writers since the 1980s and 1990s under the influence of Edward W. Said. According to Baldick (2008, p. 265), “Postcolonial theory considers vexed cultural-political questions of national and ethnic identity, ‘otherness’, race, imperialism and language, during and after the colonial periods”. It is clear that postmodernism comes into practice after many African nations obtained independence from European powers. Given the fact that the drama *God of Women* deals with issues of maleness and femaleness, this study is necessary because I am trying to understand how gender power relations are constituted, contested and reproduced. In other words, gender

representations enable this study to understand how meanings of experiences are produced and reproduced through the use of language. It is indisputable that language enables people to think, speak and give meaning to the world around them.

Anyinefa (2000, p. 7) posits that “postcolonial theories were born in the Western, Anglo-Saxon world and therefore can be resented as ‘inauthentic’ in their application to African literature”. However, Quayson (2007, p. 647) states that, “postmodernism is related to a literary and philosophical tradition of representation which could be said to have its own peculiar historical and social trajectory in Western thought”. I differ with Quayson because Africans have their historical and social trajectory as distinct from “Western thought”. African narratives and history have been purely engrained in African thought.

According to Garritano (2000, p. 58), “Postmodernism helps us to begin to envision alternative feminisms which are not bound to the binary split between same and other, not aimed at reinstalling the female body into the male economy”. Many of the postcolonial authors started writing about the issues affecting African women in English and French since the 1980s. Postcolonial African female writers such as Molaria Ogunjide-Leslie, Flora Nwapa, Ama Ata Aidoo, Buchi Emecheta, Bessie Head, Mariama Ba and others represent female voices and present more serious challenges than the First World societies for academic feminism through literature. First World societies for academic feminists are referred to as Western-trained academics. Often, many African writers emphasise the image of African women as either maltreated or abused by their husbands and fathers, a situation that leads also to many African authors speaking out for other women and men through short stories, drama or novels.

Mangena (2013, p. 8) claims that “[t]he African Womanist enters the postcolonial discourse by weakening the orientalist discourse of Western Feminism and exposes its inadequacies by attempting to include what it has tended to leave out”. One of the luminaries of postcolonial theory, Spivak (1990) accuses the First Third academic feminists of a double standard by ignoring, reducing or explaining away the otherness of women. Spivak appears to oppose the First Third World by not allowing Westerners to speak about African issues. Spivak (1990) strongly argues that “we will not be able to speak to women out there if we depend completely on conferences and anthologies by Western-trained informants” (Spivak, 1990, p. 9). African writers appear to be in a race to write the experiences of Africans as mirrored in the real world of being an African man or woman in different African societies.

Moreover, Sircar (1995, p. 11) adds that “Western feminists failed to deal with the specificity of the issues that directly affect the African woman and have also failed to recognise the active part played by the white woman in the oppression of the African woman”. Amos and Parmar (1984) argue that Western feminists’ perspective does not speak to the experiences of African women; however, where it attempts to do so, it is often from a racist perspective. It is likely that the Western feminists are increasingly speaking much of the African woman’s experiences, albeit not experiencing it themselves. Sharing the same sentiments, Zongo (1996, p. 176) states that, “The knowledge explosion in the West has equally left a legacy of misinterpretations, misrepresentations, and outright distortions of African cultures and cultural productions”. Suleri (1992) argues that to claim authenticity, only blacks can speak for blacks because a black feminist can adequately represent the lived experience of that culture. However, speaking for one’s own culture and experience can lead to African women being biased.

It appears that the First Third academic feminists are taking up the empty spaces they imagine are left by silenced African women. However, being silent is also a voice and a means of speaking whereby African female writers are trying to bring the silent voice to the fore through representing other women in fiction. Kamara (2001, p. 214) cites Ogunjipe-Leslie (1987) who points out that female writers have two major responsibilities: firstly, to tell of their experience of being a woman; secondly, to describe reality from a woman's view, a woman's perspective. African female writers appear to understand and represent the pain and suffering of other African women, their oppression, experiences and eventually, their problems. For example, Kenyan researcher Ntarangwi (2003) depicts gender as a socio-cultural phenomenon that is constructed and performed in different ways, including music and drama. Ntarangwi argues that people make efforts to position themselves within their expected gender roles because "for gender to be constructed, it has to be performed" and such a performance determines and maintains gender identity (p. 32). Nevertheless, Ogunyemi (1985) emphasises that the black woman writer in Africa and in the United States has finally emerged as the voice of black women and the black race by moving away from black male chauvinism.

Lionnet (1993), however, differs from other scholars when he argues that "feminist critics run the risk of plunging their work into cliché and triviality if they continue merely to focus on how Black men treat Black women in literature" (p. 135). Lionnet (1993) further argues that "[l]iterary works, as the Russian Formalists have shown, produce an effect of estrangement and de-familiarization based on the application or subversion of particular literary conventions, as well as on the exaggeration of familiar scenarios that can produce in readers the shock of recognition" (p. 135).

Studies about African women in relationships concentrated on the lives of African women as mothers, wives and lovers but left out aspects of their lives. For example, one may learn about an African woman's sex life but still remain ignorant of her social and economic life. By observing the plight of the African woman in relationships, Sircar (1995) arrives at the conclusion that "in African societies women have a position like that of a domestic animal" (p. 21). This clearly indicates the inferiority of the African woman in a relationship, as well as being an object and the property of her male partner.

In postulating the ethical primacy of human freedom and African women's liberty in postcolonial realities, Nuruddin Farah (1992) investigates the socio-political issues and nature of freedom of African women in relationships, especially in Somali culture. For example, in his novel *From a Crooked Rib* (1970), Farah reveals how African women in relationships are trapped in positions of subservience as objects of male desire. Thus, Farah (1992) reveals that:

Women are not able to escape from their sub-ordinate positions: their efforts to evade authoritarian roles of the traditional patriarch are thwarted by the kinship practices of the nomadic clan-families, which deny women individual rights. Women are the property of the patriarch, who has the exclusive right to arrange their marriages and to settle their bride price. The situation of women is exacerbated by the constraints of the traditional Islamic law, which affords women limited status and few legal protections. The public and private sites of negotiation available for women, which might enable them to subvert the male social hierarchy, are confined within traditional family structures that end up subordinating women's realities. (p. 177)

However, it seems that African feminists do not feel well represented by Western feminists. Therefore, African feminist voices want to give a full account of a life wherein an African woman epitomises her complexities marked with faith and courage, as well as despair. For example, a Nigerian female writer, Nnaemeka (1994) argues for the existence of some African traditional practices such as polygamy and arranged marriage, as opposed to the Western feminist who regards such practices as being oppressive to women. Polygyny is a

Greek word referring to a man who marries more than one wife. Nnaemeka (2007, p. 574) explains the originality of polygyny, that is, “polygyny comes from two Greek words: poly (many) and gyne (woman or wife). Nnaemeka (2007) considers polygyny as having two possible meanings – “many women” or “many wives” (p. 574).

Stone (2006) points out that “polygyny is the situation in which one man is married and involved in sexual relationships with a number of different women at one time”. Polygyny is practiced in many African societies, unlike in the West where a Western man may marry one wife (monogamy), yet he may secretly keep mistresses.

For the purposes of this study, the term polygyny will be used forthwith. Polygyny and polygamy have been used interchangeably, but the two words have different concepts. Although polygamy is used, it is not correct because in African culture, it is usually polygyny. Polygamy is the practice of having more than one wife or husband at the same time. It is a western tradition and a feminist term related to Christianity and it does not fit in the contexts of womanism and stiwanism. From a feminist point of view, polygamy is demeaning because it is used to discriminate, disadvantage and disempower black African women. To feminists, marriage is a legal agreement where partners have to sign a legal paper to accept the union.

Polygamy is also seen as a criminal offence and it has stigma attached to it. Nevertheless, from both a womanism and stiwanism point of view, polygyny is for specific reasons pertaining to the black African family and is even more beneficial than polygamy. Unlike feminists, womanists consider polygynous marriage a traditional agreement that is accepted by both family and community. There is no stigma attached to it. In many rural traditional African communities, having more than one wife was advantageous for survival. A woman

was not looking for money, but it was necessary to have many children to work in the field. The practice of polygyny was accepted in a rural traditional setting.

Polygyny may have adverse effects on African women in relationships, the family and even the society at large. Although the practice of polygyny is legalised in some African countries and communities, religions such as Christianity devalue such traditional systems of marriage. In Namibia for instance, the practice of polygyny operates in a vacuum as it is not recognised by the state's legislation, unlike the civil marriage. This disadvantages both women and children as they have no legal rights to inheritance and maintenance if the marriage splits. Similarly, the church does not lend assistance to those in polygynous marriages, although polygyny has been practiced for so long in Africa. Thus, African states that fail to recognise the practice of polygyny put women in insecure marriages. Nassef (2009) sees polygyny as harmful to all other forms of social development.

In the past, polygyny was introduced to remedy immediate situations, such as widowhood, motherless orphans, barrenness and cases where a wife had only produced daughters. Such a remedy was chosen to remove the shame and anxiety of the male's ego. However, this is not the case nowadays, as polygyny is instead portrayed to be a man's greed towards women. "Many are the hearts it has broken; the minds it has distracted; the families it has destroyed; and the evils that it has begotten. Many are the innocent who have been victimised by it and many are those it has led to imprisonment" (Nassef, 2009, p. 120). Echoing the same sentiments, Powell (2008, p. 167) states that "women are neglected, exploited, degenerated and indeed made to feel like outsiders". African women who have to bear the yoke of polygyny are usually at war with their competitors.

In polygynous cultures, women are regarded as the property of their husbands. Polygyny is seen as a “male supreme ideology which makes feminist scholar, Bell Hooks, believe that women are natural enemies” (Powell, 2008, p. 167). To some extent, I agree with Nassef (2009) and Powell (2008) that polygyny is the woman’s worst enemy and the only devil that creates enemies in many polygynous households. Moreover, it is difficult for a woman to easily accept her husband’s second wife, particularly if the wife is not the initiator in asking for a second wife. Having a co-wife may lead to envy, revenge and trigger a situation that may birth disunity among members of the same family.

Nassef (2009) regards polygyny as brutality and selfishness which ruins a man’s character. Some women interviewed by him divulged that when a competitor (a new wife) is brought in the home, it clearly indicates that there was no true love in the relationship as it used to be before marriage. Among the women interviewed by Nassef (2009), one woman expresses that it is painful to have a competitor for one’s husband. “When a woman is doomed to bear the catastrophe of her husband’s second marriage, her joy disappears, and in its place burns the flames of envy, weakening her body and planting the seeds of evil inside her” (Nassef, 2009, p. 121). Often, older wives are degraded and their hearts broken, as they are regarded as less beautiful than the new wife. Old wives are deceived by being put in full control of the house and being the mentors for the young or new wives, their competitors.

In contrast, Emecheta (2007) sees polygyny as liberating to the woman, rather than inhibiting her, especially when the woman is educated. Polygyny is seen as encouraging an educated woman to value herself and continue updating her career, as well as socialising with her friends outside her marriage. This implies that polygyny gives her the freedom not to worry about her husband as the co-wife/wives are looking after him. Nnaemeka (2007) insists that

the practice of polygyny affords African women the sharing of child care, economic and emotional support, friendship as well as sisterhood, among the co-wives. Furthermore, Nnaemeka (1997, p. 167) further argues that “African women who are in polygynous marriages are not morons or powerless, exploited, downtrodden victims”. Nnaemeka (1997) claims that many of the African women in polygynous marriages are intelligent, successful, highly nurtured in their education and independent, an argument I disagree with because in modern society, no woman would like to share her man/partner with another woman.

Similarly, Dolphyne (1991) relates that polygyny, at least, gives equal status to co-wives, although the senior wife usually commands respect, whereas the newest wife is most favoured by the husband. However, I believe that polygyny only liberates educated women but leaves out the uneducated woman. Many African women in polygynous relationships live in remote areas and many are uneducated. As such, polygyny will hardly liberate uneducated African women. Many of these uneducated women are usually occupied with household chores such as cultivating the field, cooking, cleaning the house and attending to the children daily. The only freedom which I believe an uneducated African woman has, is probably when she is relieved to go back to her father’s house after she has either become old or less beautiful, or suspected of witchcraft in the relationship. Yet, being relieved or taken back to her father’s house is a sign of selfishness on the man’s side and humiliation on the woman’s side.

This is similar to Ogundipe-Leslie, who in her poem titled “*Ageing Woman*” (1995) presents a situation where men only adore women of a young age and says that their attraction declines with age. Once an African woman has aged, the husband may opt to find a second wife. This is an indication that the aging woman was primarily an object for satisfying the man’s sexual appetite. However, not all African men see their wives in the light of satisfying their sexual

needs, but rather as partners for life who do not need to worry about their age. Basically, some African authors seem to be inspired to convey a new vision of women's experiences.

3.1.2 Womanism

Many black women see feminism as inadequate, as it appears to represent only the Western woman. Therefore, feminism birthed womanism or black womanism. The term, African womanism, coined by Alice Walker in 1983 in *In Search of Our Mothers' Gardens: Womanist Prose*, establishes aesthetics for the black female literary experience and sheds light on why many African American women prefer the term womanism over black feminism. Hence, womanism is not new, and much has been written about it as an African ideology by scholars such as Ogunyemi (1985), Dove (1998), Aegerter (2000) and Collins (2001).

For the purpose of this study, I used the term to describe an Afrocentric approach that many African (particularly female) authors have used in their literary texts since the 1980s, as a black woman's standpoint in the postcolonial era. Walker (1986), as excerpted by Ebunoluwa (2009), gives a broad definition of a womanist when she says:

...a black feminist or feminist of color... a woman who loves other women, sexually and/or non-sexually. Appreciates and prefers women's culture, women's emotional flexibility (values tears as a natural counterbalance of laughter), and women's strength. Sometimes loves individual men, sexually and/or non-sexually, committed to survival and wholeness of entire people, male and female. Not a separatist, except periodically for health. Traditionally universalist... loves music. Loves dance. Loves the moon. Loves the spirit. Loves struggle. Loves the folk. Loves herself. Regardless, womanist is to feminist as purple is to lavender. (p. 229)

According to Ogunyemi (1985, p. 72), black womanism is "a philosophy that celebrates black roots, the ideals of black life, while giving a balanced presentation of black womandom". Ogunyemi (1985) further accounts that black womanism is more concerned with the black sexual power tussle as with the world power structure that subjugates blacks more than

whites. Aegerter (2000, p. 67) asserts that womanism is “a philosophy that has wholeness and healing for all Black people”. Dove (1998, p. 535) illustrates that “African womanism brings to the forefront the role of African mothers as leaders in struggle to regain, reconstruct, and create a cultural integrity that espouses the principles of reciprocity, balance, harmony, justice, truth, righteousness and order”. African women who embrace feminism feel the absence of a definable framework for their needs as individuals. As a result, Weems (1994), defines African womanism as:

...an ideology created and designed for all women of African descent. It is foregrounded in African culture, and therefore, it necessarily focuses on the unique experiences, struggles, needs and desires of African women. It critically addresses the dynamics of the conflict between mainstream feminism, the black feminist, the African feminist and the Africana womanist.

Collins (2001) contends that the use of womanism sidesteps an issue central to many white feminists especially, by finding ways to foster interracial cooperation among women, although white women are seen as part of the problem that black women experience. Moreover, Collins (2001) reveals that womanism appears to provide an avenue to foster stronger relationships between black women and black men. Unlike womanism, many black women view feminism as a movement that at best is exclusively for women only, excluding men and, at worst, attacking or eliminating men from women’s paradigm. Womanism is seen as a doorway for black women to address gender oppression without necessarily attacking their black men.

From the broader explanation of womanism, it appears that womanism is a theory that looks at a woman who appreciates other women, their culture, emotions, strength and laughter, but also a woman who loves men sexually or non-sexually. “Womanism thus furnishes a vision where the women and men of different colours coexist like flowers in a garden yet retain their cultural distinctiveness and integrity” (Collins, 2001, p. 11). I concur with Collins (2001) and

see womanism as a theory that does not separate men and women, but sees both sexes as contributing to a whole society. Womanism is concerned with the survival of the entire people and, at the same time, allows both black men and women to interact in a non-threatening environment. Womanism is aware of feminism but separates the experiences of black women from white women.

In feminism, there is a binary position with men and women on opposite sides, while in womanism men and women complement each other. However, it is essential to extract womanism from feminism, as womanism recognises the oppression of black women based on racial, classist and sexist oppression, whereas feminism is chiefly concerned with sexist oppression. African women's culture accounts for the centrality of family as well as community. Thus, the needs of an African black woman vary from those of a white woman. Above all, one may conclude that womanism is a theory advocated to accommodate African problems as experienced by both African women and men.

3.1.3 Discourse analysis

For every text presented in literature, it is often conditioned and inscribed within a given discourse and ideology. Discourse is the means of communicating meaning through texts, and by text here I mean written, acted and spoken. Discourse Analysis is the deconstructive reading and interpretation of a text to disclose the concealed stimuli behind the text and discover its ideological manipulation that may be presented within a text (see Khorsand and Salmani, 2014). James Gee (1996) defines discourse as:

...an association of socially accepted ways of using language, other symbolic expressions, and artefacts of thinking, feeling, believing, valuing and acting that can be used to identify yourself as a member of a socially meaningful group. (p. 144)

Gee (2000) contends that discourse is used to describe the way that language functions to produce meanings, considering the forms of representation, codes, conventions and habits of language that produce certain fields of culturally and historically located meanings. Such discourses are hierarchically arranged and thus have different degrees of power and influence (see Foucault, 1980).

Starting with his often cited unique “discourse and Discourse” division, Gee’s (2011) recent work has brought together his approach of language with theoretical devices for inquiry. For instance, situated meanings, social languages, figured worlds and Discourses are seen as “tools of inquiry” (Rogers, 2004). All these are social and cultural frameworks for understanding how people use language to accomplish a particular social goal. “Situated meaning” elicits Bakhtin’s (1981, 1986) idea of genres and dialogues and refers to the historical, intertextual and social trappings of sign systems. In actual situations of use, words and structures take specific meanings. For example, when a speaker speaks, he/she may assume that the listener shares enough knowledge, beliefs, values and experiences with him/her to be able to situate the meaning of his/her words. However, listeners situate the meanings of words by consulting what the speaker has said, the context in which it has been said and the experience or shared background (if any) the speaker assumes they have (Gee, 2004).

Social language is referred to as grammar and the function of language as a social practice. In other words, grammar is not inherited but rather it is designed to create particular identities and relationships. Often, a person speaks or writes to enact a particular identity. “Figured worlds” refers to narratives and images different social and cultural groups of people use to make sense of the world. In other words, words are used based on models in our minds of

what is normal and not by using words based on definitions or utterance – general meanings (Gee, 2004, 2011). People use words based on stories, theories or models in our minds about “the way the world should be or is” (p. 41). For example, it is normal in our world that men marry women and that a man who did not marry is thought of as a “bachelor”, assuming he has opted to wait, or did not yet find a woman. This is merely to say, we use words based on such typical stories. To put it briefly, a figured world is actually a picture of a simplified world that captures what is taken to be typical or normal (see Gee, 2004). What we take to be normal may vary by context and by people’s sociocultural affiliation. “Discourse models” refer to the storylines, narratives and explanatory frameworks that circulate in a society (see Rogers, 2004). Generally, Gee (2011) is certainly reminding us that every time we communicate, we are building social relationships, identities and figured worlds.

For Gee, language does not occur in isolation, but within specific social contexts. This is to say, language occurs between people, in particular places, in particular sets of circumstances and at a particular time accompanied by semiotic signs such as gesture, dress and symbols. It is often influenced by a range of values, beliefs, emotions, attitudes and ideologies. It is such non-language signs that Gee terms as Discourse with a big D, to mean discourse can occur within Discourses. In Gee’s (2000) words:

Discourses are characteristic (socially and culturally formed, but historically changing) ways of talking and writing about, as well as acting with and toward, people and things. These ways are circulated and sustained within various texts, artefacts, images, social practices and institutions, as well as in moment-to-moment social interactions. In turn, they cause certain perspectives and states of affairs to come to seem or be taken as ‘normal’ or ‘natural’ and others to seem or be taken as ‘deviant’ or ‘marginal’. (p. 12)

For example, within the text or drama, it can be revealing to account for any comment regarding individuals who may be projected as less socially valued as a result of class, age, gender, ethnicity and so forth. This is likely to happen in order to legitimise the assertions of

those who hold power or to identify any pejorative or stereotyping presentation by labelling people as being “normal” and “natural”.

Gee (2011, p. 6) differentiates between discourse and Discourse. While he defines the former as “language in use”, he sees the latter as “a conversation among different socially and historically significant kinds of people or social groups”. The lower case ‘d’ discourse refers to the grammar of what is said or written, whereas the Discourse with upper case ‘D’ refers to the ways of representing, believing, valuing and participating with all of the sign systems that people have at their disposal. Such a distinction emphasises that the form of language cannot exist independent of the function of language and the intention of speakers. What is also embedded within this perspective is the fact that discourses are often historical and intertextual, linked across time, place and speakers (see Gee, 1996, & Fairclough, 1992, 1989). Both Gee and Fairclough recognise how discourse functions to reproduce society through its social structures, relationships and value structures. Similarly, the two scholars recognise how discourse has a hand in transforming society as people use discourse in creative ways. For this dialectic between individual agency and social structure, Fairclough (1992) writes:

It is important that the relationship between discourse and social structure should be seen dialectically if we are to avoid the pitfalls of overemphasizing, on the one hand, the social determination of discourse, and on the other hand, the construction of the social in discourse. The former turns discourse into a mere reflection of a deeper social reality, the later idealistically represents discourse as the source of the social. (p. 12)

It is useful to look at how Fairclough’s understanding of the relationship between discourse and the social world is cautiously hopeful about the role of individuals intervening in social, historical and political discourses. Learners may call on the resources they have for making

meanings and by so doing, they are entering into a “struggle over representation with political and ideological practices” (Gee, 2004).

A language can be used in a social context to enact activities and identities. One may look at the language beyond the sentence level (McCarthy & Carter, 1994) thereby allowing readers to consider some of the things that are happening in the language that are only observable if one looks beyond any single sentence in the text/drama. Critical Discourse Analysis thus has the potential to reveal an understanding of language as used during the mediation (by teachers) of gender roles, as portrayed in the prescribed text for Grade 9 learners, as well as patterns of language that reveal gender-specific cultural biases.

In terms of analysing the drama *God of Women*, CDA takes the view that literary texts need to be examined in terms of what they include but also what they omit, which enhances alternative ways of constructing and defining the world. Apart from reading political and social ideologies into a text, a Critical Discourse Analyst’s job should also consider the myriad ways in which a drama could have been written and what these alternatives imply for ways of representing the world, understanding the world and the social actions that are determined by these ways of thinking and being (see Rogers, 2004). As critical as the drama *God of Women* may be interpreted by Grade 9 learners, it is thus for learners to be reflective by thinking deeply about what is said in each instances presented to the in the drama and the context of its production.

3.2 Critical discourse analysis

The main purpose of this study was to investigate the mediation of gender roles in a prescribed Grade 9 drama, *God of Women*, in two selected Namibian schools. Adopting the

CDA framework of Fairclough's (1992) notion of Discourse and Social Change, this study attempted to investigate the following. How does *God of Women* represent gender roles? How are gender representations in literary texts mediated by teachers, and in what ways do the teachers' mediation practices shape learners' understanding thereof? These questions are crucial for the purpose of this study because gender representation is embedded in discourse. Since discourse is a social practice, gender discourse belongs first of all to the social dimension of gender stereotypes.

On the other hand, social practices also have a cognitive dimension, namely the beliefs people have, such as knowledge, attitudes, ideologies, norms and values (van Dijk, 1993). In the system of gender discourse, prejudices and ideologies elucidate why and how people engage in gender stereotypes in the first place; for instance, because they believe that the other gender is inferior (less intelligent, less modern, less competent, having fewer rights and so forth). Such beliefs or "social representations" (van Dijk, 1993, 1996) result in group membership. By group membership I am referring to social identity whereby people are inclined to divide our social world into "us" and "them", and how we identify with certain groups and categories (see also Kelly, 2007). Even in a classroom, learners group themselves into boys and girls when role playing a certain activity/drama. It is within the cognitive social practices that an individual's thought processes are formed and help to create the world that they occupy. Within this tradition, there are two schools of thought, the first being mainstream social cognition (Brown, 2007) which tends to view the person as a cognitive miser, explaining that social thinking and information processing biases are a result of limited cognitive resources. The second school of thought views the individual as a socialised thinker whose cognitions are structured by group memberships which are located within a particular social system.

When applied to a variety of written and spoken texts, CDA has the potential to deconstruct data from a range of contexts and spheres and also expose hidden patterns of discrimination and inequalities of power. Power is embedded in a way that it is implicit in social organisations and discourses which aim to draw attention to power relations. The social and performative aspects of language are studied within a cultural and historical context. Given the fact that the author of *God of Women*, Sifiso Nyathi, portrayed a society in the eastern part of Namibia, the drama is likely to give both the learners and teachers a cultural and historical context of how patriarchy in Namibia is still dominant. Of course, the author may already draw on cultural ideas in their discourse of a patriarchal society. In CDA, the notion of “critical” is chiefly applied to the engagement with power relations associated with the Frankfurt School of critical theory. Its argument is against a realist, neutral and rationalist view of the world (Gee, 2011), with the role of unclocking hidden power relations, largely constructed through language, and equally demonstrating and challenging social inequalities that are reinforced and reproduced.

One of the dominant methods through which the quality of literary texts can be assessed is through the use of Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA). Therefore, this study will assess how the drama *God of Women* represents gender issues and how the drama is mediated by teachers to shape learners’ understanding of gender representations as portrayed in the drama. Given the fact that this is a literary study, I chose to use CDA as a way to analyse how language reflects and enacts ideologies and beliefs within a literature classroom. In other words, the study is important given the fact that it is concerning the relationship between language and the context in which it is used, that is, the study of language in use. For the purpose of this study, I used CDA as a set of tools to examine the relationship between knowledge, power and identity in a literature classroom. For a study that is examining literary practices and

beliefs in a largely textually mediated setting, CDA is a timely perspective and methodology to address the close relationship between language and social relations. Texts as they stand in society are not neutral but ideologically loaded (see Nord, 2003). For the purpose of this study, Fairclough's (1992) CDA will be used as both the theory behind and analytical tool needed to gather data.

As a Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) theorist, Fairclough (1992) defines the process of unpacking textual meanings as an:

Analysis which aims to systematically explore often opaque relationships of causality and determination between (a) discursive practices, 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; and to explore how the opacity of these relationships between discourse and society is itself a factor securing power and hegemony. (p. 6)

Given the fact that this study is concerned with an English Second Language classroom set work, which Gwajima (2011, p. 40) asserts is “essentially social, depicting socio-cultural assumptions with regard to the relative positions and values of men and women”, CDA is relevant as one of the theories used to frame this study. The reason CDA is selected for this study is that it is an interdisciplinary theory to understanding and unpacking discourse in various texts. It views language as a form of social practice (Fairclough, 2012) and focuses on the ways in which social and political domination are reproduced by text and talk. The language use and discourse are critical social practices that are highly influenced by ideologies which in turn influence how people acquire, learn and change such ideologies.

Texts are seen as challenging and demanding in their interpretations because of their rich ideological and socio-political themes (van Dijk, 2003). The relevance of this conceptual frame is that it enables the research process to reveal understandings of social, political and ideological aspects of language, linguistic variation and discourse as represented in actions,

written and spoken texts. CDA offers a useful analytical tool for classroom practice, but also of texts themselves. It compliments SFL, which focuses on ways in which language is used to perform function. It unites and determines the relationship between three levels of analysis, namely: (a) the actual text, (b) the discursive practices, and (c) the larger social context that bears upon the discursive practices (Fairclough, 2012). CDA views texts as artefacts that do not occur in isolation but rely on socio-political and socio-historic contexts that contribute to production and interpretation of texts, which are crucial aspects of the CDA. In other words, CDA sees texts as performed (drama/visual), as spoken (on stage) and as written (words on a page).

Regarding linguistic variation, Fairclough (2012, p. 7) argues that it is insufficient to teach students to use “appropriate” language without considering why that language is preferred and who makes that decision (as well as the implications for speakers who do not use “appropriate language”). This theory also includes considerations of how a person may be marginalised by speaking in a particular way, especially if that way of speaking serves as an index of their gender, race, ethnicity, religion and social status. In other words, CDA offers teachers valuable information on how to deepen instructions on issues around race, class and gender. At times, texts are not neutral sources of information but are driven by the author(s) of the texts. Thus, as teachers, it is vital to consider the extent to which text questions, activities and exercises address problems around gender and language among ESL learners. I believe that any form of language, whether spoken or written, is a form of discourse.

According to Fairclough (2012), speakers/writers ground the use of language in a set of beliefs which he termed “ideologies”. Fairclough is interested in how writers influence readers’ thoughts on a particular topic, that is, how they advance a particular ideology through

subtle and specific features of language. Jolliffe (2011, p. 3) believes that CDA is a “system of beliefs and practices that scholars employ to analyse stretches of discourse longer than sentences” for evidence of ideological power imbalances and means of addressing these apparent inequalities. In addition, CDA encourages scholars to push beyond the surface layers of language and note the ideological work accomplished through language. It is in this way that scholars and teachers may further understand the ways in which particular cultural models of teaching and learning are reproduced and reinforced, and other cultural models ignored (Steven, 2004). Equally, the use of the tools and social theories behind CDA is seen as a metalanguage to unpack and name the ways that language enacts ideologies (Luke, 2004).

CDA is very distinctive because of its view of the relationship between language and society and similarly, its relationship between analysis and the practice analysed. Thus, CDA is essential for this study because it unpacks how teachers’ mediation practices of gender representations shaped learners’ understanding thereof. One may ask why the approach is called “critical”. Fairclough (1996) argues that the approach is critical because it recognises that “our social practices in general and our use of language in particular are bound up with causes and effects which we may not be at all aware of under normal conditions”. Moreover, the invisibility of their “ideological assumptions and of the power relationships which underlie these practices helps us to sustain these power relations” (p. 54). For CDA, the notion is mainly applied to the engagement with power relations. Its criticality is to uncloak the hidden power relations that are enormously constructed through language, and to demonstrate and challenge social inequalities.

Van Dijk (1997) contends that a central aim in all the various types of CDA approaches is that “critical analysis raises awareness concerning the strategies used in establishing, maintaining and reproducing (a)symmetrical relations of power as enacted by means of discourse” (p. 28). Thus, it is clear that CDA studies the way social power, abuse, dominance and inequality are enacted, reproduced and resisted by text and talk in social and political contexts (Van Dijk, 2004, p. 352). In analysing CDA, it takes the view that texts need to be considered in terms of what they include but also what they omit, as alternative ways of defining the world.

A CDA analyst should not merely read political and social ideologies into a text, but should also consider the “myriad ways in which a text could have been written and what these alternatives imply for ways of representing the world, understanding the world and social actions that are determined by these ways of thinking and being” (Rogers, 2004, p. 5).

CDA will thus enable this study to reveal an understanding of the ways in which gender roles in the text selected are constructed and (in the process of teaching the text) how teachers mediate such constructions. It is in this way that the study hopes to reveal how power can be reproduced and/or subverted through pedagogical choices. According to Janks (2006, p. 329), “all social practices are tied to specific historical contexts and are the means by which existing social relations are reproduced or contested and different interests are served”. In Fairclough’s (2012) words:

The method of textual analysis includes linguistic description of the language text, interpretation of the relationship between the (productive and interpretative) discursive processes and the text, and the explanation of the relationship between the discursive processes and social processes. (p. 15)

Hence, in the process of investigating how teachers mediate the construction of gender roles in *God of Women*, more attention will be on the pedagogical choices made, actual words used by teachers as they mediate meanings in the text, and how such choices and words reinforce

and/or subvert gender stereotypes present in the text. Drawing from Fairclough's (2012) Critical Discourse Analysis tools, such as Critical Literacy, an investigation of how characteristics of maleness and femaleness are presented in the text will be carried out. As an analytical tool, Critical Discourse Analysis will be used to uncover ways in which teachers create opportunities for learners to subvert and/or perpetuate stereotypical discourses that accompany the representations of gender roles in the text.

3.3 Social constructivism

For the purpose of this study, Vygotsky's Social Constructivism is used as another segment of the underlying theoretical framework needed to understand the social interactions of both the teachers and the learners when interacting with the drama *God of Women*. In other words, the study is looking at the nature of learning as not an individual process but one enacted by society and those around the individual learning. It is undisputed that the social aspect of the learning process has become crucial to learning and teaching gender aspects to learners in schools. Social Constructivism was used to unpack the knowledge of teaching and learning in the classroom, to answer questions useful for this study.

Although some sources are old, the theory used necessitated them in this study. For instance, Vygotsky (1989) believes that social interactions are critical and that knowledge is constructed via the individual's interactions with the environment and other people. Individuals often seek understanding of the world in which they live and work. In doing so, they develop subjective meanings of their experiences where meanings are directed towards specific objects (see Denzin and Lincoln, 2012). Meanings may be varied and multiplied, leading to a complexity of views rather than narrowing the meanings into ideas. The goal of

this study is to rely as much as possible on the participants' views of the situation presented to them in the classroom from the drama *God of Women*.

Social Constructivism focuses on the nature of cognition and consequently suggests some approaches where learners are given the opportunity for concrete, contextually meaningful experience through which they search for patterns, raise their own questions and construct their own models (Vygotsky, 1989). Given the nature of social interaction, Social Constructivism facilitates a community of learners to engage in activity, discourse and reflection of their environment. For example, in *God of Women*, the teacher may encourage learners to take more ownership of their ideas, pursue autonomy, mutual reciprocity of social relations and empowerment of the goal (see Vygotsky, 1989). It is crucial to note that learning is something done by the learner, as opposed to something that is imposed on the learner. In other words, this is merely to say that knowledge is actively constructed by the learner and not passively received from the outside (see Sjoberg, 2012). In essence, learners have their individual ideas about the world, but there are also many similarities and common patterns in their ideas. Some of the learner's ideas are socially and culturally accepted and shared as they are regularly part of the language, supported by metaphors and so forth. Learners from the two selected schools come from different backgrounds where issues of patriarchy may not be the same. Therefore, by interacting they are likely to understand and construct their own meanings from the situations presented to them.

Constructivism as a paradigm posits learning as an active, constructive process where a learner is viewed as an information constructor. For Tomas (2014), human beings actively construct or create their own subjective representations of objective reality. This is to say, new information is linked to prior knowledge, and hence mental representations are

subjective. Echoing the same sentiments, Andrew (2012) emphasises that society is viewed as existing equally as a subjective and objective reality. Social Constructivism has been instrumental in remodelling grounded theory. As learners are interacting in the classroom, meaning is shared, thereby comprising a “taken-for-granted reality” (p. 7). Social Constructivism focuses on the process by which meanings are created, negotiated, sustained and equally, modified (see Schwandt, 2007). Berger and Luckmann (1991) are concerned with the nature and construction of knowledge in a sense, how it emerges and how it comes to significance for society. The two scholars viewed knowledge as created by the interactions of individuals within society, which is central to construction.

Berger and Luckmann (1991) maintain that conversation is the most crucial means of maintaining, modifying and reconstructing subjective reality. Notably, subjective reality is constituted by concepts that may be shared without difficulties with others. In other words, there is a shared meaning and understanding so much that concepts do not need to be redefined each time they are used in everyday conversation and come to assume a reality which is by and large taken for granted. In an attempt to make meaningful sense of the social world, constructivists view knowledge as constructed as opposed to created. Basically, the social constructivists’ views on discourse imply that reality is not fixed but constructed through interactions and mediated by language and other semiotic systems (Freire, 1972), thus opening to a change in the mind-set of the people. For instance, if a language can be constructed, it can equally be deconstructed and reconstructed.

A written text/drama is viewed as a situated activity system that involves a dialectical tension between thought and the act of composition (see Thompson, 20130). Vygotsky (1986) argues that the process of composition involves social and cultural interaction leading to the

translation from inner speech, or internalised thought, to outer speech in the form of writing. This change involves “deliberate semantics – deliberate structuring of the web of meaning” that is unique to writing (Vygotsky 1986, p. 182). Britton, Burgess, Martin, McLeod, & Rosen (1975) describe this transformational process as “the dialectical interrelationship of thought and language” (p. 39). One argument in this study is that the most powerful forms of learning take place when learners are working within a Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD), defined by Vygotsky (1978) as:

...the distance between the actual developmental level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers. (p. 86)

Vygotsky (1978) goes on to describe the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) as “a tool through which the internal course of development can be understood” (p. 87) and argues that “the only good kind of instruction is that which marches ahead of development and leads it; it must be aimed not so much at the ripe as at the ripening functions” (p. 88). Yet as Moll (1990) points out, Vygotsky never “specified the forms of social assistance to learners that constitute” a ZPD beyond generalised comments about “collaboration and direction” (p. 11). The central concept in Vygotsky's (1978 & 1981) cognitive psychology is mediation. According to Vygotsky, all specifically human psychological processes (so-called higher mental processes) are mediated by psychological tools such as language, signs and symbols.

In the context of school learning, Vygotsky (1978) states that a child’s development within a ZPD involves social interaction, dialogue and mediated activity between learners and with their teachers. As Wertsch (2007) argues, mediation is a central theme throughout Vygotsky’s writing. In his view, a hallmark of human consciousness is that it is associated with the use of tools, especially “psychological tools” or “signs”. Instead of acting in a direct, unmediated

way in the social and physical world, our contact with the world is indirect or mediated by signs. This means that understanding the emergence and the definition of higher mental processes must be grounded in the notion of mediation (p. 178).

Vygotsky (1978) distinguishes between the mediating functions of tools that are “externally oriented” and “serve as the conductor of human influence on the object of activity” and signs that are “internally oriented” and “aimed at mastering oneself” (p. 55). Moll (2000) emphasizes the importance of mediation to learning as follows:

To put it simply, human beings interact with their worlds primarily through mediational means; and these mediational means, the use of cultural artifacts, tools and symbols, including language, play crucial roles in the formation of human intellectual capacities. (p. 257)

When analysing the process of learners’ learning, it follows that as teachers and scholars, we should pay close attention to the ZPDs of learners, the mediational tools that we provide to help scaffold their learning development, and the range of social interaction and activities involved in the process of learning, which includes reading a written text/drama, feeling and thinking, speaking and listening, observing and acting (Bazerman & Prior, 2004, p. 7). Vygotsky (1986) argues that human mental functioning is inherently social because it “incorporates socially evolved and socially organised human tools” (p. 91). In his own words, Vygotsky (1981) explicitly states that:

The word social when applied to our subject has great significance. Above all, in the widest sense of the word, it means that everything that is cultural is social. Culture is the product of social life and human social activity. That is why just by raising the question of the cultural development of behaviour we are directly introducing the social plane of development. (p. 164)

According to Blumberg (2008):

There is a common trend in textbooks around the world where women are underrepresented and misrepresented in text [sic] and in images, and when they do

make an appearance, they hold stereotypical roles in the household, occupations and attitudes. (p. 17)

The ways in which “teacher talk” [sic] mediates such messages and images has a considerable impact on learners’ attitudes, values and behaviours because they spend more of their time at school than at home. The theories selected for this study, that is Feminism, CDA and Social Constructivism all concern with the way gender power relations are constituted, reproduced and contested in society. The concept of language used in literary texts may be likely to seek insight into the social mechanisms that convince people to adopt and act from a particular attitude. There is no doubt of the existence and influence of power relation in the production of texts. Power relations exist, affect us, and influence our themes, contexts and audiences.

3.4 Analytical tools/framework

3.4.1 Critical literacy

There are different literary theories that try to define and form a link between literature and critical thinking. For the purpose of this study, Critical Literacy was used to elucidate the ideological biases which are embedded in language. Critical Literacy uses texts and print skills in ways that enable learners to examine the politics of daily life within contemporary society with a view to understanding what it means to locate and actively seek out contradictions within modes of life, theories, and substantive intellectual positions (Bishop, 2014). For Janks (2013), Critical Literacy enables young people to read both the word and the world in relation to power, identity, difference and access to knowledge, skills, tools and resources. Further, it is also about writing and rewriting the world: “it is about design and re-design” (Janks, 2013, p. 227). Freire (1972) linked Critical Literacy to a politics of self-empowerment. In his own words, Freire (1972b) puts it that:

If learning to read and write is to constitute an act of knowing, the learners must assume from the beginning the role of creative subjects. It is not a matter of memorizing and repeating given syllables and phrases, but rather of reflecting critically on the process of reading and writing itself, and on the profound significance of language... The human word is more than mere vocabulary – it is word-and-action. The cognitive dimensions of the literacy process must include the relationships of men [and women] with their world. (p. 29)

Freire's (1972) argument seems to remind us that our world is not politically and socially neutral but has been formed by history and shaped by humanity (Janks, 2013). Thus, a careful analysis of the teacher-learner relationship at any level, be it inside or outside the classroom or school reveals its fundamental narrative character. It is worth noting that the dialectical relationship between language processes and social worlds holds in a Freirian's sense the possibility of analysing and exploring discourse as a mediational tactic to understanding and transforming the social relations. We might be aware that the formal aspects of schooling include; reading, writing and using one's developing literacy to learn about content matter and about learning itself. In a situation where learners read merely to fulfil the reading practice and for assessment purpose only, it limit learners, and teachers too, to the worldviews about gender and power relations.

Janks further emphasises that, "a critical approach recognises that language produces us as particular kinds of human subjects and that the words are not innocent, but instead work to position us" (p. 227). I believe we are positioned by language because the word and the world embody human choice. As humans, and by using language, we tend to deconstruct what was constructed and reconstruct it again, a process which Janks (2013) calls the "redesign cycle" (p. 227). Through text production, learners may consume what is produced in the text and may believe that the texts reveal their social reality without challenging the author's views on power relations portrayed therein. However, learners need power to choose and name their world.

For the purpose of this study, Critical Literacy will be used to understand how language use develops humans as agents in society and how both teachers and learners may become conscious of their experiences that are constructed within some power relations. While Anderson and Irvine (1993, p. 82) contend that literacy is “social action through language use that develops us as agents inside a larger culture”, they see critical literacy as “learning to read and write as part of the process of becoming conscious of one’s experiences as historically constructed within specific power relations”. Shor (2009) puts this differently:

We are what we say and do. The ways we speak and are spoken to help shape us into the people we become. Through speech and other actions, we build ourselves in a world that is building us. The world addresses us to produce the different identities we carry forward in life: men are addressed differently than women, people of color differently than whites, elite students differently than those from working families. Yet, though language is fateful in teaching us what kind of people to become and what kind of society to make, discourse is not destroyed. (p. 1)

The teacher’s role in this context is to enable learners to remake themselves and society, if they choose, through alternative words they could use in mediating the texts they consume. This is where critical literacy begins - words that question a world not yet finished. According to Ontario Science Curriculum Gr. 9 & 10, (2008):

Critical literacy is the capacity for a particular type of critical thinking that involves looking beyond the literal meaning of a text to determine what is present and what is missing, in order to analyse and evaluate the text’s complete meaning and the author’s intent. Critical literacy goes beyond conventional critical thinking by focusing on issues related to fairness, equity, and social justice. Critically literate students adopt a critical stance, asking what view of the world the text advances and whether they find this view acceptable. (p. 8)

Through critical literacy, teachers and learners could be offered opportunities to study and analyse texts in order to achieve authentic interpretation and comprehension, resulting in total understanding. The prime conception of literacy among governments, policy-makers and many members of the general public, however, is that literacy references the ability on the

part of individuals to read and write. While this concept is useful and important, some scholars look at literacy in broader, sociocultural and political terms, sometimes referring to it as “critical literacy” (Luke, 1997, p. 24). Those who are interested in critical literacy investigate written text, or indeed any other kind of representation of meaning, as a site of struggle, negotiation and change. Andreotti (2006) highlights the post-colonial critic Gayatri Spivak in relation to critical literacy as an educational practice which focuses on issues of language, power and knowledge, emphasising their role in transforming relationships and in developing social responsibility.

In the 21st century, the definition of literacy has expanded to refer to “a flexible, sustainable command of a set of capabilities in the use of production of traditional texts and new communication technologies using spoken language, print and multimedia” (Anstey & Bull, 2010, p. 5). Therefore, learners will have an opportunity to understand, interpret, reflect on and create an increasingly broad repertoire of spoken, written and multimodal texts across a growing range of settings. Equally, it is thus appropriate for teachers to consider how they can become familiar with and confident in their use of multimodal texts in their classroom settings. In a society, people continue to actively build and rebuild their world (Gee, 2011), not just through language but through language used in tandem with actions, interactions, non-linguistic symbol systems, tools and technologies. It is the language that we use to make things significant in particular ways, to carry out actions such as promising and encouraging, and to get recognised as engaging in a certain sort of activity.

From a critical literacy research drawn from Pakistan, Canada and South Africa, Norton (2004) believes that literacy is not only about reading and writing, but about relationships between text and reader, student and teacher, classroom and community. As Luke (1997)

notes, while earlier psychological perspectives conceived of literacy as the acquisition of particular behaviours, cognitive strategies and linguistic processing skills, more recent insights from ethnography, cultural studies and feminist theory have led to increasing recognition that literacy is not only a skill to be learned, but a practice that is socially constructed and locally negotiated. Critical Literacy enables young people to read both the word and the world in relation to power, identity, differences and access to knowledge, skills, tools and resources (see Jank, 2013).

Within such a view, literacy is best understood in the context of larger institutional practices, whether in the home, the school, the community, or the larger society. In contexts in which relationships are equitable, learners have greater access to literacy and are more able to engage actively with text. Where relationships are inequitable, access to literacy is limited and engagement with text ritualised. When learners are critically literate, they tend to examine their ongoing development, revealing the subjective positions from which they may make sense of the world and act in it. In the context of literary critique, it is hard to separate fully the author from the background of his or her writing. It is also important, however, to not only see the writer as a text, but for one to understand the context and textual ideas drawn upon by the author. Nevertheless, it cannot be disputed that there is a link between the author, the text and the society. Gwajima (2011, p. 41), however, argues that, “a literary text is commonly supposed to gain some of its identity from its historical moment interacting with the attentions, judgments, scholarship and performances of its reader”.

A literary study on gender representations in English literary texts in Tanzanian secondary schools was conducted by Gwajima (2011). Her findings reveal that the goal of gender equality is unlikely to be achieved unless the implicit understandings of gender relations in

teachers' classroom practices are addressed. A similar study by Paynter (2011) using the coding schema of Hamilton et al. (2006) examined gender stereotypes and representation of female characters in children's books. Paynter (2011) revealed that since the Hamilton et al. study, most measures of stereotypes and underrepresentation improved. However, some "measures that declined significantly include more anthropomorphized male main character and illustrations" and that there were "no female characters in assertive/aggressive characterizations" (Paynter, 2011, p. i).

Gender in many instances is likely to influence our perceptions of ourselves and others. This is to say, in many societies, people's behaviours are assessed through gender norms. Holmes (2006) explicitly states that people are constantly and unconsciously assessing behaviours contextually in relation to gender norms. Holmes continues by saying that, "as with all social norms, this is often most evident when a person breaks or challenges the taken-for-granted assumptions about the way women or men should behave" (p. 5). It seems that the human social experience is intertwined inextricably with gender, and gender is often taken for granted to the extent that it becomes invisible in our spheres of our conversation. Sunderland (2000a) believes that gender spreads in every corner of the language classroom and language education. I differ with Sunderland as I believe that gender spreads in every corner where there is an interaction. Some studies advocate mediation theory as a universal theory that is applicable to any situation and learning context.

3.4.2 Multimodal texts

There is no doubt of the existence and influence of power relations in the production of texts. Power relations exist, affect us and influence our themes, focus, contents and audience. New direction in CDA is emerging into multimodal properties of texts as one significant

innovation. Multimodal is a theory of communication and social semiotics. It “describes communication practices in terms of the textual, aural, linguistics, spatial and visual resources or modes used to compose messages” (Bowcher, 2007, p. 189). It is also a mode of communication to make meaning from spoken language and written language. Multimodal thinking provides a richer perspective on making meanings and learning, as it focuses on the material means for representation and the resources for making texts. Multimodality draws attention to the many material resources beyond speech and writing which societies have shaped, and which cultures provide as a means of making (Kress, 2004). Modes are socially made and culturally available material – semiotic resources for representation.

Authors use texts as evidence for the existence of discourses, one kind of concrete realisation of abstract forms of knowledge, which at the same time are interactive and influenced by sociolinguistic factors. CDA studies look at textuality. By this I mean the techniques, choices and strategies used to communicate meaning. Textuality is also the discourse that constructs meaning. One may look at the relationships that are constructed between techniques. A number of questions may arise, such as: Are texts creating asymmetrical relationships or symmetrical relationships in the process of power relations and meaning? What are the ideological implications underpinning a text? What are the inherent ideological issues that are coherent in the text, e.g. male issues and female issues? Certain social practices and discourses of masculinity come with more social status, potential power and social goods than others (Connell, 1987; Gee, 2004). Connell used the term “gender order” to describe the hierarchies present between and among the different ways of being masculine and feminine (p. 91). However, gender order is not static (see Marsh & Lammer, 2004), but is constantly changing and creating relations of power between men and women and among men.

Much of the information from which humans interpret the world around them comes from a wide range of sources such as personal interactions with others, from their knowledge and experience, cultural conventions and precedents in their social world, and also from exposure to their institutional learning environments. Thus, a school where learners are interacting with their teachers is also one of the sites where they are learning to interpret their world and meaning making. The drama *God of Women* is also one of the literary texts where learners are learning to interpret and understand the African patriarchal society. At times, authors use their narratives through fictional short stories/novels/drama/poetry etc. to convey a certain ideology apparent in their society.

The primary mode through which most of these sources provide information is through language (a discursive process), although some scholars (Kress & Leeuwen, 2001; Jewitt & Kress, 2003; Taylor, 2006) have crucially indicated that other modes of meaning making including gesture, intonation, image, gaze and other signs play a vital role and should be considered when dealing with multimodal texts. As a researcher, it is vital to not only consider the spoken or written word when collecting data. It is useful to consider other aspects of multimodal social semiotics, such as body movement, space, gesture, facial expression and tone in order to discover how meanings are embodied and what the difference is between “getting meanings through the eye as against getting meanings through the ear or getting meanings through the touch of the fingers” (Kress, 1988). All these are important aspects of route meaning. In other words, Kress appears to remind us to move beyond the mode of language in meaning making. From a social semiotic tradition, Kress views meaning as a social process where people use modes or resources at their disposal to represent. The drama *God of Women* is a resource that represents the patriarchal society in Namibia.

Language is so crucial that instead of drawing meanings passively from pre-existing knowledge of the world, it plays an active role in classifying the phenomena and experiences through which individuals construct, understand and represent reality (see Sumber, n.d). Thus the way in which learners make sense of their world is discursively mediated through language. This would mean that the relationship between the linguistic forms used to describe the world and the “reality or ideational content intended to be encapsulated within these forms is not arbitrary or conventional” (Sumber, n.d, p. 3). The relationship is a branch of a process which is ideologically loaded and the meanings implied by such synthesis of forms and content can be related to the social structures and processes of the origins of texts and discourses. All in all, language needs to be viewed as more than just a representative process of communication and be viewed as a wider part of the ideological process which people draw on in the construction of meanings.

A text may be defined as multimodal when it combines two or more semiotic systems. The semiotic systems are used in the construction and interpretation of meaning in society. The design of multimodal texts supports effective classroom use. For example, learners may understand that texts perform a particular function over time or within a specific context and they are designed to achieve particular communicative purposes. An understanding of a text’s purpose, audience and method of communication is key, as is an understanding of not only what is included in a text, but how different elements relate to each other and the effect they are designed to achieve. Both teachers and learners need to understand the codes and conventions used for semiotic systems in order to convey meaning. For instance, when composing a multimodal text, they need to make a decision about whether to show “character’s emotions through sound, gesture, facial expression or descriptive words” or some combinations of these (Anstey & Bull, 2010, p. 2). Taking on a multimodality point of view,

texts carry a degree of saturation “institutional and personal warrant” and play a key role in “enabling social groups to form, develop and maintain a sense of shared identity” (Bowcher, 2007, p. 189).

3.5 Outline of chapter

This chapter began by discussing theories such as Feminism, CDA and Social Constructivism that frame this study. Secondly, it described the analytical tools, including Critical Literacy and Multimodality, which are useful in the context of this study.

CHAPTER 4

STRATEGIES TO GENERATE DATA

Chapter 3 introduced the theoretical lenses that were used to generate, analyse and interpret data. Feminism was chosen to frame the study as it is concerned with issues of gender construction and representation in various social institutions. Firstly, the chapter attempted to discuss the relationship between the research questions and selected theories framing the study. Secondly, the nature and characteristics of each theory and concept were discussed in detail. Most importantly, the chapter emphasised the extent to which each concept aligned with data in attempting to answer the research questions.

The purpose of this chapter is to describe and explain the research methodology choices made as part of investigating the role of pedagogic practices in the mediation of gender roles in a prescribed drama, *God of Women*, in two selected schools in Namibia. First, it begins by explaining the research methodology choices made to generate data for the study and secondly, explains how CDA, the analytical tool designed for the study, was used. Finally, the field work in the two selected schools is described. This field work consisted of interviews with teachers, policy-makers involved in the selection of literary texts for schools in Namibia, classroom observation and documentary evidence (from learners' written work). The aim of this part of the study was to understand the policy guiding the selection of literary texts, and the way in which such texts were mediated by teachers to learners during the teaching and learning process. Throughout, the focus is on teachers' mediation of gender roles, and how such mediation shapes learners' understanding of gender discourses within the literary texts. To organise data, Figure 4 shows the categories that were used:

Figure 4.1: Categories used to organise data for analysis and evaluation

Purpose of the study	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• How does <i>God of Women</i> represent gender roles?• How are gender representations in literary texts mediated by teachers?• In what ways do the teachers' mediation practices of gender roles shape learners' understandings of gender representations?
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These three research questions were designed to generate insights with regard to:

1. How teachers analyse *God of Women* during the teaching and learning process,
2. What type of pedagogical practices teachers employ to mediate gender representation in *God of Women*,
3. How learners engage in classroom activities, and
4. The nature of the written comments teachers write on learners' written assignments based on *God of Women*.

I then described the data analysis strategies adopted and move on to explain why the schools were selected. I then discuss issues of my position as a researcher, particularly concerning my position as a researcher and as a teacher. Finally, I discuss the range of ethical issues arising in this study and how they were dealt with.

4.1 Research methodology

Given the fact that this is a Critical Discourse Analysis study, qualitative research methodology was used. The approach was chosen because of its naturalistic character of studying participants in their natural setting rather than in isolated, artificial spaces. Writing about the purpose of qualitative research, Gay, Mills & Airasian (2009, p. 12) argue that it is a research approach that “seeks to probe deeply into the research setting to obtain in-depth understandings about the way things are, why they are that way, and how the participant in the context perceives them”. I chose qualitative research to enable me to investigate and understand those social phenomena that human beings experience in their social settings.

According to Creswell (2014, p. 6), engaging in qualitative research is an act of supporting and honouring “an inductive style, a focus on individual meaning, and the importance of rendering the complexity of a situation”. Four teachers (2 males and 2 females from each school) who are participants in this study were given an opportunity to reflect on their pedagogic choices with regard to the selection of a teaching approach, the type of assessment tasks set, and assessment strategies used to evaluate learners’ work. The reason these particular teachers were selected is that teachers with more years of teaching literature tended to be able to offer insights into the reason for their pedagogical choices.

Another reason this research approach was crucial to this study was that one of its benefits was that, through both verbal and nonverbal communication, I as the researcher had my understanding of the phenomenon under investigation expanded. Furthermore, without being subjective, I was better positioned to understand how the study participants made sense of their world and their experiences therein. Study participants tended to frame meanings they associate to their practices according to the uniqueness of the way their society functions and interacts. In the context of this study, this approach allowed the generation of data by means of semi-structured interviews, classroom observations and documentary evidence (Grade- and subject-specific curriculum documents, the syllabus, teachers’ lesson plans and teachers’ comments on learners’ written work).

4.2 Research design

In Fairclough’s (2012) words:

Critical Discourse Analysis highlights how language conventions and language practices are invested in power relations and ideological processes which people are often unaware of. It criticises mainstream language study for taking conventions and practices at face value, as objects to be described, in a way which obscures their political and ideological investment. (p. 13)

Wodak (1999) draws our attention to the historical dimension of discursive acts and identifies the focus of CDA as something that:

...centres on authentic everyday communication in institutional, media, political or other locations rather than on sample sentences or sample texts constructed in linguists' minds. [CDA] regards both written and spoken 'discourse' as a form of social practice. It assumes a dialectical relationship between particular discursive acts and the situations, institutions and social structures in which they are embedded: the situational, institutional and social contexts shape and affect discourse, and, in turn, discourses influence social and political reality. In other words, discourse constitutes social practice and is at the same time constituted by it. (p. 8)

Wodak's (1999) assertion above shows that CDA exceeds traditional discourse analysis by not only seeking to describe language in use, but also to explain, analyse and interpret the significance of the relationship of representations embedded in discourse (Fairclough, 2001; Gee, 2005; Kress, 2000). Although this study is primarily following Fairclough's CDA approach, both discourse-historical analysis and three-dimensional approaches (the situational, institutional and social contexts) informed the study and assisted in helping the frame that was used to generate and analyse data. This is because there is not a standardised CDA approach. Different CDA approaches may overlap to a certain extent.

In this study, I used Critical Discourse Analysis (CDA) to examine the vocabulary (lexis) and sentence structure (syntax) of spoken, written and enacted texts. This choice enabled data to reveal the relationships that are suggested, created and maintained through texts, between writer/speaker and reader(s)/listener(s)/viewer(s). Given the fact that this is a study examining literacy practices and beliefs in a largely textually mediated setting, CDA provided an appropriate perspective and methodology. It is based on the idea that this relationship is revealed by examining the "deep" structure of a text. It is based on the idea that no language or action is "innocent" but that all choices in producing a text spring from the author's attitudes to the receiver as well as attitudes to the subjects mentioned in the text (van de

Mescht, 2017). Early CDA was mostly interested in power relationships. Thus, in this study, the purpose of examining texts in this detail was to reveal those unequal relationships: how a text is demeaning of a certain group/gender (in particular women). The purpose of this analysis is social redress so that marginalisation can be debated and corrected. Since then, CDA has also been used to reveal how a relationship is created (constructed) through text and to reveal how the writer sees him/herself or his/her readers and their roles (positions) in the exchange (van de Mescht, 2017).

As the above definitions imply, Critical Discourse Analysis was used both as a research design and as an analytical tool in this study. It was selected as a research design in this study because of its analytical power. In the context of this study, it was helpful in generating data arising from how teachers analysed *God of Women* during the teaching and learning process, what type of pedagogic practices they employed when they taught it, how learners' engaged in classroom activities and, what the nature of written comments teachers wrote in learners' written assignments based on the drama was. CDA allowed the development of insights into the discursive structures of various texts and genres along with their socio-political effects. Equally, it enabled the study to raise awareness of the readers and listeners to hidden parts of gender discourse. It is for this reason that as a discourse analyst, I wanted study participants to play an active critical role when exposed to a text and not just the "tip of the ideological iceberg" (Van Dijk, 1997). I noticed, for example, that readers often viewed the text as the true reflection of realities and facts, without seeing the need to subvert some of the gender biases embedded and implied in such texts. Critical analysis of the texts enabled the study to create sensitivity and consciousness about the implicitly left, invisible section, misinformation, manipulation and misinterpretation practiced by some writers and speakers.

For the purpose of this study, CDA was also used to consider the non-verbal acts during classroom interactions. For instance, the study generated data about how both teachers and learners show non-verbal clues that may signal interest or disagreement, such as giving male learners more eye contact following questions (thus inviting response). Regarding non-verbal modalities, the results of investigation of different forms and functions of several body movements made in classroom interactions during the mediation of the drama were considered as well. Because non-verbal communication is defined by body gesture, the study has considered apparent behaviours such as facial expressions, eyes meeting, and tone of voice.

In this study, non-verbal communication is regarded as powerful because it seems to express inner feelings and is likely to be more genuine, as it cannot be controlled as easily as spoken words. Thus, when dealing with CDA studies, it is essential for the readers to be aware and conscious of the various aspects of the text's production, such as the writer's socio-political background, its historical setting, and its cultural tendencies. Such elements are vital recipes for critical thinking and self-actualisation as the ultimate goal of all educational enterprise (Reichenbach, 2001). It is a powerful method against short-sighted, closed-minded mentalities, the cornerstone of most educational systems. Texts are seen as not ideologically neutral, but rather replete with ideologically motivated materials which can be brought to light by the readers' and listeners' views through CDA studies (Rahimi and Riasati, 2011).

This type of research design enabled the study to reveal instances in the text and in the teachers' pedagogic practices of stereotypical gender representations, and whether or not these are subverted during the mediation process. As already alluded to earlier, schools can be spaces where liberating discourses can find space or be discouraged, depending on how

interpretive repertoires in textual meanings make sense to learners. Part of the reason Critical Discourse Analysis is chosen for this study was its ability to offer tools that afford, in Locke's (2004, p. 1) words:

...the systematic analysis and interpretation of texts as potentially revelatory of ways in which discourses consolidate power and colonize human subjects through often covert position call.

In this context, text refers to both written texts and actions and practices that could be studied as texts as well. For Gee (2011, p. 122), "Critical Discourse Analysis is itself an interpretation, an interpretation of the interpretive work people have done in a specific context - an interpretation of an interpretation". Usually, Critical Discourse Analysis pays attention to views, issues and themes that are expressed in actions, talking and writings. CDA was necessary for this study because of the figured world which holds a particular worldview that a teacher holds – manifest the way the teachers interpret situations and respond to interview questions as it is filtered through teachers' views. More important is the fact that CDA enabled this study to identify and describe the figured worlds that are crucial to teachers – not only what they said, but also how they said it.

4.3 Research instruments

Given the fact that both the drama, *God of Women* and the teacher's pedagogic choices in mediating the drama were analysed, structured interviews, classroom observations and documentary evidence were all used to generate data.

4.3.1 Semi-structured interviews

Semi-structured interviews were used to generate further data. Key participants in this study were the education actors dealing with literary texts prescribed for Grade 9 in Namibian schools. Pre-lesson structured interviews with each teacher based on the lesson plans were

carried out. The interviews were adopted to generate data on how teachers mediate issues of gender roles as portrayed in *God of Women*. These interviews occurred once a week over the second term of the schools' calendar. Interview questions were centred on the purpose of the lesson, its focus, and ways in which these are evident in the actual lesson. At all times, the concerns of this study that is ways in which gender-related issues and their textual representations are evident both in the lesson plans and during the interview, were noted.

Within the context of data generation in qualitative research, the interview increases the comprehensive nature of the data and at the same time allows for the interview to remain conversational. The interview was chosen in order to understand how teachers mediate gender representations in the drama *God of Women*. In other words, I chose qualitative interviews because I needed to develop an in-depth understanding of participants' views and perceptions on gender-related issues (see Mason, 2002). Interviews in this study were semi-structured; however, they allowed for an element of more probing questions when required. May (2001, p. 1) believes that semi-structured interviews "allow people (respondents) to answer more on their own terms than a standardised interview permits, but still provide a greater structure for comparability over that of the focused interview". On a contrary note, Dexter (2006, p. 22) contends that individuals may refuse to be interviewed for several reasons that include avoiding being embarrassed in case they do not know the answer to the questions asked. He suggests that the best way to make a subject willingly ready for interview is to explain to them the relevance of the study in question.

One limitations of semi-structured interviews is that, they produce data that are not precoded and have relatively open format. In addition, consistency and objectivity are hard to achieve.

Similarly, the identity of the researcher may affect the statements of the statements of the interviewee. The following table summarises the interview questions.

Figure 4.2: Categories of interview questions for teachers.

In your view, do you think the way a teacher approaches the teaching of a drama text like *God of Women* plays a role in shaping a learner's view on gender representations in society? Please explain.

- As an English Second Language teacher, what strategies do you use to teach *God of Women*?
- What would you identify as the strengths and challenges in your approaches and strategies to teaching *God of Women* to Grade 9 learners?
- Are there any aspects of *God of Women* that you feel your learners struggle with most? Please explain.
- Which strategies have you employed to enable learners to overcome their struggles in these aspects?

These questions required the participants to give their views about gender representations in the drama, as a prescribed literary text for Grade 9 in Namibian schools. I designed the interview questions to investigate how texts had been selected for schools' curricula in Namibia and what gender discourses are believed to be conveyed in such literary texts. Moreover, I wanted to know whether the curriculum designers and teachers regarded the teaching of literature as a central means of critiquing traditional gender ideologies in the classroom. Interviews were tape-recorded and later transcribed during field work.

4.3.2 Observation

The study also used an ethnographic approach, drawing on classroom observations focusing on the interactions between the teacher and learners. Classroom observation was used to generate data on how the instances are mediated by the teachers and also how the teachers respond and/or react. I also observed how the teachers responded to learners' responses to questions, and ways in which teachers' reactions reflected the world view of the learners. Overall, I observed whether what the teachers actually did reflected what they actually said at the interviews. I observed instances during the teaching and noted how the teachers talked about such instances, as well as the spaces within the lesson and/or during the lesson they gave to learners to critically think and respond to issues as presented in the drama. This is the reason classroom observations were used to triangulate interview data, particularly regarding the relationship between interview data and actual classroom pedagogical practice.

According to Bertram and Christiansen (2014, p. 85) "observations enable the researcher to gather information about a wide range of phenomena, for instance, the interaction that takes place between the teachers and learners". One of the limitations of observation is that people may consciously or unconsciously change the way they behave because they are being observed and thus, observational accounts of their behaviour may be inaccurate representations of how they behave naturally. Classroom observation took place daily over a period of the second term. There were also post-lesson interviews. These interviews were designed to engage further with the observed classroom practice, focusing on ways in which gender-related issues were dealt with during the lesson itself. To understand the impact of the teachers' mediation of the lessons regarding gender-related views, class interactions during the lesson were treated as texts. The following is the observation schedule used in the study.

Figure 4.3: Observation schedule for teachers and learners

Institution: _____ Date: _____

English Second Language Lesson

Seating arrangement:

Grade/Class Group: _____

- In what ways does classroom discourse construct gender identities?

- What strategies and approaches does the teacher use to engage with gender sensitive aspects in the text?

- In what ways does the teacher represent and respond to gender-biased languages both from the text and from learners?

The observation was essential to understand the mediation of gendered cultures through studying the teaching and learning process, the way teachers mediate the drama *God of Women* to learners and the way learners responded to gender discourses. I was not only concerned with how the drama *God of Women* represents gender roles, but also with the interactive processes of meaning making, by looking at how teachers and learners carry out the discussion of gender discourse in the classroom.

Although observation may often be difficult and complex, it is regarded as one of the most versatile ways of collecting information (Simpson & Tuson, 2003). It involves naturally occurring data (Silverman, 1993). Thus, I observed teachers in their English literature lesson in order to capture their pedagogic practices on gender mediation. I was interested in observing the teaching and learning process in the classroom context to see the level of gender awareness that both teachers and learners have on how a text is likely to promote gender inequality. Using Sunderland's (2001) term "talk around text" as alluded to earlier in Chapter 2, I was interested in how teachers mediate the drama *God of Women*, as gender-critical points in the drama were another area of concern. As an observer, I was interested in identifying the information that was being conveyed as well as how and what views of the text/drama were being formed and exposed by teachers and learners.

Basically, how teachers mediate the drama and how learners respond to these methods were chiefly the focus of this study. I believe that learners are not passive recipients, and that they can actively interact with the drama during the course of the classroom observation. The content of the observation checklist was based both on the research questions and interviews I carried out with teachers for the purpose of this study.

4.3.3 Follow-up questions with teachers

Moreover, after each observation I carried out some follow-up interviews with each teacher after their lesson. I had an opportunity to ask them for instance, about how they had gone about planning their lesson and what other sources of information they had used apart from the drama. I also asked them to explain certain matters relating to what I have observed in the class, for instance, why they did not touch on issues of gender stereotyping, or why learners were not given adequate opportunity to become more involved in the lesson, or why girls appeared to be more passive, whereas boys were actively engaged in the lesson. The purpose of follow-up interviews was because I had identified significant dialogue, episodes, themes and issues of language use from earlier interviews and observations.

4.3.4 Documentary evidence

I used learners' documentary evidence to investigate in what ways the teachers' mediation practices shape learners' understanding of gender representation. Through observation, I attempted to show how the impact of the teachers' mediation choices manifest in learners' written work. For the purpose of this study, I wanted to observe how learners interpret the situations presented in class activity which determined the types of discourse drawn upon, and how this in turn may affect the nature of interpretative procedures which were drawn upon in textual interpretation. However, documentary evidence in the form of teachers' comments on learners' written work arising from the set text under study was also used. Such data was used to understand the teachers' comments, and ways in which learners interpreted and mediated gender issues and responded to gender roles within their prescribed literary texts. On the contrary, document evidence may not be sufficient to provide required data particularly when the participant did not understand the content of the subject at hand. On the other hand, some document evidence may be sensitive to be revealed.

Of course, learners were able to independently make guesses early in the process of interpreting a text, and such guesses were likely to influence the meanings that were attached to individual utterances in the drama. Fairclough (2015) points out the relationship between interpretations of context and interpretations of text where he affirms that the “interpreter quickly decides what the context is, and this decision can affect the interpretation of text; but the interpretation of context is partly based upon, and can change in the course of the interpretation of text” (p. 158). In order to interpret the features which are actually present in a text, it is generally important to consider other choices that might have been made. Multimodality helped this study to observe teachers and learners through their attempts at meaning making through body language, facial expression, tone, and gesture. The following figure gives categories of documentary evidence.

Figure 4.3: Document evidence sample.

1	Type of document: Learner's written work
2	Date(s):
3	Name and status of the author of document:
4	Position held: Learner
5	For which audiences is the document written?
6	<p>Document Information (Learner's written work)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The relationship between what is in the document (learner's written work) and the nature of teacher's talk that went on during the lesson • The extent to which the teacher's language during class time features in learner's written work • The presence (in learner's written work) of aspects of the teacher's sensitivity to gender issues that were introduced in class and the extent to which these are applied by learners in their work • To what extent is teacher's feedback enhancing gender sensitivity? (Assessment for learning literature needs to be consulted by myself)

Data generated through document evidence enabled the study to generate ideas concerning the units of analysis under study in ways that interviews and classroom observations were not likely to do. Learners' written works were the main document evidence for this study. Thus, the reason document evidence was selected is because it exists independently of the

researcher's action, consequently providing an element of objectivity in the data generation process.

4.3.5 Other data resources

Curriculum documents in which policies are set to direct or guide the syllabus design were also examined to obtain the general overview of gender as an educational agenda in Namibia. Textbook and material instruments were also used to examine how those involved with the selection of literary texts in Namibia look at gender representations. The primary goal was to read educational policy documents that guide the design and development of English literature curricula in Namibia. Overall, I was particularly interested in investigating the extent to which the African literature curriculum mirrored the principles of gender equality and power relations that are common in many patriarchal societies.

4.3.6 Data analysis

The analysis of the drama as a textual analysis was guided by feminism and postcolonial approaches discussed in detail in Chapter 2. While postcolonial theory focuses on the nature and function of today's African literature, the feminist ideology guided the analysis of literary texts in a twofold manner. Firstly, the fact that the position of African women in many societies cannot be generalised to other women in other parts of the world. Secondly, the argument that there is misrepresentation of women in literary texts as discussed in Chapters 1 and 2. Given the fact that this study deals with gender representations, the analysis of *God of Women* therefore sought not only to discuss the literary theories mentioned in Chapter 3, but also explored language and gender as influenced by feminist ideology, the emphasis being power relations revealed in the use of language in literary texts.

Fairclough (2010) proposed a three-dimensional framework that could be employed to relate micro levels of language use to wider aspects of social practice. Data analysis for this study thus followed Fairclough's (2001) CDA model of a three-dimensional level of discourse that operates as (a) text (spoken or written), (b) as discourse practice (processes of text production and text interpretation), and (c) as sociocultural practice (immediate context, institutional context, societal context). These three levels are dialectically interlinked, which in Fairclough's view makes language a social practice. Hence, CDA was used to analyse how *God of Women* represents gender roles and representations. I analysed the drama in relation to power. This was necessary because social orders and orders of discourse are relative to certain ideologies and to certain power relations. Consequently, it is evident that situations may be differently interpreted if different social orders are being drawn upon as interpretative procedures by different participants (see Fairclough, 2015). Moreover, it is equally essential to consider that ideologies and power relations which underlie social orders have a deep and pervasive influence upon discourse interpretation and production, for they are embedded in the interpretative procedures of the social order.

For Fairclough, there is an internal and dialectical relationship between language and society. This corresponds with another of Fairclough's three-dimensional processes of discourse analysis, that is, (i) description (looking at the formal linguistic properties of texts), (ii) interpretation (looking at the relationship between productive and interpretative discursive processes and the text) which implies that a text is the product of a process of production and a resource in the process of interpretation, where there is an interaction between people, and (iii) explanation (looking at the relationship between discursive processes and social processes). In other words, the text is seen as a piece of social action.

Often, the relationship between the text and social structures is an indirect, mediated discourse. Firstly, it is mediated by the discourse which the text is part of, taking into account that the values of textual features exclusively become real, socially operative when embedded in social interaction (Fairclough, 2015), where texts are produced and interpreted against a background of common-sense assumptions which give textual features their values. Secondly, the relationship is mediated by the social context of the discourse because the discourse in which the values are embedded becomes real, socially operative, as part of institutional and societal processes of struggle (see Fairclough, 2015). The common sense assumption of these discourses is that they incorporate ideologies which align with a particular power relation. Thus, Critical Discourse Analysis served as an analytical tool to analyse how a Grade 9 prescribed drama was used to reveal, critique and reflect on gender issues and power relations within a specific society, particularly in instances in the text where stereotypical gender views are constructed.

Data analysis also focused on the pattern of language used in the teachers' comments on learners' written work. In other words, the study paid attention to phrases used by the teachers when assisting learners to understand. For example, the analysis focused on how learners interpret and respond to the issues of gender roles and power relations in the text, and how the teacher's comments raise the learner's critical awareness of typical gender stereotypes in the text. Regarding the analysis of data generated through classroom observations, Critical Discourses Analysis was used to engage with events in the classroom as texts: topics discussed, dialogue among learners, and between learners and teachers, and ways in which issues of gender and language usage from the observation schedule reveal the extent to which teachers' pedagogic practices mediate ideas that enhance learners' critical thinking skills regarding gender relations and issues. Because I observed classroom practices and conducted

interviews with teachers, such data revealed how the teachers interpreted and mediated gender issues in their classrooms.

4.3.7 Sampling

Both the research site and study participants were selected through purposive sampling. The reason for selecting Grade 9's in the two different school types was the fact that I was interested in investigating schools in the northern part of Namibia. This part of the country is still predominantly traditional, and gendered perspectives of males and females still dominate. Another reason was the fact that literary studies are introduced for the first time in Grade 9 and learners are expected to write a literature examination for the first time in Grade 9 in Namibia. Thus, four Grade 9 English Literature teachers (two from each school) were selected for this study and the criteria in question were their years of teaching experience and their level of academic qualification. Teachers with longer years of teaching experience and holding higher qualifications generally yield richer data than novice teachers, who often rely on pre-determined choices in their pedagogic practice, with very little innovation.

4.3.8 Ethical consideration

I was aware that classroom observation is a sensitive issue for those involved. The observer has all the power and control over people she/he observes (Foucault, 1977). Because the study was conducted at a secondary school, permission to conduct interviews with government officials who are involved in the selection of literary texts for Grade 9 was sought from the Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture. I was aware that the use of interviews could raise some ethical issues. The exposure involved in being interviewed about curriculum policies guiding the selection of literary texts for schools could not be underestimated.

Study participants were assured of their confidentiality. Moreover, all study participants were requested to complete a consent form that outlines the purpose and reasons for the study. Anonymous and confidential work of learners was used to generate data. Participants were also given complete information about the purpose of the study and assured that they were free to withdraw from participating if they wished to do so. The data was generated, securely recorded and used solely for the purpose of this study, and later destroyed after the completion thereof. All information that the study participants shared in this study remained confidential, except to those who had access to it, that is, my supervisor and myself. In terms of my position in this study, I do not teach in the same schools as my study participants, and I teach Grades 7 and 8, not grade 9.

4.3.9 Validity and reliability

Bricki (2007) relates validity and reliability to trustworthiness, and stresses that the researcher has to ensure that the findings of a study are actual findings, not the impression of the researcher. He calls on researchers to make sure that the tools they use can be used elsewhere, hence, such tools should be systematic, credible and transparent. Like any other research design, qualitative studies should employ the principle of honesty and transparency. The rights of the participant shall at all time be respected.

For the validity and reliability of the study, I reported actual findings and took care not to misrepresent these in any way.

4.4 Outline of the chapter

This chapter outlined the research design and methods employed in the study. It further explained how CDA is designed as an analytical tool used in generating data. Subsequently, the field work was described. The aim of this part of the study was to understand the policy

that guided the selection of literary texts prescribed for schools in Namibia, and the way in which the drama *God of Women* is mediated by teachers. The chapter discussed the methods adopted in relation to research instruments such as interviews, classroom observations and documentary evidence that were utilised during the study. Moreover, this chapter described the data analysis strategies adopted and then moved on to explain the choices of the schools and drama for the study. Finally, I have looked at the issue of ethical considerations.

CHAPTER 5

TEXTUAL ANALYSIS

Chapter 4 presented the research methodology choices made to investigate pedagogical practices in the mediation of gender roles as prescribed in the drama *God of Women*. Given the fact that this is a literary study, the chapter discussed Fairlough's (2001) CDA model of a three-dimensional level of discourse and showed how it is going to be used in this study. As an analytical tool, CDA looks at how language conventions and practices are invested in power relations and ideological processes which people are often unaware of. Furthermore, the chapter explained how semi-structured interviews, classroom observation and documentary evidence were used to generate data. The chapter then concluded by describing the study participants and the ethical issues pertinent to this study.

The focus of this chapter is to discuss the first set of data generated in this study. This data is based on the analysis of the Grade 9 prescribed drama *God of Women*. More specifically, the chapter is set out to identify, interpret and analyse this text in ways that reveal how gender representations are constructed and perpetuated.

5.1 Nature of the syllabus

The English Language Syllabus (Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture, 2017) has a list of topics to be covered in the teaching of literature in Namibian secondary schools. English is used as a medium of instruction from Grades 4–12 in Namibia; however, the teaching of literature commences only from Grades 8–12 and it is compulsory. The list of literary texts is prepared by the Namibia Institute of Education Development (NIED), which also deals with curriculum planning and development of teaching and learning resources. As discussed in

Chapter 1, the nature of the curriculum materials used in schools and their relationship to the world of learners give a critical window into what knowledge is being conveyed by schools (Stromquist, 2007). NIED approved the use of literary textbooks on the basis of the didactic and social objectives to be achieved, and no discussion is opened around how such literary texts present, and therefore construct, gender roles. The absence of such discussions at NIED means there is no guarantee that learners' world views on gender relations are engaged and challenged within the classroom context.

There are no specific components that outlined the teaching of literature in the National Curriculum. However, and in regard to teaching of English, the National Curriculum (2014, p. 22) stipulates that by the end of completion of Junior Secondary Phase (Grade 8-10), "Learners listen with understanding for information, interact effectively in two-way communication, read and understand youth literature and other texts and write factual and imaginative texts of up to two pages in which errors do not confuse meaning". This means that the National Curriculum did not have specification and guidance on the teaching of literature. In other words, there are no values outlined on what is to be learned and promoted in regard to literature.

According to the current in-use English Language Syllabus for secondary schools (Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture, 2017), the overall objective for teaching literature is "to read and respond to plays, novels, stories and other texts" and also "to understand the literal and inferred meaning of a text". The basic competencies include, "infer meaning using language structure" and also "demonstrate an understanding of and respond actively to key aspects of texts such as action and consequences, characters and relationships between characters" (p. 22).

Considering the objectives in a syllabus from a CDA point of view, it stood out that learners analyse the ways in which the texts, talk and other semiotic interactions that learning comprises are constructed across contexts. Secondly, there is a need to conceptualise interactions that are compatible with socio-cultural perspectives in analysing literary texts. Thirdly, the social world is reflected and constructed through different sign systems. Therefore, the systems of meaning are caught up in political, social, racial, economic, religious and cultural formations which are linked to socially defined practices that carry either more or less value in society. As a result, all these cannot be considered neutral. Given the fact that language is a social practice and contrastingly, not all social practices are created and treated equally, I agree with Gee (2004) that all analyses of language are inherently critical.

5.2 God of Women

To begin with, it is essential to decide whether or not the drama *God of Women* is written in a feminist tradition. That would help the readers to understand the position of the female characters versus the male characters. To do this, let us first define gender as it is central to the analysis of the issues and instances in the drama. Easthope (1986) considers gender on three bases, namely: the biological body, the social roles of males and females, and thirdly the way humans internalise and live out their roles in society. It is such ways of considering gender interactions at different times in the lives of people that can determine a person's outlook and treatment of others.

The drama *God of Women* is a Grade 9 prescribed literary text used in Namibian secondary schools. Nyathi has portrayed men and women who interact with each other in a particular way. Nyathi (1998) positions the drama as a critique of African patriarchy. *God of Women*

presents the different ways in which African patriarchy broadly manifests itself regarding the subaltern position of women. In this analysis I used a range of feminist theories, extracting information from the concepts useful to an understanding of the drama. The drama represents unequal power relations between men and women in Chief Lewanika's kingdom, which was largely steeped in tradition. Women (Ma Inonge, Ma Ilenge, Nsala and Joyce) failed to challenge the practices of male domination in various ways. None of these women makes an effort to question some of the decisions that were the prerogative of the patriarch. The women also did not attempt to break out of the role of domesticity and submission.

Women in particular have been portrayed from a different perspective to that of men. The drama is centred on a polygamous Chief Lewanika, who failed to produce the customary heir to his throne, in spite of having four wives. As a result, he marries one wife after another, adding to his harem, hoping that one of the wives will eventually bear him a son. Chief Lewanika is however, depicted as an abusive husband who is disrespectful to his wives.

The drama is also about a seer, a prophet and a traditionalist complacent with the status quo, who tries to find the origin and cause of the king's curse, and also to cleanse the clan from further affliction. The seer reveals that the affliction is caused by lust, which involved father and son eating from the same fruit. The actual meaning of the seer's prophesy is that a father and his son, within Chief Lewanika's clan, had had sexual relations with the same woman. His fourth and youngest wife, Joyce, later announces that she is pregnant, but she is confused as to who the father of the unborn baby is.

It is also about Neo, a very good friend of Lewanika who had the audacity to tell him to stop abusing his wives. Lastly, there is John, an unknown son whose presence in a dramatic turn of

events leads to the fulfilment of the seer's prophecy. Chief Lewanika ultimately commits suicide. The drama depicts patriarchal dominance wherein women have less or no power over men. This analysis is about the entrapment of the four women by a dominant husband.

Nyathi (1998) portrays the oppression of women with regard to class and gender. Ma Inonge, the first wife, became pregnant at a young age by Lewanika before he became chief. Lewanika ordered Ma Inonge to abort the foetus as it would downgrade his position to the heir of chieftainship. Ma Inonge hid the baby and had to lie that she aborted it to let Lewanika take the throne. The baby was Lewanika's unknown son, John. She is faced with having to lie about her womanhood to empower a man. Ma Inonge later married Lewanika, but failed to bear him a second son. Being so desirous to have a son, Lewanika married a second wife, Ma Ilenge, who bore him four daughters. Lewanika does not consult his wives when deciding to take another wife. This suggests that women have no decision in their marriages and they appear not to challenge such practice. They had accepted the male supreme to rule over them.

Given the fact that Ma Inonge had only daughters, Lewanika continued to harbour another woman. He married for the third time, Nsala, who was barren. He finally married Nsala's sister, Joyce, in whom Lewanika placed his last hopes. Joyce was forced to marry Lewanika to save her parents from destitution. She was exchanged for a handsome herd of cattle and a piece of land.

Joyce became pregnant but she was not aware whose pregnancy it was, as she had sex with both the father and his son. This means that Lewanika's unknown son, John, had an affair with Joyce who is a wife to his father. Joyce later confided to her husband that John claims the burden of her womb. This confirmed the seer's prophecy that "Father shall eat with son.

Eating with greed the abominable fruit of the son” (p. 2). Ma Inonge confided to Joyce that John was chief Lewanika’s son with whom she had slept before marriage. It was Joyce who disclosed to John that Lewanika was indeed his father. John became angry as he had not known his father and had been denied his birth right. He went to confront his father with a spear, intending to kill him. Moving towards his father, John pointed a spear at him and stated that “Know it from today. You will remain my mortal enemy” (p. 32). Lewanika grabbed the spear from John and thrust a spear through his abdomen, only to eventually commit suicide.

Given the fact that this drama depicts African patriarchal society, it would help us to understand the position of its female characters versus its male characters. To do this, I began by presenting the construction and treatment of males and females in the drama, *God of Women*. Gender is pervasive and it is often assumed in many societies that it is bred into our genes. Some people find it hard to accept and believe that the construction of gender is constantly created and re-created out of human interaction, out of social life, and that it is the texture and order of social life. For some individuals, gender construction begins with the assignment of sex category. In social interaction throughout their lives, individuals learn what is expected, see what is expected, act and equally react in expected ways, and hence simultaneously construct and maintain the gender order. Notably, societies vary in the extent of the inequalities in social status of their women and men, but where there is inequality, the status of women is often held in a lesser esteem than that of men.

Secondly, I emphasised domestic violence by foregrounding gender and power inequality in opposite-sex relationships. The focus was on societal situations that sanction a man’s use of violence and aggression throughout life and outlaw gender roles that dictate how men and women should behave in their relationships. I explored how females were often harassed and

badgered into silence by their husband, Chief Lewanika. Ma Inonge, Ma Ilenge and Nsala were humiliated and belittled by Lewanika. Fourthly, I stressed how women were used as commodities and were also depicted as involving themselves in petty fights. Finally I discussed the domestication of women in patriarchal society.

5.3 Gender construction in *God of Women*

Gender construction in many literary texts has been critiqued by feminists. As a theory that guides this study, feminism has been chosen to understand and examine gender roles and stereotypes regarding gender, and how power plays a part within socially and cultural composed gender roles. Society has indoctrinated acceptable behaviours for women and men. As a theory, feminism provides teachers the opportunity and lens to examine a text through an alternative perspective. It is through a feminist lens that society can remedy the injustices and imbalances that women undergo at the hands of a patriarchal society. The inequalities among gender are a result of different knowledge and different cultures that have been dominated by the assumption that the male perspective is the “universal” perspective.

Gender, as it pertains to Tsitsi Dangararembaga’s *Nervous Condition*, incorporated gender as both a biological and social construct in humanity. While women are depicted and constructed with qualities such as submissive, destitute, sex object, voiceless, domestic service provider, powerless, passive, envious, compassionate, sensitive and vulnerable, on the contrary, men are depicted differently with qualities such as power, physical strength, control and dominance. As discussed earlier in Chapter 3, I stressed the feminist view that patriarchy in all aspects of life is the source of social inequalities and injustices among both men and women. Through a feminist lens, learners are able to analyse how gender plays a part in a text and how stereotypes regarding gender and culture influence gender construction. Feminist

criticism is meant to disrupt the way we look at the world. It is necessary to make learners aware of the subtle positioning of women so that they may move forward in life with open minds, ready to deconstruct the stereotypes around them. As discussed in Chapter 3, I incorporated a radical feminist lens whereby the construction of gender is grounded in male attempts to control female sexuality. I looked at the construction of women versus men under the same set of circumstances. Given the fact that power relations exist in many societies, it is true that Lewanika controlled his wives' sexuality and that they had to submit to his will.

The women in the drama clearly undergo struggle and are often disempowered in their society. All these elements are evident in the play. For example, women are depicted as voiceless when Chief Lewanika, in Act I Scene I, tells his wives to accept his fourth wife, Joyce, who is also a sister to his third wife, Nsala, without their consent. Joyce, on the other hand, has been trapped into marriage by her parents to save them from hunger and poverty. Thus she marries Chief Lewanika against her will. Joyce is married with only one purpose: to bear Lewanika a son. Women are forced culturally to accept their activities as exclusively existing in the domestic sphere, thereby inhibiting their development into creative and intellectual humans. The oppression of women is both a material reality originating in material conditions, and a psychological phenomenon, a function of the way women and men perceive one another and themselves. In most instances, these women are beaten and remain silent about the physical abuse by their husband. The wives are portrayed fighting each other, as they appear to be envious of one another. For instance in, Act I Scene I, Ma Ilenge fights Ma Inonge, but when Lewanika tells them to stop the fight, Ma Ilenge rebukes: "If my child was the child of your beloved Nsala, you wouldn't have said I should shut my mouth" (p.7).

Nyati depicts men as powerful. For example, Chief Lewanika physically and verbally abuses his wives. He is portrayed as beating his wives and verbally disrespecting them by openly telling them about their failed sexuality when they all fail to bear him a son. Ma Inonge's sexuality is compared to a "depleted granary"; Ma Ilenge is told that her "traditional dish has lost its delicacy", whereas Nsala is compared to a barren desert. As discussed earlier in Chapter 3, section 3.1.1, Ebunoluwa (2009) shares the view that women's oppression is tied to their sexuality.

On the contrary, feminist literary criticism takes gender as a fundamental organising category of experience, believing that the inequality of the sexes is neither a biological given nor a divine mandate, but a cultural construct. Given all the arguments above, the truth is that gender incorporates both the biological and the social constructs in humanity. For instance, the following interaction shows how Lewanika perceives his wives:

Lewanika: You must treat her as one of you. She is my fourth wife. I know this has upset some of you, but you know yourself why it happens.

Ma Inonge: My lord, what gives you all the hopes in her?

Lewanika: The Lords of the Soil have spoken. Women, I shall continue feasting in your huts.

The same is true in that social construction often has a dominant role to play in determining people's interactions with one another. This also suggests the reasons why feminists appear to assert one universal truth: that whatever power or status may be accorded to women in a given culture, they are still, in comparison to men, devalued as a second gender. The inequality of the sexes being referred to here, Easthope (1986) believes is the result of different fields of knowledge and different cultures that have been dominated by the assumption that the male perspective is the universal perspective.

As a man, Lewanika is depicted as dominant, controlling and possessing all the power in the compound. Considering the definition of feminism as discussed at the beginning of Chapter 3, we are yet to see if Nyati's drama is written to remedy the injustices and imbalances that women undergo at the hands of a patriarchal society. The author depicts women's experience of being abused and humiliated, and never protesting against their abuse. Lewanika gathers his wives to ask them about their virility. Ma Inonge, the eldest wife, is surprised when she is asked if she had a son before she met Lewanika. Ma Ilenge, Lewanika's second wife, cries when she is asked if she was never attended to before or if she was simply on the moon. Nsala, the third wife, cries when she is told that she is barren beyond an ordinary desert. Joyce, the fourth wife, is married to purposely bear a son. She is exchanged for a herd of cattle and piece of land to rescue her parents from hunger. She has no power to deny the arranged marriage.

All these hold the social and sexual condition of women, essentially (in one way or another) embodying the fact that the way women are treated in sex and society is congruent with what women are viewed as. In other words, this could mean that the fundamental relationship between men and women (in sex), in reproduction, in social hierarchy, is both necessary and inevitable. *God of Women* does not represent a womanist lens (as opposed to feminist), which is committed to the survival and wholeness of the entire people. The gender role prescriptions are internalised by Chief Lewanika and became extremely powerful determinants of behaviour. It is a society where a man inflicts violence against his wives. This is evident when Chief Lewanika slaps Ma Ilenge when she calls Ma Inonge a "witch" (p.7). Nsala is beaten for refusing to remain silent after she has an argument with Ma Inonge. These suggest that in the patriarchal society, men have a near monopoly on institutional power, and that men at all

class levels are able, to some degree, to exploit women for their physical, emotional and reproductive labour.

From a womanist point of view, both genders in *God of Women* have different, although roughly equal, kinds of suffering to cope with because of their respective genders. For instance, the wives are sexually humiliated because they fail to create a son. Chief Lewanika cannot cope with the fact that he has no son as an heir. John wants to marry Joyce but he cannot accept the fact that she is the new wife to his father. Neo is unhappy about the abuse of women by his best friend, Chief Lewanika.

There are clearly defined sex roles, while various taboos ensure conformity with pre-specified gender roles. Traditionally, men do not participate in domestic work including child rearing – such tasks are considered to be the exclusive domain of women. Males are classed as having qualities such as strength, vigour, virility, power, courage and self-confidence. Men, in short, provided for their families.

The act of dancing to the chorus of the owl behind the compound is seen as engaging in a secret affair by members of the same compound. In other words, the people involved in the sexual dalliances are within the same clan where spouses are engaging in adulterous or amorous affairs. The author uses the opening to depict Joyce hugging John behind the compound of Chief Lewanika's best friend, Neo. This act suggests that Joyce, although a married woman, is of loose morals and engaged in sexual relations with another young man. The author makes use of foreshadowing as a literary device in Act I Scene I through Neo, who upon his visits to the palace suggests to Chief Lewanika that "the young woman you have recently brought to the compound is deficient in morals" (p. 8). This foreshadowing as a

literary device works well, as Joyce is later found by Neo with John behind the compound, fulfilling the seer's prophecy. It is clear that Joyce is seen as responsible for the affliction that the clan is engrossed in. The author depicts a woman, Joyce, as responsible for bringing a curse to the clan through the voice of the seer. In his voice, the seer shouts:

You shall perish by lust

Lust

Lust

Lust

Lust

Lust, oh seeds of the soil... Lust.

Father shall eat with son. Eating with greed the abominable fruit of the son.

Oh Lust, where do you lead these souls? (p. 2)

What is noteworthy in the above is that while 'father and son' will share the same woman (abominable fruit), the woman is portrayed as having slept with both father and son. The author presents the woman as loose and equally a prostitute. Given the fact that she is married, Joyce was supposed to have abandoned her previous love relationships. She is expected to behave as a married woman given that she is married in a royal house, and she is expected to show respect for that fact above all else.

Nonetheless, it appears that her feelings are overlooked because she is forced into marriage by her destitute parents. To emphasise the radical feminist view as discussed in Chapter 3, section 3.1.1, gender is constructed in patriarchy to serve the interests of male supremacy. In other words, a woman is traditionally considered an item for men, given an exchange value and treated as a commodity. As a young girl of the family, she is marked with material value.

It appears Joyce is made to believe in femininity as merely a set of culturally defined characteristics, leaving her with no option to resist, as she will be labelled disobedient.

In other words, Joyce does not love the Chief yet she cannot disobey him either, so she continues to see John behind the Chief's back, resulting in not knowing the father of her unborn child. In this instance, the readers are immediately informed what kind of character Joyce is. The author, Nyathi (1998) depicts Joyce as a prostitute. On the contrary, Chief Lewanika is depicted as a respected man within his clan. He is regarded as a man of high esteem within his compound. He is not blamed for involving himself in sexual relationships with minors. As a chief whom everyone looks up to, he is supposed to lead by example and not engage in indiscriminate sexual relations for personal gain, yet he marries Joyce simply to bear him a son. Upon asking his third wife (Nsala), about the whereabouts of her sister, Chief Lewanika tells his wives:

You must treat her as one of you. She is my fourth wife. I know that this has upset some of you, but you know yourselves why it happened. You, Ma Inonge, your granary has been depleted. Ma Ilenge, your traditional dish has lost its delicacy; and you Nsala, all my hopes lay on you until you proved yourself barren beyond an ordinary desert. For long I have wanted a son, but you all have been in vain. Who shall inherit this chieftaincy when I bid farewell to this earth? I have therefore married Joyce for a purpose. In her I shall plant a seed. (p. 5)

On the question of whether the drama is written from a feminist tradition, a womanist perspective or a stiwanism perspective, we first need to understand these terms. Feminism advocates for women's rights on the grounds of the equality of the sexes. Womanism is a form of feminism that acknowledges women's natural contribution to society, while stiwanism is concerned with the social and political transformation of African women. All these elaborate and specific kinds of critical and theoretical practice, despite their differences, are committed to the struggle against patriarchy and sexism. In other words, these are

attempts to describe and interpret (and where possible, reinterpret) women's experience as depicted in various kinds of literature.

What arose from the data collection of this study is the dynamic of gender and power, wherein a man has power over women and may decide to take another wife with or without informing his other wives. This brings in the issue of polygyny as practiced in many African cultures, where women have no say in their matrimonial issues. This is evident when Chief Lewanika tells his wives about his decision to bring in Joyce and have them "treat her as one of you". This is a reflection of how a wife is expected to remain submissive and allow the husband to have a final decision in their marriage. It also tells of how these wives have less power to question their husband in matters regarding their household affairs. This is also evident when Chief Lewanika becomes much more severe, intimidating, unfriendly and ready to perpetuate the patriarchal values in his homestead, which he claims is his own. The women feel helpless in his presence. Some postcolonial scholars, as discussed in Chapter 3, section 3.1.2, argue from a feminist point of view that polygyny is demeaning because it discriminates against, disadvantages and disempowers black African women.

Nyathi (1998) portrays women as relatively voiceless and not participating in the decision making of family affairs, or even the decisions about their own lives. Chief Lewanika is aware of his dominance and control over his wives and seems to care not at all about their feelings. This is evident when he says "I know that this has upset you, but you know yourselves why it happened". Chief Lewanika seems to know that his decision is hurtful to his wives but that does not matter to him. What matters is the absence of a son that he so desires to have. The issue of polygyny is still regarded as a male-supremacist ideology by many feminists, seeing

it as a harmful form of social development (see the broad discussion about polygyny in the theoretical and concepts chapter).

Nyathi (1998) presents a metaphoric validation of male power which addresses the issue of harbouring a new wife. Moreover, Nyathi (1998) tells how males continue to dominate their society, and may start threatening women that they will take a second, third or fourth wife if the woman does not bear a son.

One can see how women are verbally and emotionally abused by their husband. The metaphors used by Chief Lewanika (“your granary has been depleted”, “your traditional dish has lost its delicacy”, “barren beyond an ordinary desert”) show how women are regarded as sex objects. The language Chief Lewanika uses to describe his wives’ womanhood is also significant. Ma Inonge’s womb is compared to an empty grain store, which literally means she is old and cannot support life. Ma Ilenge’s vagina is compared to food that is tasteless, whereas Nsala’s womb is compared to a desert that is desolate. Of course, these words are used to insult the women and show them that he is no longer interested in their sexual activities, as ultimately, his own pleasure and needs are all that matter.

In addition, the choice of words used by Chief Lewanika could also mean that a woman is only attractive in her tender years, but as women grow older, men see them as wearisome. This can be seen in Chief Lewanika’s choice of words when he is harbouring his new wife, Joyce, referring to her as “Young, smart and industrious” (p. 4).

A woman who is ageing is regarded as no longer attractive to her husband sexually. It is also clear that Chief Lewanika did not marry Joyce out of love, but for a specific purpose as

clearly stated above: “In her I shall plant a seed”. A seed here refers to a son who will one day inherit his chieftainship.

The author presents the typical patriarchal society that only concerns itself with matters that benefit men over women. Having examined the portrayal of men and women in *God of Women*, I would argue that the drama is not written in the feminist tradition. The author merely depicts women’s experiences and leaves them there. At the same time, he simply describes the socialisation of women into their roles and nowhere does he depict women protesting against abuse by their husband. All that is described is women who accept mistreatment, seeing it as normal. In other words, the author represents women constructed in a way that they should accept their inferiority to men. This is to say, the author merely gives a representation of the social construct - a pattern of sexuality and behaviour imposed by cultural and social norms. The drama lacks the concepts of feminism or Alice Walker’s womanism, the latter being committed to the survival and wholeness of an entire people, male and female.

Nyathi (1998) immediately reminds readers that even if women know that they are used as sex objects, they have no choice to resist but rather to accept what is in the male interest. Given the postcolonial and postmodern theories as discussed in Chapter 3, section 3.1.2, many contemporary African writers describe women’s experience and in most instances, such experience is made visible in alienating or degrading ways. Such experience as described by Nwapa in her novel *Efuru*, and by Bessie Head in *So Long a Letter*, tend to reinforce the universal belief of man’s dominance and superiority over woman. Moreover, the author presents how it is a traditional obligation for a woman to avail herself to satisfy her husband’s sexual desires. In other words, *God of Women* depicts how women are married for sexual

entertainment, as expressed by Joyce when in conversation with Ma Inonge in Act I Scene III: “Look, this man does not love. He just wants a son out of me and thereafter he will treat me as he treats you. You know very well, Ma Inonge that love is not found in the market” (p. 15).

Moreover, Ma Inonge also expressed her dissatisfaction towards her sexual affair with Lewanika before he became chief. In her own words, “I don’t know whether I like this either, but I was meant for it. I feel so...” (p. 14).

Nyathi (1998) depicts how women become powerless in sexual matters. Similarly, Ma Inonge also confides in Joyce that she does not like the idea of having had sex with Lewanika during his youthful years, before becoming chief. The author infers that Ma Inonge, like any other young girl, should accept sexual advances from male suitors. It is clear that both women do not wish to have sexual relations with Lewanika, but as women, they have to avail their sexual readiness to him to prove their womanhood. Literally, this means that women are merely seen as sex objects who have no say over their sexuality, let alone challenge the demands of men. This results in women being disempowered and unable to decide what is right for them.

A woman is often blamed for her inability to bear sons, overlooking the fact that biologically, both male and female chromosomes determine the gender of the child. It appears that a woman is considered the prime factor in maintaining her husband’s lineage. A man’s lineage is worthless if a woman has not borne him a son. Often, wives who bear daughters only are humiliated by their husbands and their fellow kinsmen. Family lineage is very important in African cultures. Usually, the family lineage is seen through the birth of the sons in marriage. This is evident when Chief Lewanika continues to harbour new wives in search of a son to become heir after him. Often, a woman who fails to give her husband sons is at risk of being

either humiliated or replaced by another woman. This is portrayed in Act I Scene I when Lewanika humiliates his wives by forcing them to accept his decision.

In many patriarchal African societies, women play a major role as wives and mothers where their “reproductive capacity is crucial to the maintenance of the husband’s lineage and it is because of women that men have a patrilineage at all” (Davies, 1986, p. 243). In many African societies, a male child is more welcome than a female child. The value of a son in African tradition cannot be overemphasised. Thus, Chief Lewanika could not accommodate the fact that he had no son to take up his mantle. As a result, Joyce becomes the victim of both her family and her society. She has no desire to marry Chief Lewanika, who she looks at as her grandfather, but to obey the cultural practices of the Subiya tribe (a tribe found in the Eastern part of Namibia) is unquestionable.

The drama, *God of Women*, represents women as preoccupied with sexual activities. This is evident in Chief Lewanika, who after his consultation with the seer summons his senior wife, Ma Inonge, to call her co-wives to a meeting where he can reveal to them the prophecy. Ma Inonge responds by saying, “I am not on duty my lord, please consult your roster” (p. 3). She continues responding to her husband: “I am sorry, my lord, I thought you wanted your daily food” (p. 3). It appears from Ma Inonge’s response to her husband that a schedule is drawn up, whereby each wife should be on call for sex, and it is likely that the same person on call should be the one to prepare her husband’s food.

On the other hand, “your daily food” could mean that every day Chief Lewanika has to have sex with one of his women. One could also infer that once a woman is called by her husband, she is called for sex. This is implied by her husband’s reaction: “Don’t reach your destiny

before you arrive at it, woman” (p. 3). The author tries to exonerate men from preoccupation with sexual matters and place it squarely on women that they too believe themselves only sex objects. However, Chief Lewanika’s response could infer that men have other matters of concern that they may want to share with their wives.

The drama appears to carry more insinuations suggesting that women cannot have a say in matters concerning sex. After belittling and insulting his wives upon informing them about the seer’s words, Chief Lewanika continues to instruct them to “update your huts for my next visit” (p. 5). This implies that women are reminded of their purpose: that they are married to respond to their husband’s sexual desires. Chief Lewanika is also still in pursuit of having an heir and his wives are reminded to prepare their huts for his visits as he perhaps wants to see who will be pregnant with a son. Thus he demands his “traditional food” from his wives as it is seen in this drama that it is the wife’s responsibility to avail herself to the husband’s sexual demands. Sex is regarded as food, as it were. The drama shows female characters as having to submit to social norms, having no say in how they live their lives in the patriarchal domain.

Often, in many relationships between men and women, power surfaces, and many women accept inferiority while men accept mastery. Some gender beliefs that mirror a particular society have contributed to the maltreatment of women in their marriages. For instance, the notion that women are inherently inferior to men underlies the society’s attitude towards the treatment of women.

Given the social constructivism as discussed in Chapter 4, section 3.3, Berger and Luckmann (1991) are concerned with the nature and construction of knowledge and how it comes to be significant for society. It is noteworthy that the social construction of gender takes place

through the working ideology. Nyathi gave us the ideological beliefs and assumptions which may be unconscious and invisible, representing the imaginary relationships of individuals within real conditions of existence. On the other hand, the author portrays a system of practices that informs society's every aspect of daily life. The society appears to authorise its beliefs and practices as universal and natural in presenting women not as cultural constructs, but as eternally and everywhere the same.

The author seems to have one gender used as sexual objects, depicted as powerless and with no rights over their sexual choices. It is obvious that female characters in *God of Women* are more involved in sexual activities than men. An example can be seen in Act II Scene III, where the author presents Ma Ilenge and Nsala discussing sex. Ma Ilenge confides in Nsala that she had sexual relations with a priest when she once worked at a chapel. As an innocent woman, she could not exercise her rights to refuse to be dragged into sex, specifically by a priest (Father Thomas), given the fact that priests are known to be sworn to celibacy. Ma Ilenge reveals to her co-wife Nsala that "He did it again and again" and "I too was becoming fond of it" (p. 25). The author presents how women are introduced to sex before marriage and although knowing that sex before marriage is unacceptable, Ma Ilenge was eventually enjoying it. The author puts women in low positions, where their role in the whole play centres on their sexual relations. Women are not represented discussing economics, politics, business or education, but rather are represented as being involved in petty discussions over sex, which I believe denotes the patriarchal idea that women are inferior creatures who do not think on the same level as men.

Vygotsky (1986), in Chapter 3 section 3.3, asserts that culture is the product of social life and human social activity. Therefore, the process of internalising gender roles as a male

personality who automatically looks down on female persons has been done consciously by the author of the drama *God of Women*. Act 1 Scene 1 ends with Chief Lewanika telling his best friend, Neo, how they are in control of women. In his words:

We culture them...
We give them a little civilisation...
We domesticate them...
They are ours... (p. 9)

I see the subjugation of women in the *God of Women* as a form of social control, such as patriarchy that puts them in a marginalised position. It is alluded to in Chapter 3 that the system of gender discourse, gender representation, prejudices and ideologies elucidate why people engage in gender stereotypes in the first place, believing that the other gender is inferior. Such beliefs, as argued by van Dijk, and Kelly in Chapter 3, resulted in social identities whereby people are inclined to divide their social world into “us” and “them”.

The author shows how women are portrayed as subjects and the property of men in an African setting. The pronoun “we” refers to men whereas “them” refers to women, e.g. “We culture them”. This suggests that men teach women about tradition, taboos and myths and also give them education. Moreover, it could mean that to fit into the patriarchal society in question, women are taught about initiation into womanhood in preparation for marriage, sex education, personal hygiene and social graces.

It seems women have to learn how to be submissive and loyal to men’s authority. “We give them a little civilisation” could mean that women have to be taught values and norms by men, they are taught to behave or respond to their husbands in a particular way. “We domesticate them”; this suggests that women are tamed by men. “They are ours” suggests that women are the property of men. They are their subjects, attached to them and therefore easily controlled.

They do not seem to have a sense of individuality and are represented as dependent on men for survival and meaning. In other words, they have to identify themselves with men to have meaning. Griffiths (2013) argues that the growth of male power in society is regarded as the main problem many women face nowadays.

In addition, some African societies codified the rights of men to exercise power over women on the basis of gender. The fact that the male has a superior position to the female positions a man to consider women as inferior human beings. For example, some men monopolise women with their power, resulting in many women becoming vulnerable, weak and submissive to their husbands. Moreover, in some African societies, it is believed that gender equality simply does not operate in the traditional society. This is likely to hinder the social and economic position of women in their society. I believe the use and abuse of women by men makes other women behave lowly in their society and, at the same time, puts women's position under assault.

5.4 Domestic violence and verbal abuse

The drama *God of Women* depicts domestic violence towards women. Chief Lewanika's wives appear to experience violence and verbal abuse differently, but the men as depicted in the drama all inflict violence on their partners. Spitzberg (2009, p. 210) defines violence as "behaviour intended to inflict physical harm". Dobash and Dobash (1998, p. 4) believe that "violence may encompass verbal abuse, intimidation, physical harassment, homicide, sexual assault and rape". African women are often sexually abused and or beaten by their male partners. This is evident in Act I Scene I when the seer who told Chief Lewanika about his unknown son gave him a "rod of correction". The seer to Chief Lewanika: "Here. Take this

rod of correction. With it, you shall bind your subjects to you. With it you shall keep your spouses together” (p. 2).

The seer is also represented as a male in the drama, giving another man a stick with which the chief shall administer punishment on his wives. The seer gives instruction on what the rod shall be used on. He regards women as subjects to be beaten if they do not adhere to their husband’s commands. It may also mean that if the wives are involved in rivalry, the chief may use the rod to keep them together. The wives are at the centre of abuse such that even if one may want to leave the polygamous relationship, she is likely to be beaten. An attempt by the chief to beat his elderly wife could be seen in Act I Scene I, when Lewanika asks Ma Inonge to call all her counterparts to a gathering, to which Ma Inonge responds, “Which ones my Lord?”. Chief Lewanika responds in anger: “Is your intelligence ageing, woman? Call your counterparts quickly, before I use this rod on you!” (p.4). Ma Inonge responds immediately and runs quickly to call her co-wives. The eldest wife is questioned about her level of thinking. Chief Lewanika felt offended by Ma Inonge’s question “Which ones my Lord?”; however, he continues putting women at a low level and sees them as inferior, hence he mutters to himself “It is as if they were denied their sense!” (p. 4).

The author tells of how women are physically and verbally abused. Moreover, the author depicts how men are perceived as having power and are highly respected. This is most evident when Chief Lewanika is addressed as “My lord”, referring to someone who has power or authority over others. In addition, the author depicts how women hardly exercise power over men, showing the kind of relationship they have at home when a husband is addressed as a master. In the African setting, a husband is considered the head of the household and a wife has to adhere to his orders.

Another aspect of verbal abuse hurled by Chief Lewanika to his wives can be seen in Act I Scene I. In an attempt to find if any of his wives mothered a son before marriage, Chief Lewanika asks his eldest wife, “It does not ring in my memory that you were still untouched when I first met you. Did you have a son before?” (p. 4). Ma Inonge, in anger as the interrogation takes place among her co-wives, responds with “Ah! Father of my children, where is your respect? How dare you malign me before these young girls? (p. 4).

It is clear that the use of an exclamation by Ma Inonge is an indication that of shock and humiliation. Chief Lewanika’s word “untouched” is indirectly insulting Ma Inonge, implying that she was not a virgin when he slept with her. It appears that a woman who keeps her virginity until she meets her husband is afforded high respect; however, it is not the same with men. Moreover, men are not questioned about their virginity. None of the wives questioned whether their husband was also a virgin before he met them. Chief Lewanika chooses not to apologise after offending his eldest wife. He continues to verbally insult his wives instead. “Bo Ma Ilenge. Our first contact coincided with the intense flow of the river. Were you unattended before, or you were simply on the moon?” (p. 4). Ma Ilenge, Chief Lewanika’s second wife, crying as she was also asked in the presence of others, replies “Husband, why do you spill your bile at me like that? Wasn’t it you who told me on your first wrestle that I was convincingly unique and simply the best?” Chief Lewanika replies, “Don’t publicise it” (p.4). Turning to his third wife, Chief Lewanika continues to hurl insults:

Nsala, all my hopes lay on you until you proved yourself barren beyond an ordinary desert. Women, I shall continue feasting in your huts. Nsala you were the last to bring your first harvest at the start of the previous season. This should not repeat itself. (p. 5)

The choice of words used by Chief Lewanika to ask his wives about their sexuality in the presence of one other explicitly shows how men are disrespectful towards their wives. The

author presents how women are humiliated and choose to show remorse instead of arguing. In the drama, women are put to shame by their husband because they seem not to satisfy him sexually. The author immediately shows how men want their sexual activities kept a secret, whereas women should be made aware of their sexuality. This is evident when Chief Lewanika instructs Ma Ilenge not to publicise their first contact. The author presents how women remain in silence and simply take the abuse and humiliation as a norm.

Despite his insults, Chief Lewanika continues to show his sexual desires towards his wives when he tells them that he will continue feasting in their huts. The use of the word “feast” shows that Chief Lewanika will still enjoy sex even if his wives do not bear him a son. In other words, it could mean that even if their husband is not pleased with their libido, these wives may not deny him sex despite being humiliated over their sexual activeness. Nyathi (1998) tells how women are voiceless, submissive and have no say in their marital affairs.

God of Women represents men as powerful and shows how they inflict violence on their wives. This is evident when Neo, Chief Lewanika’s best friend, attempts to stop a fight that erupts between Ma Inonge and Nsala. Neo feels that Chief Lewanika’s polygamous relationship is the result of his wives’ infighting. He questions Chief Lewanika, saying that “With this chaos I am witnessing, my lord, how do you foresee peace in many?” (p.8). The narrator shows that men can also sympathise and provide protection against the abuses (at the hands of their counterparts) in their society. For instance, unhappy with the continuous abuse of women, and in particular when he finds Nsala being defamed by her husband, Neo confronts Chief Lewanika, saying that:

My lord, you abuse your wife. You malign her in front of us all.
My lord, words will be enough... has the rod of correction turned into a rod of
destruction?
Why do you batter your wives?

We marry women because we love them and not because we want to batter them.
It is not pride but humility that makes us esteemed. (p. 16)

Although the author presents men as abusive, not all men inflict cruelty on women. There are some men out there with a merciful heart. The character Neo is represented as being merciful towards women. It shows that men can act as preservers of their families too, rather than the measure of one's manliness being the beating of one's wives.

Neo, at one point, questions Chief Lewanika about his continuous marriages despite being regarded as a man of high esteem. Neo feels that marrying one woman is a good choice rather than marrying many wives who will engage in rivalry. He feels that there will be no peace as the co-wives will bicker amongst each other. Chief Lewanika rebukes Neo: "Don't be foolish, Neo, you know there is more than this in one wife, one husband. Don't pretend you don't know I know your wife already nurses a blue rim on her eye" (p.8).

Chief Lewanika seems not to respect his male counterparts. This is seen when he responds to his best friend with "Don't be foolish". Chief Lewanika believes that marrying one wife does not guarantee peace in a marriage, and reveals that although Neo is married to one wife, he still abuses her. In other words, the authors brings in power relations to establish that all men abuse their wives irrespective of whether they are monogamous or polygamous. Not only does Chief Lewanika shows disrespect to his best friend, he continually uses derogatory remarks. The following is part of the conversation with his eldest wife, Ma Inonge:

Lewanika: Is there peace in the village? Do people still respect me? Do they still fear me?

Ma Inonge: I don't know ...

Lewanika: You must know. Idiot! You are the eldest of all these nincompoops.
(p. 22)

The author continues to show how women are subjected to violence and verbal abuse. It appears they have no one with which to share their maltreatment. For instance, Neo, upon appealing to Chief Lewanika to halt beating and punishing his wives, shares how he witnessed the total abuse of his mother: “I heard and saw in my youth the frailty of her ribs crushed by the merciless fists of a father I have ever since denied fatherhood. Killed for not warming him water for a bath” (p. 16).

The author immediately introduces the abuse of men in the kingdom. It is as if beating is legitimised by all men. The choice of words selected by the author, “frailty of her ribs crushed” shows how heartless a man can be towards a woman. It also shows how women’s lives can be lost over petty things, like not warming water. The author’s voice is describing one of many very dreadful fights of which women are the victims in their marriages. Although Neo’s mother may have wanted to defend herself, it is likely that her husband overpowered her. It is as if women are perceived as slaves in their households. One may not imagine that a woman may die just because she has not warmed her husband some water.

5.5 Silenced women

Returning to Chapter 2, most of the studies on gender stereotypes constantly critique the traditional culture as being conservative, sexist and patriarchal by regarding women as second-class citizens and equally as people who work at home tending to their husbands and caring for children, with no opinions of their own to be vocally expressed. No woman has been depicted as trying to freely articulate her freedom. The author portrays women as individuals who do not know how to get out of their situations. This suggests that women’s position is doubly burdensome, as if they cannot make decisions in their own lives. It could be argued that Nyathi (1998) constantly represents women as playing a silent role. Where they

attempt to speak out about their feelings, they are immediately silenced by their husband. For instance, the following from *God of Women* illustrates this:

Both of you shut your mouth.
Shut your mouth. Are you mad?
You will seal your mouth when I say so.
You will obey instructions in this house.
You will do as I say, woman. (p. 7)

The above examples appear when Chief Lewanika's wives started to fight. Instead of listening to them and mediating as both a husband and leader, he chooses to silence them. This is an indication that he is the only person with authority and women have to remain silent irrespective of their feelings. None of the women respond to Lewanika, an indication that even women themselves are accustomed to the culture of silence. This is the experience of many women, particularly in rural African societies. As alluded to earlier in Chapters 2 and 3, Nyathi appears to demonstrate that the women's fear of pointing at the real problem for them is patriarchy. In addition, the author presents how women often appear to be dominated by their male partners. The author shows the significance of gender representation since the main character (Chief Lewanika) is portrayed as strong and able to outwit everyone to get what he wants. This implies that society is not neutral on gender issues, given the fact that Lewanika does not consider women to be his equal, but rather second-class citizens.

Given the male power that threatens women for its own benefit, the drama *God of Women* in Act I Scene III depicts how women are silenced to secure men's position in society. For example, Ma Inonge reveals to her co-wife, Joyce that she did not like the idea of sleeping with Lewanika before he became Chief. She says:

I don't know whether I like this either, but I was meant for it. They were going to appoint the son as chief. We fell prey to his hunt. I knew I was carrying. we kept it a cryptic for fear he would lose his chieftaincy. (p. 14-15)

The above shows how women become prey to male supremacy and how women are disempowered in their society. The pronouns used, “we” fell prey to “his” hunt, suggests that young girls in the village were forced to accept sexual advances from male suitors. “I was carrying” means that their first contact coincided with her being pregnant, which did not please the chief-in-waiting. It shows how young girls are used to advance men’s sexual desires, yet they cannot bear the shame of sex before marriage.

The feminist ideology, as explained in Chapter 3 section 3.1.1, takes the view that throughout history, women have been reduced to objects of male supremacy. In many instances, ‘woman’ has been constructed as the ‘otherness’ of man, thereby denied the rights of her own subjectivity and the responsibilities of her own actions. In a more existential term, patriarchal ideology presents women as ‘immanence’ whereas men are ‘transcendence’ (see also Mol, 1985), dominating all aspects of social and cultural life. The narrator shows how women are regarded as inferior and have to save men from social embarrassment. The command “Get rid of it” is given to Ma Inonge to abort the pregnancy because it will ruin Lewanika’s chances of being crowned chief. Likewise, John, (Lewanika’s unknown son) after hearing that Joyce is pregnant, asks Joyce to abort the foetus so that he can marry her instead. The following is their conversation:

John: I know you are being reared by a stupid shepherd and he is struggling to tame you.

Joyce: John... I am pregnant.

John: Pregnant?

Joyce: It’s not just being pregnant... I am confused as I don’t know whether you or my husband is the father.

John: I want to marry you and I don’t want that pregnancy. You must get rid of it!

Joyce: What?

John: Get rid of it I said! Get rid of that foetus! (p. 20)

The radical feminists are generally correct to argue that the construction of gender is grounded in male attempts to control female sexuality. The author shows how men and

women have no equal status in society because the way men and women perceive one another in the drama *God of Women* is more slanted toward male supremacy. Ma Inonge has to lie to secure Lewanika's position in society. Joyce is told to abort her foetus to marry John. It seems that a man's position in society is more important than that of a woman. Thus, Ma Inonge has to lose her pride as a woman to elevate a man to a leadership position, while John does not want to marry a woman who is already impregnated by another man.

5.6 Women as a commodity

Arranged marriage appears to be one of the social aspects that explains the status of women in much of African literature. Young children, and in particular girls, are forced into marriage by their parents in exchange for materials or to bail them out of poverty. Nyathi depicts how a young girl, Joyce, has to accept an arranged marriage against her will. Joyce's family, stricken by hunger, opts for Joyce to marry Chief Lewanika, who was old enough to be her grandfather and who already had three wives. She was meant to become his fourth wife against her will. Telling her one-time lover, John, who promised to marry her, Joyce has this to say:

I am married to a man who already has three wives. He has offered a piece of land and a hut. He has paid my family a handsome fifteen head of cattle in exchange for me... He has saved them from hunger... But still, I don't love him. (p. 11)

The author seems to suggest that it is a norm for patriarchal societies to exchange their young girls for commodities. Given the patriarchal sphere that dominates society, Joyce's father exchanged her by fulfilling his desire to uphold his African tradition's patriarchal values. Equally, the author seems to show that women are perceived as trade goods that may redeem the family from poverty. It is clear that Joyce's decision to accept to marry the chief could mean that a child who refuses to accept her parents' desire is likely to face a curse in her life. Thus, Joyce chooses to please her parents, a choice that disempowers her as a young woman.

This is evident when she says, “But still, I don’t love him”. In other words, Joyce’s situation is not about personal preference, but rather an arranged union which might have a huge impact on her life. The author appears to demonstrate how difficult it is for women in Africa to be liberated from patriarchal society.

It appears that all of Chief Lewanika’s wives were married against their will or had no choice but to accept him to save themselves from poverty. This is evident in a conversation between Ma Ilenge (second wife) and Nsala (third wife). The following is their conversation:

Nsala: How did you join the compound?

Ma Ilenge: I had a deep thought of a spell cast on me by my father. I then sought solace in my husband-to-be, whom I knew would provide. I needed a slice to feed whomever I would bring to earth, and I found it here.

Nsala: Do you adore him? I mean do you treasure him?

Ma Ilenge: He fathers my children and provides ground, yes, but I have no passion.

Nsala: Neither do I.

It is evident that these women do not love their husband. For instance, Ma Ilenge accepted to marry Chief Lewanika after disappointing her father, who detested her first lover because he was not of her tribe. She therefore finds comfort in a man who would give her a portion of his land in order to feed her family. This suggests that women are not married for love but for security. In an African setting, a man is considered wealthier when he owns land and livestock. Thus, a woman is depicted as having to find a man who would give her meaning through his wealth. It also appears that a man, particularly a father, has more power in giving consent for his daughter to be married. Nonetheless, a woman may be denied the opportunity to marry the man of her dreams if the father refuses to give his consent. *God of Women* represents women characters as voiceless and at the receiving end of discrimination and oppression from their patriarchal society.

Nyathi gives a powerful critique of how parents can betray both motherhood and fatherhood where young daughters are trapped in arranged marriages in exchange for goods, status and security. As a young girl, Joyce has been dragged into misery by her parents. The narrator manifests how women are accorded lower status in a patriarchal society. Equally, the author shows how women are regarded as prize-worthy. The “handsome fifteen head of cattle” refers to a good price worth sacrificing a daughter for.

Practically, Joyce never wish to marry a man who is comparable to her grandfather, but because of patriarchal superiority, she has to accept being a salvation to her family, rather than her own person. For instance, Joyce could have refused to be sold, but she also felt that, “I am their only pride” (p. 11).

The author also suggests that a woman has no choice to refuse what she is offered. It could also mean that a woman has to accept that she is inferior to men. The piece of land offered is regarded as acquiring wealth in the African tradition. A hut refers to a dwelling, the house where she will be living, where she will submit to tradition and endure inhumane treatment at the hand of the patriarchal society. It appears that Joyce has to live with a man she does not love, owing him her survival from the hardships her family experienced.

The author further presents another aspect of women exchanged for material wealth by their families. As *God of Women* continues to represent both male and female characters differently, Chief Lewanika continues to represent male supremacy over women. To reinforce the idea that women have a lower status in society, he tells them, “You all crept here as destitutes. I sliced my land for you. I traded you for my stock. I fed you. None of you standing here can claim hunger.” (p. 17).

The above utterance shows how women are vulnerable and continue to be humiliated and abused at the hands of the male supremacist. The choice of words used explicitly shows that women are not married for love but rather used for benefit. “You all crept here as destitutes” shows that they all came from poor families and hence, have nowhere to go. “I traded you for my stock” means that all of Chief Lewanika’s wives were exchanged for cattle. It seems that the exchange of women with cattle is the justification given for their abuse.

As an African custom, often a man who asks for the hand of a woman in marriage has to make a payment in cattle or cash to the bride’s family, known as *lobola*. It is likely that the payment made positions women as commodities who are merely exchanged for livestock. Moreover, women continue to be regarded as the property of men who are not married for love but for sexual advances and to provide labour in the patriarchal circle. Women are placed at the lowest level of patriarchal society. Many African women are unable to repossess themselves and shun the view of being marginalised by males. As a literary text for Grade 9 learners, *God of Women* presents opportunities for teachers to encourage learners to critically examine the bride payment as problematic, as it is a system still common in some African countries.

5.7 Rivalry among women

God of Women continues to portray female characters negatively. Given the fact that all the women characters in the play are in a polygamous relationship, the author fails to show solidarity among women. Thus, instead of exhibiting solidarity and friendship among women, the author depicts them as engaging in petty rivalries. For instance, in Act I Scene I, Ma Inonge and Ma Ilenge, (Chief Lewanika’s first and second wives) quarrel over a child who was fed food unfit for consumption. Here is their choice of words when quarrelling:

- You filthy maggot! You think you can come to my hut and push me around?
- Seal your stinking mouth, you senile-dog!
- I wonder how a man of high esteem can marry such a witch.
- Nsala upon hearing her name mentioned in a quarrel, interjects: Let nobody call my name here. I say, let nobody mention my name at all! (p. 7)
- Ma Inonge: Oho, so the rumour that you two gossip about me is true?
- Don't be shallow, Ma Inonge. (p. 8)

Contemplating the choice of words used by these women, it is explicit that they are not content with each other. They use vulgar language over petty things. Ma Inonge is seen as a filthy maggot and a witch, while Ma Ilenge is compared to a weak, old dog. Even the young Nsala, who is supposed to regard Ma Inonge as her mother, refers to her as “shallow”. There is no happiness in the compound. This can be interpreted as implying that a polygamous marriage does not bind women together but instead divides them. Instead of finding solidarity among each other over the abuse by their husband, the author represents women as mere enemies within.

5.8 Women as domestic workers and service providers

The author represents women as playing a major role in the household chores. In *God of Women*, women's roles include preparing food for family and guests whenever they visit, looking after the family in general, availing themselves for sex, and tilling the fields. In patriarchal culture, men are often represented as engaging in economic, social and or political discourse. When visitors come to the compound, women have to prepare food as a sign of hospitality. For instance, Ma Inonge is tasked to prepare an alcohol beverage when Neo pays a visit to the compound. After parting with his friend, the chief tells his senior wife about his

troubles, telling her that he dined with a phantom in his sleep. His wife suggests that perhaps she could call for a witchdoctor to heal him. His response is, “Since when has a woman thought on behalf of a man?” (p. 22). This suggests that women are not regarded as problem solvers. It could be the reason they are not involved in the politics of the kingdom, because they are perceived as people who do not think. This also tells of how women are ignored in general, viewed as having nothing meaningful to offer in their household except their wifely duties.

Nyathi (1998) continues to show how women are used as sex objects. After wanting to find out who has conceived in his compound, Chief Lewanika tasks his elderly wife “Find out who has been fermenting seed before its rot contaminates us all. I know it cannot be you with your exhausted womb. Make a meal for me and dust your blanket” (p. 23). As an elderly wife, she must find out who among her co-wives is pregnant. She is also reminded that her womb cannot reproduce again, which I believe may have two possible meanings – either she had many children or she failed to conceive after several attempts. The remark, “exhausted womb” shows how women are defamed in the patriarchal society. After being reminded of her weary womb, she is instructed to prepare him food and clean her room for his sexual visit. This indicates that men have power over women, who are deemed as weak and whose primary purpose is to respond to men’s sexual desires.

The author makes readers believe that women have also admitted their inferiority and accepted humiliation from their husband. This can be seen when they are asked who among them is pregnant. Nsala admits her barrenness when she responds, “It is not a secret from anyone that my womb is fruitless”, comparing herself to a tree that does not bear fruit. Ma Ilenge also vows not to breed with the chief anymore, when all her four daughters were given

to his kinsmen for failure to labour in his field. Thus she swears, “Therefore I shall try no more, for I know no son will come”. Ma Ilenge also has to admit, “I am parched” meaning she cannot conceive at her old age. Again the author depicts one gender as being overpowered by the other. The drama also represents women as hard working. They themselves also know of their roles. This is evident when Ma Ilenge reminds her co-wives that their husband does not feed them but it is nonetheless their duty to make sure that they till the land in order to have food. In other words, it suggests that women are married to offer labour to men.

The author consistently portrays men as having more power than women and it is clear that women are used as subjects who accept their inferiority to men. The play presents overtly traditional African cultural practices with regard to women’s sexuality. Therefore, it would be best for the literature teacher to use the play to encourage learners to critique aspects of African culture regarding gender roles. If the drama is presented uncritically, learners are likely to accept the power relations as reflected in *God of Women*.

5.9 Summary and conclusion

To conclude this discussion, I can say that men are portrayed as superior whereas women are reduced to an inferior position and suffer at the hands of the patriarchal system in the drama *God of Women*. Given the patriarchal society they live in, women are often abused and denigrated. I also provided a textual analysis which attempted to address the research question of this study: How does *God of Women* represent gender roles? The nature of the Grade 9 English Second Language syllabus in Namibian secondary schools is outlined prior to the textual analysis. It is clear from the textual analysis given that men and women have no equal status in the depicted society. Often, male characters are represented as powerful and

dominant whereas women are subservient, with domestic violence and abuse used as a way of cementing traditional gender relations in African culture.

God of Women presents ample opportunity for English literature teachers to encourage learners to engage in critical discussions and debates on issues such as violence against women, arranged marriages and payment of a bride buying (lobola) system. Of course, these are not simple debates in the classroom, given the fact that some learners might be coming from backgrounds where they have witnessed the issues of power in question. These situations require teachers themselves to engage learners critically with the drama, considering how it unpacks issues of the African patriarchal society. Basically, the author has shown us how a linguistic medium promotes and transmits the values woven through society.

The next chapter presents how *God of Women* is mediated by teachers.

CHAPTER 6

TEACHERS' MEDIATION PRACTICES

Chapter 5 presented the data generated through the analysis of the text that is used in this study as the basis for the investigation of teachers' mediation of gender stereotypes prevalent therein. This text, as already established, is the drama prescribed for Grade 9 learners in Namibia, *God of Women*. This data analysis in Chapter 5 revealed the extent to which *God of Women* is infested with innumerable instances wherein, through characterisation, character relationships and the plot in general, patriarchal views are promoted, eventually destroying women's sense of self, identity and confidence. An analysis of this text was crucial, not only because of the way it is taught and negotiated by teachers and learners, but also to reveal the ways in which learners are socialised through schooling into accepting and/or challenging gender norms.

Chapter 6 takes on a different level of analysis: how the classroom discourse emerges in the teaching of *God of Women*, but also how through the interview data it mediates the problematic gender constructions in the text. The way in which learners respond to such mediation forms part of this analysis. The ways in which teachers engaged learners in the context of the discussion of gender-sensitive aspects of the drama is crucial both to this study and to teachers' understandings of the problematic ways in which different genders are constructed by the text. It is in this context that the chapter begins by, firstly, introducing the research instruments used to generate the data on teachers' mediation of gender roles in the drama. The chapter then moves to a discussion of how teachers introduced their lesson, looking at the classroom talk, questions and answers, and learners' involvement in the lesson. Thirdly, the chapter describes the way classroom discourse constructs gender identities.

Fourthly, the chapter takes a further discussion on power and gender and also presents the position of women as a theme in the play. Furthermore, I discuss how teachers engaged with gender sensitivity. The chapter concludes by looking at how teachers responded to gender-biased language.

Given the fact that this study used an ethnographic approach, it drew on classroom observations focusing on the interactions between the teacher and learners. Classroom observation was used to generate data on how the instances in the play were mediated by teachers and equally observed by students, as well as how the teachers responded and/or reacted to such gender instances. In other words, classroom observation was crucial to understanding the mediation of gendered cultures through studying the learning and teaching process. Overall, it was necessary to answer a research question in this study: How are gender representations in literary texts mediated by teachers?

As discussed in Chapter 2 section 4.3.2, observation as a research instrument enabled me to gather information about a wide range of phenomena, particularly the interactions that took place between teachers and learners. Given Sunderland's (2001) definition of mediation of literary texts as teachers "talk around text", the classroom observation also focused on interactive processes of meaning making by looking at how teachers talk around the gendered discourse as represented in the drama *God of Women*.

Three English literature teachers, one from school A and two from school B (see Chapter Four, section 4.1), were observed as they delivered their lessons. It should however, be noted that these classroom observations did not allow findings to be generalised to all secondary

schools in Namibia. The purpose of the classroom observations in each school was to observe how gender representations are mediated by teachers and to what extent such practices could be said to be shaping learners' understandings of gender relationships in the text itself, and then extend such understanding to society in general.

The classroom observations revealed that each learner from the schools in question had a copy of the drama, which could be significant in engaging all learners in the mediation of gender stereotypes through discussion and critique. Classroom observation data had been observed around the following situations.

6.1 Teachers' introduction of the lesson

T1 introduced the lesson by asking learners "What is gender?" to which learners responded that gender is either "you are male or female" or, "when men and women are treated equally". The teacher could not give learners a thorough definition of gender; instead, he underlined that gender was neither biological difference nor sex. No further explanation or absolute definition of gender was given.

T2 had not introduced the lesson at all. Instead, she asked learners to get into groups and began to dramatize Act I Scene I. Only one group acted and learners were applauded for their role play. There was no construction of gendered discourse identities in the classroom. T3 did not introduce the lesson; instead, he gave learners an old question paper and instructed them to answer Section C thereof. The following is an extract from Section C:

Give literal meanings to the following expressions/figures of speech:

- Young women have fragile hearts. Old men foster them and young men break them.

- Bird, wind and trees have eyes and ears.
- When my mouth yields its teeth and my skin dries and wrinkles.
- The gods shall soothe our souls.

Learners were asking the teacher about the definition of words that I have underlined above. Instead of giving them the meaning of the underlined words, the teacher distributed dictionaries to enable learners to find meanings on their own. Thereafter, he would ask a learner to read the meaning aloud. Generally, there were no deliberate signals of gender-related issues in the lessons' introduction.

6.2 Classroom talk

There were no specific sections of the drama selected for classroom talk over the extent to which poor constructions of women and better constructions of men were presented. However, some talks emerged from the readings. While T1 was reading Act I Scene I, he came across an expression from Chief Lewanika talking to himself about his wives: "It is as if they were denied of their senses!" (p. 4). The teacher explained to learners that the expression was aimed at devaluing women and that they are seen as inferior. He further explained that Chief Lewanika speaks disrespectfully towards his wives, an indication of a woman not valued by her husband.

While T2 was asking learners what they had learned from the play, she summed up that the author portrayed women as a commodity, referring to Joyce who is exchanged for a herd of cattle and a piece of land. She concluded by summarising that: "Women are voiceless, submissive and have no say. The author portrayed women as jealous of each other."

(6/6/2018)

It appeared that the teachers had no deliberate classroom talk about the poor construction of women and how much better men were presented in the play. Their explanation of such constructions emerged as incidental from learners or their readings. For instance, while a learner was reading Act I Scene 1, T3 picked an expression from Neo and Chief Lewanika's conversation. He asked learners, "What is Lewanika trying to say when he said 'we know your wife nurses a blue-rim on her eye'?" (6/6/2018). Learners did not respond. Instead, the teacher responded by saying "All men abuse their women in their kingdom". As mentioned earlier, there were no specific classroom talks on the representation of men and women as portrayed in the drama. All that emerged were incidental explanations from the readings.

6.3 Question-and-answer stage

The classroom observation also considered the types of questions the teachers asked and the extent to which they related to gender, as well as how learners' awareness levels were consciously and explicitly raised. Learners were given activities based on the form and not the content of the drama (see Appendix E). Based on lesson preparations, teachers asked that learners answer questions based on the play. However, the questions asked did not consciously and explicitly raise awareness of gender roles as presented in the play. For instance, T1's lesson preparation (see Appendix F) indicated that learners will answer questions from the play and that learners were able to provide correct answers; however, most of the questions that were posed during lesson presentations did not raise awareness of gender roles. Oftentimes, learners did not answer with detailed explanations beyond simply saying "no". The following were the questions posed by the teacher while reading:

T1: Are men and women treated equally?

Is there gender equality in the play?

Do you think it is fair for couples to beat each other?

Why is Chief Lewanika having all these wives?

Why is there a rod of correction? (23/05/2018–01/06/2018)

T2 asked learners about the moral of the play and gave learners notes thereon (see Appendix G). The teacher prepared three lesson plans but there were no gender-based issues raised from the play.

T3 had prepared two lesson plans and while learners were reading Act I Scene I, asked the following questions:

T3: How does the scene end? Who is in conversation with who?

Analyse Lewanika's relationship with his friend Neo. What is happening?

What event do you think Nyathi foreshadows with Neo's words on p.8? (4–13/06/2018).

To all these questions, none of the learners attempted to answer. Instead, the teacher provided responses to learners. This is a clear indication that learners were not consciously engaged in discourse to raise an awareness on gender issues as represented in literary texts.

As previously discussed in Chapter 4, classroom observation was designed to focus on how the classroom discourse constructs gender identities, the strategies and approaches the teachers used to engage with gender-sensitive aspects of the drama, and ways in which the teacher represented and responded to gender-biased languages both from the drama and from learners. In other words, the classroom observation was necessary to compare what teachers said in the interviews and what they actually did in the classroom.

6.4 How classroom discourse constructs gender identities

From my classroom observation, I determined that gender issues were not dealt with collectively, particularly in shaping learners' understanding of gender representations in their prescribed drama. This is in contrast with the teachers' responses from the interview, which stated that the approaches they used in teaching *God of Women* shaped learners' understanding of gender issues, a claim they all affirmed.

From my classroom observations, and given the absence of gender debates and interactions in the classroom, learners maintained the traditional gender roles as endorsed by their teachers. It is my conviction too, as Sunderland and Yasa state in Chapter 2, that traditional gender roles are endorsed by teachers when dealing with texts uncritically.

The classroom observations revealed that the text was often not tackled critically in classroom discussion. The gender discourse was silent, especially in terms of the engagement of learners. The observed teachers used a thematic approach in tackling the literary texts. The main themes in the drama include polygyny, violence and abuse against women, women's role and position in an African society, bigotry, adultery, fornication and family lineage, among others. According to the teachers, these are the major themes that learners should consider when studying the drama.

Generally, the teaching of the drama was focused more on the form than the content. The content is referred to in here as the area that is supposed to be given preference during the teaching of the drama, considering the themes that emerged from it. The form comprises aspects such as the title of the book, the author, the names of the characters and the language used. All these affirm Feuerstein's (1991) mediation theory, where it is argued in Chapter 2

that the mediation of content with stereotypical gender representations could be a challenge. Thus it was revealed that teachers had challenges in mediating stereotypical gender representation in all the schools I visited.

Teachers seemed to be aware of the gender identities portrayed in the drama *God of Women*. I had discussed in Chapter 2 section 2.4 that English literature teachers can use classroom space to promote learners' critical judgment about the societies they live in. The same is contended by Madondo (2012), stating that teaching literature presented teachers with an opportunity to develop learners' critical engagement in relation to the past and the present. This demonstrates how English literature teachers can bring the world to the classroom.

Generally, teachers dealt with gender issues from different angles, mainly focused on the position of women in society as depicted in the drama *God of Women*. They extensively described how women (and not men) were depicted in African society. *God of Women* is about the force of gender in the context of patriarchy. What Nyathi attempts, and I believe he substantially accomplishes, is the intense and detailed dissection of the force of gender on women's condition, experience, reactions and resistance to male dominance.

Despite the fact that gender as a central theme would be relevant for both males and females, all the teachers overwhelmingly focused on the depiction of women in the play. As a result, they allowed for less discussion of the gender discourse in the classroom by learners, as teachers dominated the discussion more than learners. For instance, T1 split learners into five groups where each was expected to discuss the gender issues portrayed in each Act. Each group had one learner to present on behalf of the rest. Instead of discussing gender issues as depicted in the play, learners from both class groups (9A & 9B) were merely retelling the

play. There were no gender roles and gender issues discussed. The rest of the class was silent during all the presentations from the groups. It was also observed that of the five groups, girls dominated the presentation in retelling the drama, except for one group in which a boy represented the others.

6.5 Learners' involvement

I discussed earlier in Chapter 2 section 2.3 that schools, classrooms and educational practices are useful sites where social structures are reproduced. The drama *God of Women* as a literary text presents an opportunity for learners to explore identity and improve their understanding in innovative and multimodal ways. However, this did not transpire, as seen from the data presented below. For example, T1 attempted to lead learners into gender discussion but learners seemed not to respond openly. The following was part of gender mediation from T1:

What is gender?

Boy: It's male or female.

The teacher does not comment on the learner's response. He continues to engage learners by asking:

T1: Are men and women treated equally? Are there gender relationships?

Learners respond in a chorus: No.

There was no further mediation from the question asked. T1 continues to ask:

Do you think there is equal gender representation?

To which learners respond: No.

Continuing with his questions, the teachers asks:

Do you see power relations in the drama?

Learners respond: No.

Given the fact that this study was framed by Critical Discourse Analysis, as discussed in Chapter 3, the drama seems to be challenging and demanding in its interpretations of its ideological and socio-political themes. The teachers appeared unsatisfied with learners' responses. It was not clear whether the learners did not understand the questions or if they were merely not interested in the lesson. The above responses from learners illustrated how gender dynamics in societies remained obvious yet overlooked.

Given the nature of social interaction as discussed in Chapter 3, these learners were not given an opportunity to engage in gender discourse activity or to reflect on their environment. For example, Vygotsky (1989) believes that social interactions are critical and that knowledge is constructed via interactions with the environment and other people. This emerged when the teacher did not follow up his questions about the issues of equal representation and power relations when learners responded so negatively. Rather, the teacher dominated the classroom discussion by explaining to the learners that "Gender is ignored in the drama *God of Women*. Human Rights are not respected and that African culture seemed to affect a particular society, specifically women" (28/05/2018).

As teachers, we wander with our learners through the shifting terrains of literature, and we often find that the texts we teach and the conversations they provoke challenge us to explore our own inner landscapes. The teacher continued to discuss gender issues by explaining how women are treated in the play. In his own words, T1 said: "Chief Lewanika does not value his wives. He often abuses them and speaks disrespectfully to his wives. The chief only wants Joyce to give him a baby boy; he doesn't love her" (29/05/2018).

One of the reasons why learners are not openly discussing gender issues could be the questioning technique, whereby some questions are not open-ended but instead closed. The teacher continued to read the play alone and did not ask learners to read in the classroom. Given the discourse analysis as discussed in Chapter 3, it necessitated the deconstructive reading and interpretation of a text to disclose the concealed stimuli and discover its ideological manipulation. While reading, the teachers asked learners some meanings of idiomatic expressions and phrases. Part of the reading process is to make connections to the text, after which learners may spend time interpreting it. When learners are interpreting a text, they are generally trying to find the meaning and significance of the story, in other words, what the text means and why it is important. For example, the teacher asked “What does the expression, ‘I thought you wanted your daily food’ refer to?” One boy replied that it referred to sex and the whole class dissolved into laughter. Some girls were rolling their eyes and it was not clear whether this meant that they were not interested with the response given or did not mind at all about the word “sex”. Through Critical Literacy as I discussed in Chapter 3, learners used language power to interpret the figured world as seen from the boy’s interpretation of “daily food”. This reflected and created an increasing repertoire of written and multimodal texts.

In addition, some boys held their mouths upon hearing the word “sex”. It was not clear whether they were astonished by the word or considered it inappropriate to say in the presence of the teacher. Generally, the word cannot be said publicly, as it is considered immoral. The teacher did not comment on the boys’ response, thus whether they were correct or incorrect, it remained that “daily food” referred to sex. Both girls and boys seemed to be shy to actively engage in the lesson. Moreover, when the teachers asked “What does it mean to ask ‘are you

touched?\"", none of the learners responded. Instead they laughed, and some seemed to shy away from the expression.

Returning to Chapter 2, I had indicated that there is a need for learners to challenge some gender roles and stereotypes in literature. I believe this is a way of negotiating their gender differences and at the same time, a way of constructing the self. The observation revealed that gender identity narratives are practically absent from English literature classrooms. The question arose: how are we going to fill the gaps in school policies that enumerate protections or validate multiple gender identities?

T1 failed to respond to the silence of learners and equally failed to see whether the silence meant confusion, understanding or simple lack of interest among the learners. The teacher's behaviour was not only visible when dealing with gender issues and gender roles, but throughout his lesson.

6.6 Power and gender

Given the fact that Joyce was married to bear Chief Lewanika a son, the importance of a son as described in the play and as a real issue in the African context was not pursued in the classroom discussion, despite being mentioned by the teacher. T1 encouraged learners to ask questions and one girl asked:

Girl: Why is the drama named *God of Women*?

One boy responded that: "Because Lewanika was like a god to his wives/women. He was called my lord by his women. He takes what he wants from them" [sic] (31/05/2018).

The teacher did not comment on learners' responses. It seemed that he has also accepted learners' responses. The teacher could have initially asked learners about the intentions of the

author's title, or asked learners to analyse the relationship between men and women in the play. T1 summarised the whole play, emphasising what learners should consider from each Act in order to prepare for their examinations. The following excerpts are part of T1's summary from each Act:

- Act I Scene II introduced us to Joyce. Joyce is married to the king but John is unaware. Neo caught the chief's wife with a boy. The whole scene is about John's affair with Joyce, who is married to the chief (29/05/2018).
- Act I Scene III, the scene is about the discovery of Chief Lewanika's son, John. It is about the relationship between Joyce and John (29/05/2018).
- Act I Scene IV is about Neo telling his best friend, Chief Lewanika, to stop abusing his wives and respect them. Neo wants Lewanika to show humility towards his wives (30/05/2018).
- Act II Scene III is about Ma Inonge exposing the chief to all the other wives (1/06/2018).

These classroom observations from school A revealed that the teacher appeared to have ignored learners' engagement on gender issues. The teacher seemed to have overlooked the function of mediation as discussed in Chapter 2. Referring to Cheng and Kia (2011) in Chapter 2, "learners reach their potentials in the subsequent four dimensions: teachers as mediators interact with students, teachers as mediators facilitate learner-learner interaction, teachers as mediators develop classroom activities, and teachers as mediators generate new classroom tasks or activities". The lesson was more teacher-led and some problematic gender issues were left undebated. Although learners were asked to read about the play and discuss it in the classroom, they were silent most of the time. They appear to have less understanding of

the whole play. In other words, they seemed to be unfamiliar with the drama. Additionally, not all Acts were summarised.

At school B, class A was split into groups and asked to dramatize the first scene. Learners had the same characters' names and the same genders as represented in the drama. There was no gender discourse in the classroom, as learners were merely quoting exactly the characters' dialogue. Additionally, their costumes showed boys wearing shoes whereas girls were barefooted. This suggests that males could be seen as decent, whereas females are portrayed in lowly fashion, even in acting.

Instead of commenting on how learners dramatized the play, the teacher asked other learners to give them a round of applause for their performance. In other words, what was missing was the drawing of a conclusion from what learners had dramatized. For example, their conclusion ended as:

We culture them.
We give them a little civilisation.
We domesticate them.
They are ours. (p. 9)

I would argue that the gendered discourse was also silent in school B. As an example, the class discussed each phrase given above to reveal power relations as portrayed in the drama. The conclusion could have aroused debate in the classroom on which gender appeared to be superior and how men perceived women in a patriarchal domain. The absence of a debate contradicts the interview question: what strategies do teachers use to teach *God of Women*, given the fact that all the teachers mentioned debate as one of the strategies they use? Learners were not engaged in any debate. Apart from citing debate, T2 mentioned "writing" as another strategy that she used to teach the drama. Given the Critical Literacy concept as

discussed in Chapter 3 section 3.3.1, learners were not given an opportunity to adopt a critical view of interpretation through writing. From a feminist point of view, Critical Literacy, as a skill, allows learners to engage actively with the text, revealing the subject position from which they make sense of the world and act in it.

As discussed in Chapter 3, Gee (2004) states that investigating how language works in and outside the classroom can indicate how learners understand and make meaning from a text as well as the world around them. Likewise, Gibbons (2003), as cited in Chapter 2, echoes that language learning is mediated by language use in collaborative interactions between teachers and learners. In other words, language plays a part in learners' understanding of and reactions to a text. Similarly, the following question could have been posed to conclude the drama: "Who is referred to as 'we', 'they' and 'them' and why did the author end the scene in such a conversation?" As part of a recap in their literature lesson, T2 asked learners what they had learned the previous day. This is what learners had to say:

- Girl: We learned about the old traditions.
- Girl: We learnt that the chief is to be respected. The wealthier he is, the healthier he is.
- Girl: The chief is abusive.
- Girl: The author portrayed women as fighting each other, jealous of each other.

The teacher concluded the lesson by summing up that the author portrayed women as commodities, as Joyce is exchanged for a herd of cattle and a piece of land. I suggested that the teacher could have allowed learners to discuss the advantages and disadvantages of early and arranged marriages, or rather by encouraging a debate on whether it was correct for parents to sell their daughters into marriage. Further exploration of the consequences of early and arranged marriage might have raised some interesting debates in the classroom. The

teacher further encapsulated that women are voiceless, secretive and submissive and have no say in their marriages. Chief Lewanika did not consult his wives before marrying another woman. “A woman has no decision in marriage, is that so?”; all the learners answered in a chorus “yes”. By teaching and commenting that women are voiceless, submissive and secretive, the learners began to see women as inherently inferior or weak. The learners were given an activity to write in the class and it was not gender-based questions (see attached activity Section A).

In class B, from School B, the teacher attempted to engage learners with some gender issues as depicted in the play, but with less engagement because the teacher referred learners to a first-term literature question paper. Learners were asked to answer Section D, which asks the following:

Quote an expression from the play which shows that the chief abuses his wives by

- a) Beating them/physical assault
- b) Insulting them (their intelligence)/verbal abuse
- c) Referring to them as objects/properties that he owns.

Learners were identifying the pages and quoting the expressions from Chief Lewanika. The discussion could not be expanded to engage a debate on gender representation. T3 often asked questions for discussion but ended up answering most of the questions himself, clarifying the instances that are portrayed in the play. For instance, T3 asks: “How does the scene end? Who is in conversation with who?” Instead of allowing learners to respond, T3 responded by saying: “The elders have come.” (5/06/2018)

The elders refers to senior members of the tribe, particularly men, who have influence or authority in their society. Therefore, their conversation, “We culture them. We give them a little civilisation. We domesticated them. They are ours”. T3 explained to learners that the above conversation among men means that men teach women about tradition, taboos and myths, and educate them about cultural norms and values, and they therefore own them. The teacher could have asked learners to discuss how men in the above conversation perceive women in their society, or asked learners to critique the patriarchy in modern society. The teacher continued to pose questions in the class: “‘We know your wife nurses a blue-rim on her eye’ – what does this mean?” Instead of giving learners a chance to respond, the teacher answered for them, stating that all men abuse their wives. Furthermore, the teacher explained that Neo was surprised that Chief Lewanika has a fourth wife but the chief cared less, because he believed that white men (whom are seen as civilised) also have more mistresses.

Given the observation, above, it is evident that teacher did not create adequate debate in the classroom about gender identities as depicted in the drama *God of Women*. Learners were silent most of the time, leaving gendered discourse undebated in all the schools I visited. Learners in class B were given a homework assignment to give the literal meanings to the following expressions/figure of speech:

“Young men have fragile hearts. Old men foster them and young men break them.”

“Birds, wind and trees have eyes and ears.”

“When my mouth yields its teeth and my skin dries and wrinkles.”

“The gods shall soothe our souls.”

As discussed in Chapter 3, Khorsand and Salmani (2014) maintain that Discourse Analysis is the deconstructive reading and interpretation of a text to disclose the concealed stimuli behind

the text and discover its ideological manipulations. Learners were not asked to write about the homework but rather to discuss it the next day in the classroom. Of all the four expressions, the teacher only attempted to give the literal meaning of the second expression, “Birds, wind and trees have eyes and ears” when he said that any secret that is concealed will one day be revealed. From my observation, none of the learners gave the literal meanings of these expressions. This is to say, learners failed to interpret the expressions given in the text, resulting in undisclosed concealed stimuli behind it. In other words, the ideological manipulation of the text remained undisclosed. Gee (2000) in Chapter 4, contends that discourse is used to describe the way language functions to produce meanings, considering the forms of representation, codes, conventions and habits of language that produce certain fields of culturally and historically located meaning.

The teacher encouraged learners to ask questions about the play but instead of discussing gender-related issues therein, learners were asking about vocabulary. They seemed to have difficulty with some words used in the play, thus they were asking the meaning of words such as: counterparts, fragile, numbskull, deficient, decadent, dejected, melancholically, and morals. The teacher brought dictionaries to the class, so the learners instead spent time looking up words to give their literal meanings.

Learners had to move on the next scene (Scene II) despite little understanding of the gender instances depicted in the play. Given the fact that this is a gender mediation study, instead of allowing learners to debate gender roles in the play, the teacher asked learners to read in dialogue form as narrated in the play. Boys and girls had to take characters’ names as portrayed in the drama and based on their gender. For example, a tall and muscular boy took the role of Chief Lewanika, while a short boy in the group took the role of the seer. All the

four girls were Chief Lewanika's wives. After the end of the lesson, learners were given homework:

Define foreshadowing. What event do you think Nyathi foreshadows with Neo's words? (The young woman you have recently brought to the compound is deficient in morals, p. 8).

None of this was discussed in the classroom and no feedback was given. The teacher moved on to discuss symbolism and defined it as the use of symbols in literature to represent ideas. For example, the teacher explained that an owl is associated with witchcraft but in the play it is associated with time, because owls are usually seen at night. All these are literary terms and are not related to gender issues. In other words, the teacher seemed to focus on the form of literature rather than the content. Similarly, T2 gave learners notes (see attached notes) to understand the themes and morals of the play. T2 was asking the following questions:

T2: What did you learn from the play?

Girl: Neo advising Lewanika not to beat his wives.

Girl: We learn about polygamy when a husband marries many wives.

Girl: Some cultures still practice polygamy.

Girl: Make a choice before marriage.

T2: Relating to the play, does Joyce love Lewanika?

Girl: No, but to save the family from hunger.

T2: Is there violence in the play?

Boy: Yes, when Lewanika was beating and abusing his wives.

The teacher then emphasised that marrying more than one woman can cause problems, because we witness how Chief Lewanika's wives fight among themselves. These instructions

were direct and did not stimulate any debate on gender issues. The teacher could have asked about the male characters, for instance Chief Lewanika, who has three wives and still wants to marry a girl young enough to be his daughter. It would have been interesting to find out the boys' views regarding polygamy and further explore what its effects are on people's social relations, particularly among women. Moreover, the teacher could have used Critical Literacy as discussed in Chapter 3 to push learners to break the conceptions they have about men and women. Given the fact that the drama *God of Women* reflects the sociocultural views of central and southern African societies, Jank (2013) in Chapter 3 believes that Critical Literacy enables young people to read both the word and the world in relation to power and identity. In addition, learners could have discussed the relevance of the drama to today's society, since it is now two decades from its publication in 1998.

Furthermore, the teacher explained that one of the themes in the play is secrecy, as one wife reveals that she had a son with Lewanika before he became chief, of which he was not aware. Another theme is the denial of birth rights, as John did not know of his father. All these are forms of literature rather than the content of the play.

As alluded to by Lande (2000, p. 23) in Chapter 2, mediation is not useful for everyone and it is not a cure-all. All the teachers, as participants in this study, failed to truly offer distinctive opportunities for learners to exercise responsibility over their own disputes and their own lives. Teachers' mediation could have served as a tool for critical evaluation and problem solving through the text. This did not happen during my four weeks in the field. It appears that teachers find it hard to mediate the content of the drama *God of Women*, as most of the time they were addressing the form of the literature. I would argue here that the impact of the play on learners is determined not just by the content but by the teachers' mediation of it.

6.7 Position of women as a theme

All the teachers addressed the “position of women” as a core theme in the play. However, as the theme suggests, most of the discussion centred on the treatment of female characters, given the fact that gender representation does not omit men’s presence in gender discourse. Although, this is one way of discussing gender representation in the drama *God of Women*, it entailed that the structure and relationships between men and women, and equally, the issues of gender issues of masculinity and gender relations were not discussed. Instead, what teachers would do on this theme was to ask learners to discuss how women are depicted in the drama and then compare such depiction to real-life situations. Equally, the teacher would ask learners to identify the page wherein such depiction is given in the play.

Although the teachers were aware that this study is investigating the mediation of gender representation in *God of Women*, the teachers failed to encourage learners to debate gender roles and issues as depicted in the drama. Often, where teachers posed a question on gender representation, it turned out that instead of learners answering, the teachers were simply emphasising the gender incidents in the play. For example:

T1: What is the relationship of men and women in the play? Are men and women treated equally?

T1: Do you think it is fair for couples to beat each other?

Class: No.

T1: Do you think there is gender equality?

Class: No.

T2: Why were women fighting?

Girl: Because of food.

T3: What is Lewanika trying to say with, “Don’t be foolish” – is it polite?

Class: No.

The whole class answered in a chorus, “no” but they could not give any reasons for their answers. This suggests that there is no debate encouraged and one-word answers are accepted as normal.

6.8 Engagement with gender sensitivity

As I have observed, some teachers tried to engage learners in discussions through different techniques, but with no great success. For instance, T1 from School A tried to engage learners by asking them about some phrases that concerned women in the play, but could not develop the key ideas about gender sensitivity further for critical engagement. For example, T1 asks:

T1: Is it normal for a husband to beat his wife?

Class: No.

T1: Do you think it was good for Lewanika to ask Ma Inonge if she was touched before?

Class: No.

T1: The chief speaks disrespectfully of his wives and he often asks them about sex. It is not a normal practice for a husband to tell his wives about his feasting. It also shows us that the women are not valued by their husband.

T1: Why was there a “rod of correction”?

Girl: To beat the wives if they don’t do what their husband is telling them.

T1: Why did Ma Inonge expose her husband to all the other wives? Who caused the problem?

Girl: It is because of Chief Lewanika, who instructed Ma Inonge to abort the baby boy.

T1: Do you think that John, after learning the predicament of his father, will follow him?

Girl: No, because he said that his father will remain his enemy.

Although this teacher projected himself as someone who is aware of the gender representations in the text, and of their importance to learners as well, he did not attempt to develop this fully. All these elements could have been developed into a critical debate wherein learners could have either accepted or rejected the depictions of males and females in the play. The teacher could have asked learners for their views or encouraged them to speak up or give a critical response to the gender roles and gender issues as portrayed in the drama.

In addition, key ideas could have been discussed, such as how a woman has to lie to save a man from public embarrassment.. The teacher could have encouraged a debate on how women are disempowered in order to empower men. Moreover, the fact that John refused to forgive his father could have encouraged debate about whether boys would have accepted and forgiven their fathers under similar circumstances. All these are gender sensitivity issues, but the teachers failed to engage learners critically.

I have also observed that T2 from School B did not engage learners on gender sensitivity. The teacher could have asked learners, particularly girls, if they would accept being exchanged for goods, or she could have asked boys if they would exchange their daughters for cattle and land. Given the fact that Joyce was forced to marry to save her parents from hunger and poverty, the teacher might have asked girls to give their views on arranged marriages. This could allow learners and teachers alike to deconstruct the societal beliefs and values as represented in the English literary texts for many secondary schools in Africa. On the other

hand, the learners' responses to the text may have indicated their beliefs, including how they feel about their own gender, as well as the opposite gender. Moreover, T3 from School B failed to engage learners on gender sensitivity. For example:

T3: Joyce was forced to marry Chief Lewanika. Let's read it to prove it.

(Learners were reading and were praised by the teacher for simply reading, and no further debate was attempted regarding Joyce's forced marriage.)

T3: Who decided Joyce's marriage?

Girl: Her parents.

T3: The family decided to trade Joyce for a herd of cattle and a piece of land.

One girl hummed "mhh" in astonishment and the teacher seemed not to take note of such a gesture, or perhaps he chose to ignore the girl's murmuring. Whether the girl was astonished or felt pity for Joyce as a young girl sold by her parents, went undiscovered. I believe that pedagogical practices are the primary influence on how learners perceive gender, and not merely the texts that they read. On the other hand, ignoring a learner's gesture promotes learners' beliefs about the way society values a particular gender. In other words, learners could have been encouraged to examine the instances presented in *God of Women* through multiple perspectives. Thus, it was necessary for the teachers to have incorporated Critical Literacy into their classrooms to help learners to understand their gender perceptions. Through Critical Literacy practices, learners and teachers are provided with an opportunity to examine the text and develop an understanding as to why the beliefs therein are held, and in some instances promote change.

6.9 Teachers' responses to gender-biased language

Given the fact that *God of Women* used demeaning language to represent female characters, often the teachers did not respond to such biased language and prejudices. For instance, the language that T1 used in the classroom in addressing learners did not reinforce binaries. Instead of addressing them as “boys” and “girls”, he was addressing them as “you guys”. The terms of address used in *God of Women* either greet or show respect to individuals. In addition, the terms of address do play a part in dictating someone’s social status. For instance, when you respond to someone with “yes my lord” or “father of my children”, “man of high-esteem”, “mother of my children”, it often reflects their social class in the community. This is surely an indication of how gender segregation is important and how respect is given to males characters in the play. It was found that female characters which play major roles in the story were often simply called “woman”. Moreover, in the text, males seem to possess strong character traits and values like courage and intelligence. Females, on the contrary, are depicted as kind and friendly, but easily becoming nervous or agitated, or depicted as fighting each other.

Although both teachers in this study attempted to encourage learners into a discussion of the gender issues raised in *God of Women*, they did not use the opportunity to challenge the gender-biased language inherent in the play, which I perceived as unethical and necessary for their pedagogical practices.

Chief Lewanika’s asking of his eldest wife, Ma Inonge, if she was “touched” was not discussed or responded to in the classroom. Chief Lewanika used this figure of speech to demean his wives when they failed to produce a son. He assembled them and asked them about their sexuality using metaphors such as:

Your granary has been depleted. (p. 5)
You proved yourself barren beyond an ordinary desert. (p. 5)
I know it cannot be you with your exhausted womb. (p. 23)

These metaphors demean and humiliate women yet they were no further explorations thereof in the classroom. In other words, the teachers did not respond to the gendered-biased language used in the drama. As discussed in Chapter 2, the words and phrases used in *God of Women* to represent women carry some strong messages that devalue women in society. In addition, Chief Lewanika often uses inflected language when calling and responding to his wives and he does so in anger. The following are responses toward his wives:

Woman, I command you to come here immediately! (p. 3)
Don't reach your destiny before you arrive at it, woman! (p.3)
Is your intelligence ageing, woman? (p. 4)
Women, I shall continue feasting in your huts. (p. 5)
You will do as I say, woman. (p. 7)
Where are my rewards, women? (p. 17)
When are your brains going to grow, women? (p. 17)

Chief Lewanika appears to change his voice in tone or pitch when talking to his wives. This is evident from the punctuation used (particularly the exclamation that is used for interjection). Moreover, the use of the words "woman" or "women" at the beginning and end of each command or question tells us how women are relegated to inferior positions in their society. It could have been interesting to look at how the social world of objects and events is constituted in talk and text and how social identities are constructed using cultural discourse already in existence. As discussed in Chapter 2, teachers could have looked at the nature of social discussion which focuses on what people say and how they say it. For social discursiveness, Langdrige (2007) believes that the focus is on interpretive repertoires, subject positions and ideological dilemmas.

On the other hand, Nyathi (1998) depicted how some men dominate and totally control women. It is explicit that Chief Lewanika is in total control of his wives, which is likely to suggest that he owns them and they are lower than him. One may wonder why Chief Lewanika is merely calling them “women” or “woman” instead of “my wives/wife”. Remarkably, none of these women respond to any commands or questions from their husband. They all kept silent and do as commanded. This may suggest that they are either intimidated or do not live freely in the presence of their husband. All these issues were left unchallenged in the classroom by teachers. Learners also took no notice of them.

Learners were asking for the meaning of words used in the text. I have observed that instead of discussing biased language used in the text to represent women, the teachers were giving literary meanings towards the demeaning words used in the play. For instance, learners were taught the meanings of the following words:

- T3: Deficient – lacking morals
- T3: Decadent – involving a lot of pleasure that is immoral
- T3: Dejected – rejected
- T3: numbskull – water head. Moisture or wet.

All these words were used in the drama *God of Women* to demean women, but teachers failed to discuss them further with learners in relation to how they were used to describe women. Teachers chose to give the literal meanings instead of responding to them in-depth. There were no questions or discussions that would have revealed gender-biased language used by learners. In other words, teachers were silent with regard to gender-biased language used in the play. T2 did not even attempt to give meaning to any gendered-biased words from her class, an indication that the representation of gender-biased language was ignored at all schools.

In addition, the following remarks or phrases were used in the play to show gender-biased language and yet they were completely ignored for interpretation in the classroom. For example:

I speak the voice of a man.
I speak the language of the elders.
Don't walk behind me like a dog following a she-dog on heat.
You speak like a granny.
Lords of the soil.
Uncultured woman.
The young woman you have recently brought to the compound is deficient in morals.
Young women have fragile hearts.
Little woman of the chief.
Lords of the World.
Of all the bulls in the village, why did you decide on John?

All these are examples of gender-biased language and given the fact that they are left unchallenged in the classroom, learners might accept the power relations reflected in the drama *God of Women*. Despite the fact that gender-biased language manifests itself in the drama, teachers failed to deal with bias as represented in the play. The followings are examples of common nouns that were used to relate to males and females in the play.

6.10 Common nouns

Table 6.1: Common nouns used to represent males and females in the play.

Males	Females
Countryman	Counterparts
Lord	Woman
Father	Mother
Husband	Wives
Chief	Granny
Mister	Little woman
Seer	Girl
Kinsmen	
Bulls	
Calf	
Man	
11	7

The above table shows that there are more male common nouns as compared to female common nouns found in the play, which could make learners infer that males are still the main characters in the play. The derogatory or condescending terms associated with age used to represent women such as “granny”, “little girl” and “small girl” could have been emphasised in the classroom to make learners aware to avoid them.

Looking at the analysis above, it is obvious that patriarchal influence is widely spread in the drama *God of Women*, as the findings perpetuate masculine dominance. Through these depictions, the view of women as inferior is still deeply rooted in the drama.

6.11 Conclusion

Chapter 6 provided the nature of the schools visited as sites of this study. In the process, the chapter discussed the way classroom discourse constructs gender identities. Given the fact that this study is looking at the mediation practices of gender representation by teachers, this chapter looked at how teachers engage learners on gender-sensitive issues, and eventually gave a discussion on how teachers represent and respond to gender-biased language as depicted in the drama *God of Women*.

CHAPTER 7

TEACHERS' THOUGHTS ON THEIR PRACTICES

Chapter 6 began by introducing the research instruments used to generate the data on teachers' mediation of the gender roles in the drama *God of Women*. The chapter then moved to a discussion of how teachers introduced their lesson, looking at the classroom talk, questions-and-answers stage and learners' involvement in the lesson. Thirdly, the chapter described the way classroom discourse constructed gender identities. Fourthly, the chapter took a further discussion on power and gender and also presented the position of women as a theme in the play. Furthermore, I discussed how teachers engaged with gender sensitivity. The chapter concluded by examining how teachers responded to gender-biased language.

The first part of this chapter describes the strategies employed by teachers in teaching *God of Women*. The teachers' strengths and challenges in their pedagogic practices are also highlighted. The second part of the chapter focuses on the Senior Education Officer's criteria in selecting literary texts for Grade 9.

Given the fact that the study analysed the teachers' pedagogic choices in mediating the drama *God of Women*, semi-structured interviews were used to generate data. Such interviews, as discussed in Chapter 4, were used to generate data to understand the extent to which teachers critically reflect on the pedagogic approaches they use to teach *God of Women*. The nature of the subject matter in this drama foregrounds gender issues which are pervasive in society. An understanding of this aspect in relation to the teaching of this text is thus crucial. The interviews also enabled teachers to engage in self-critical reflection, as they managed to point

out what they saw as their personal strengths and challenges in their approaches to planning lessons, teaching and assessing learners on the drama.

Apart from using interviews to generate data from teachers, an interview was also carried out with an education official from the regional level (Senior Education Officer – English Second Language) formerly known as Subject Advisory. The focus of the interview was particularly in relation to how texts are selected for school curricula in Namibia, but also to understand the extent to which gender issues form part of the deliberations when texts are selected. Through both sets of interviews, an in-depth understanding of participants' positions when it came to gender-related issues was established. May (2001) argues that semi-structured interviews allow participants to respond more on their own terms than standardised interviews permit.

7.1 Teachers' views on their approaches

The influence of the literary texts on learners regarding gender issues depended on the teachers' teaching approaches. I had discussed in Chapter 2 Section 2.4 how the teaching of a text plays a crucial role in shaping learners' understanding of related events presented in the text into their own situation. Teachers' beliefs, practices and attitudes are important for understanding their influence and role in shaping learners' socialisation into specific gender positions. Teachers were asked whether the approaches to teaching a drama text like *God of Women* shaped learners' views on gender representation in society. The specific question was: "In your view, do you think the way a teacher approaches the teaching of a drama text like *God of Women* plays a role in shaping a learner's view on gender representations in society? Please explain." The responses for all three teachers on the same question reveal much.

T1 from school A, maintained:

Yes, if a teacher gives learners equal opportunity (boys and girls) to engage in the drama, for example, to debate about issues of human rights, then learners will have a deep understanding of men and women. If a teacher asks learners to debate about gender roles and gender representations in plays, the teacher will have a background of learners' views about gender roles in their societies. I also believe that a teacher who asks learners to challenge the representation of men and women in short stories will shape learners' understanding of gender imbalance in textbooks. (23/05/2018)

T2 from school B had the following to say:

Yes, it only depends on how often the teacher engages learners in critical thinking about gender issues. For example, a teacher who asks learners to critique gender as portrayed in many fictional novels will cement learners' understanding of gender stereotypes by either criticising gender inequality or accepting gender roles as a normal practice in their societies. (4/06/2018)

T3 from school B takes a similar view:

Yes, when a teacher mediates the lesson, it gives learners equal opportunities in engaging critically in gender representations as portrayed in literature. A teacher who has learners critiquing the way Nyathi depicts women is likely to shape learners' understanding of gender roles in their societies. Another good technique for shaping learners' understanding is to allow them to write articles, essays or reports about how they feel about gender representations where women have no equal rights (4/06/2018)

From the above quotes, these teachers seemed to imply that learners are likely to have a better understanding when they engage in debates about gender issues in their societies. Nonetheless, there is a mismatch between the teachers' responses regarding their teaching strategies and their lesson plans. For instance, T1's lesson plan outlined the following from the teacher's activities:

- Teacher will give a background of the play and ask learners some questions orally.
- Teacher will make comments paying close attention to key aspects of the text and will give learners some notes to prepare for their presentations (see Appendix).

- T2's lesson plan outlined that: Idioms and their meanings will be written on the chalkboard and explain, define plot, setting, content in the play and give examples and teachers would take notes (see Appendix).
- T3's lesson plan outlined that: Set learners in pairs, ensure task for homework and monitor feedback on responses. Demonstrate how to introduce, develop and conclude an essay (see Appendix).

Drawing from the teachers' responses, it is explicit that these teachers believed that the construction of traditional gender stereotypes should be challenged in the classroom. However, their responses did not reflect their own teaching approaches, as they gave learners no opportunity to critique how the drama *God of Women* represents femininity and masculinity. None of the lesson plans reflected what the teachers think of their teaching strategies in mediating the drama. The teaching approaches used in both schools promoted uncritical gender stereotypes, resulting in learners accepting patriarchy as a natural order. Given the figured world as discussed in Chapter 3, teachers are responsible for making school challenging and encouraging learners to critique the power relations as represented in literary texts. Teachers could have instilled a power of figured worlds to shape learners' beliefs and actions related to literacy and masculinities. Allowing learners to have a say in matters related to gender identities provides them with a sense of empowerment. Thus, there was a need for all learners to be encouraged to participate and share, even those not easily volunteering their thoughts.

Despite the fact that Nyathi depicted men as dominant and women as submissive, the teachers did not see this as problematic. They appear to have taken the drama at face value, as it portrays real-life situations and societal cultures. In other words, it appears that teachers at

some point expected learners to accept this as a natural order. All the teachers adopted an uncritical reading of the play as if assuming that the author wanted readers to accept rather than critique the traditional gender identities which are represented therein.

I agree with Lande (2000) when he contends that “mediation is not useful for everyone”. Given the fact that this study is about gender representation in literary texts, T1’s approach to the play asked learners to present what each scene was all about. Instead of discussing the acts/scenes, learners (often only one per group) merely re-read the play and the teacher would summarise each scene briefly. As I indicated in Chapter 6 on teachers’ mediation practices, T2 had learners dramatize Act I Scene I and could not further engage learners in any thorough discussion related to gender as depicted in the play. At the same time, T2 and T3 had learners answering questions directly from the play without any engagement on gender representations as depicted in the drama (see questions for activity Appendix E). Gender is a very important component in the way people perceive the world. It is also salient in the way people produce, understand and interpret texts. The lack of interactive process in engaging the stereotypical gender representations in *God of Women* reinforced and reproduced a version of dominant gender forces in society.

There is no relationship between what the teachers said during the interview and their actual teaching. The interview revealed a stronger gender reinforcement in the classroom, whereas the actual pedagogic practice lacked learners’ engagement on gender representations as portrayed in the play (see lesson plans and learners’ activities). We saw in the previous chapters that building inclusive classrooms must involve deepening learners’ understanding of gender identity and gender stereotypes. Some research studies demonstrate that without an explicit teaching of gender equity in classrooms, it is highly likely that learners may uphold

and endorse a strict adherence to gender stereotypes through unchallenged gender representations in literary texts. The fact that teachers focused on teaching the form of literature rather than the content thereof did not give learners an opportunity to challenge the traditional gender stereotypes in literary texts. Although the teachers said that they engage learners in debate, they neglected such debates in their interactions with learners. The observation of many lessons showed that teachers were more into reading the play than critically debating the representations of male and female characters. Given such an absence, the teachers' pedagogic practices preserved and reinforced the conceptions of masculinity and femininity as represented in the drama.

Given such issues, it is crucial that teachers could have fostered a classroom environment in which learners accepted and appreciated nonconforming gender roles and felt safe to reveal their authentic gender identities. *God of Women* could provide a safe haven for learners to explore issues related to social justice.

Given these issues, teachers did not offer a distinctive opportunity for learners to exercise responsibility over their own disputes and lives regarding gender roles and issues as represented in the drama. For instance, the young Joyce is forced to marry Lewanika and yet no debate was opened up to give learners the opportunity to understand their own views on gender issues. Regarding Joyce, T1, after group 2's presentation summarised that: "Chief only wants Joyce to make babies. He doesn't love her." (29/05/2018).

T2 after recapping the lesson, asked learners if Joyce loved Lewanika, to which the class shouted "No". While learners were reading Act 1 Scene II, T3 stressed that Joyce was forced into marriage and asked learners who decided on Joyce's marriage, to which learners shouted

“parents”. The teacher reinforced learners’ responses that “family decided for her” and no further discussion was opened up for debate. As I revealed in Chapter 6 from the classroom observation, debate on gender issues was silent in many instances. The interaction between the teachers and learners could not translate into debate beyond reading the play, dramatizing it and often vocabulary searching for new meanings of certain words.

The fact that Lewanika keeps on taking new wives to bear him a son was another opportunity for learners to debate in the classroom. Contrary to what Cheng and Kia (2011) contend as discussed in Chapter 2, teachers failed to facilitate learner-learner interactions. Overall, what teachers actually said about their teaching pedagogies as given above did not reflect what they did in their classrooms.

7.2 Teachers’ strategies in mediating literary texts

When asked about the strategies they use when teaching *God of Women*, T1 had this to say: “I give examples to learners by breaking things down, for example, I tell them that men and women are both equal. I relate issues of gender stereotypes to the current era because the drama is written from a traditional set-up. I asked learners to compare traditional society with modern society.”

There is a mismatch between the teacher’s responses and the actual happenings in the classroom. For example, the teacher began by asking learners the following questions: “What is gender?”; “Do you think there is equal gender representation?”; and “Is it normal for a husband to beat his wife?” The above questions did not illustrate any breaking down of issues as indicated by the teacher. Given the fact that these were closed questions, learners’ responses were often closed answers, that is, “No”. There was no further expansion on the

responses from the teacher, except by emphasising that gender is ignored in the play and that women are not treated the same as men. From learners' document evidence, the teacher asked learners to write an essay described as follows: Reading the drama *God of Women*; do you think there is equal gender representation? Explain your answer in relation to characters (see learners' document evidence). Therefore, learners were not asked to compare the traditional society with modern society as indicated from the interview. None of these essay papers were marked either. Learners' responses showed that there is no equal representation of gender in the play; however, their views could not expand to challenge such gender representations in literary texts (see learners' written work).

T2: I had group discussions where we focused on expression in the play. We do speaking lessons to allow learners to debate. For example, our current lifestyle had moved from traditional to social standards. I also allow writing essays about Human Rights.

There is a relationship between the teacher's responses and the actual happenings in the class. This is to say, the teacher had a collection of expressions and asked learners to give their meanings; for example, "What is Lewanika trying to say when he told Neo, 'We know your wife nurses a blue-rim on her eye'?" and, "What event do you think Nyathi foreshadows with Neo's words 'The young woman you recently brought to the compound is deficient in morals'?" All these were expressions from Act I Scene I, but learners were unable to provide the answers. The teacher had learners searching for words in the dictionary to find meanings. The teacher explained to the class what each expression meant as learners were reading.

Although the teacher indicated that he had group discussions, learners were not grouped but sat either in pairs or individually. One of the objectives as outlined in T2's lesson plan was "ability to read with understanding and relate characters". This however, could not be

measured, as learners relied most of the time on the teacher's explanation. On the contrary, the class had no speaking lessons as indicated by the teacher, and no debate took place. Learners were answering what appear to be questions from first-term tests. The questions had sections which learners had to deal with after their class readings (see Literature task).

Given the interview response claiming that the teacher allowed essay writing on Human Rights, a lesson plan was developed (see T2's lesson plan) with a lesson topic "Women's rights", but learners did not write such an essay. It appears that the teacher is generally aware of gender stereotypes in the text and that, despite such awareness of gender issues, attempts to challenge these portrayals were neglected in the classroom. It appears that one of the challenges of contemporary society and the educational system is to address gender inequality in the social systems. Given the fact that the gender perceptions as represented in the play remained unchallenged, teachers continue to unconsciously perpetuate and reproduce these stereotypical modes of thinking.

It is notable that the teachers' personal beliefs and stereotypical perceptions affected their attitudes and classroom practices. To some extent, it is the teacher's ability to remove stereotypical, biased or gendered expectations, behaviours and languages from the learning environment. Given such an ability, the teacher could gently guide learners through inclusive experiences that will influence how a learner interprets gender. We saw in Chapter 2 that teachers are in a position to considerably influence how learners perceive themselves and others through the inclusive learning and teaching experiences that they encounter. My interest and concern was to know more about how teachers can fulfil such a requirement.

A question arises as to whether teacher gender influences learners' understanding of gender representations in literary texts. In other words, the question arises to understand how teachers present gendered identities in different ways to different learners in their classrooms. It is obvious that learners from these classes came from different social backgrounds and may experience gender stereotypes differently. Therefore, such a question was posed to understand if the gendered teaching style impacted upon a learner's perception and understanding of gender issues. When asked about her strategies to teaching *God of Women*, T3 has this to say: "For all learners to understand, I divide them into groups, each group with a scene to dramatize."

The teacher had learners in groups to dramatize the play. Nonetheless, the class had only one group that dramatized Act I Scene I. Observation showed that the teacher made no comments on such role play by learners except praising them for their efforts. As I indicated in Chapter 6, learners acting out the drama had the same roles and general features as represented in the play. By praising learners and allowing no discussion on their role-play, the binary representations of males and females in literature were laid bare. The act of learners dramatizing the play showed how teachers were not prepared to be effective change agents and role models for reducing gender stereotypes as represented in literary texts. Although the teachers responded by engaging learners in their approaches of teaching *God of Women*, gender stereotypes were not critically approached in the classrooms. It was often silent.

Given the fact that literature as art mirrors social realities, such real-life situations and societal cultures were not given a face value. It appeared that gender was not something that teachers recognised as crucial enough to converse about in their classrooms, if at all, but it seemed significant to some degree in every action that teachers took to address gender perceptions in

their teachings. I began to question how this situation would impact upon learners' experiences, expectations and exercising of their abilities. Regardless of its invisibility, gender is a crucial aspect and I began to see that gender messages and role models are powerful. Yet measuring the possible impact of these issues upon individual learners is an impossible task, and would also require more studies on gender.

In some instances, the fact that gender roles and issues were not critically challenged in the classroom could be a result of how teachers' personal beliefs and stereotypical perceptions affect their attitudes and classroom practices. Learners had to accept all the gender stereotypes and depictions of women as weak and inferior, whereas men emerged as powerful and in total control of women.

This study found that teachers' pedagogic practices not only reinforced traditional gender roles but also gender stereotypes. All the teachers at some point neglected the gendered identities as represented by Nyathi. It appeared that the teachers held gender stereotypes as a natural order, hence their failure to critically engage learners in debate in their classrooms. It stands out that teachers are generally unaware of how their mediation practices on gender have an impact on learners' ability to change the traditions of their society. It is because of such silent mediation practices that learners continue to accept the representations of maleness and femaleness as natural.

We saw in Chapter 1 that a teacher's interactions with their learners are at the heart of the hidden curriculum and are a vital means by which informal lessons about gender are transmitted in schools. What this means is that what teachers do not do in relation to gendered encounters has consequences for learners' informal learning about gender. As teachers, our

reactions can impact greatly on how a learner informally learns about gender, which signifies the level of thought each teacher dedicates to this issue each and every day.

7.3 Strengths and challenges in teaching *God of Women*

First of all, it appears that there is an array of gender discourses closely linked to English, which have great potential to influence learners' investments and decisions. Such discourses shape learners' desires as well as their images of themselves, their futures, and their social, educational, and economic opportunities. In some instances, perceived opportunities could strengthen the learners' agency and through others, they could fuel their resistance to gendered discourse in their English literature. In most cases, gender inequalities may structure differential interactional opportunities for male and female learners of different ages, classes, or ethnic backgrounds. Consequently and in some contexts, learners get significantly less classroom interaction time.

All the teachers interviewed are generally aware of the gender stereotypes used in the play. They believed that there was always a power dynamic that favoured males over females. Yet, this did not reflect in their prepared lessons (see Appendix D). The exploration of teachers' behaviour in relation to literary texts ("teacher talk *around* the text") either challenged or perpetuated gender conceptions as represented in *God of Women*. This mediation of the drama may be more relevant to any effect of the text than the text itself. When asked about their strengths and challenges in teaching the drama *God of Women*, the teachers had this to say:

T1: I had not taught the drama before and I had not received pre-service teacher training on how I should tackle the issues of gender stereotypes. I found the introduction very difficult as I have to re-read the introduction over and over again to understand the choice of language used. I think the author used idiomatic expressions that are hard to understand. Even learners did not understand them because they were just saying the language used was not simple. The strength part of my teaching was to relate the play to modern society for learners to understand African tradition in the past compared to modernity.

T2: The introductory part in Act I Scene I was challenging because learners did not understand what the drama is all about. I asked learners to go and read the whole play before we discuss about it in the class. I did so in order for them to get a clear picture and an in-depth understanding of the whole play. One of the strength in teaching the play is by asking learners to dramatize the play. They seem to enjoy the drama and they all get involved in dramatizing as everyone has a chance to act.

T3: My challenge was the introductory part where learners had difficult in understanding the idiomatic expressions used in Act I Scene I. My strength was to explain the meaning of some expressions used in the play.

Looking at lesson transcripts, as well as the teachers' own perceptions of their behaviour, I observed how teachers' talk cannot be predicted from the textbook text itself. In particular, the data showed cases of the traditional focus of texts being endorsed, whereas progressive texts were undermined. In some instances, the parts of texts that can be seen as containing traditional biases were passed over, and talk about gender issues within texts was characterised by gender blindness. The following is an introduction from Act I Scene I:

Seer: I speak the voice of the man. I speak the language of the elders.
Leave, you devils, I say. Go back to your caskets of doom. I say.
Come, you ancestry,
Cleanse this servant of your tribe.
Come, powers of the gods,
Bring forth a pelting relief.
Redeem us from this crucible of fire.
Heal the wounds sustained from your curse.
Unfold your tongues, open your hearts.
Turn your backs away.
And let your blessings flow.
Your great ancestor is now speaking.

Voice: This moral calabash you have broken. This sacred token bequeathed to you by our brave ancestor. This that was snatched from the jaws of the lion. The one that has been the pride of our tribe spills the lava of their rage. You have danced to the chorus of the owl on the branch behind your compound. Now the curse is upon you.
You shall die of disease.
Of hunger.
Of thirst and of lust. (p. 1-2)

Given the fact that this is a Critical Discourse Analysis study, I had discussed earlier in Chapter 3, section 3.2 that every text presented in literature is often conditioned and inscribed within a given discourse and ideology. I may agree with T1, based on Bakhtin (1986) who claims that genres and dialogues use words and structures to take specific meanings. In a situation where the reader does not share the historical, intertextual and social trappings of sign systems, it is likely to be a challenge to fully comprehend situated meaning. If both teachers could have shared enough knowledge, beliefs, values and experiences with the author, it could enable him to situate the meaning of the words used in the extract above.

Nyathi (1998) had written the drama *God of Women* to enact a particular ideology. Given the fact that the author depicts a social group from Caprivi in the Eastern part of Namibia, Nyathi's writings are an imagining of different social and cultural groups of people making sense of the world. In other words, these is a "figured world", where words are used based on models in our minds, based on utterances to produce general meanings.

Contrastingly, the challenges that these teachers had in their approaches are not gender-based issues or gender stereotypes represented in the play, but are merely the teaching styles of the whole drama. As I had already indicated in Chapter 6, the teachers were more focused on form than content. This was evident from the class activities given and the role-playing of the drama. Although the teachers were aware that the study undertaken was on mediation of gender roles in the drama *God of Women*, it revealed that their lesson plans did not create room for stimulating discussion about gender relations and identity. Their lesson planning and presentations lacked gender discourse. This was reflected in their lesson plans (see Appendix E).

The drama itself has the potential to stimulate critical engagement with traditional African cultures and values. The author represented women as voiceless entities who cannot challenge males. For instance, Lewanika takes on a new wife to bear him a son but none of his existing wives challenges him, despite the fact that none of them favoured a new wife. As I discussed in Chapter 3, in many African traditions, polygamy was introduced to remedy immediate situations such as widowhood, barrenness, orphan hood and cases where a wife produced only daughters. Such a remedy was to remove shame and anxiety from the male's ego. It is on this basis that Lewanika appears to follow the African tradition of taking a new wife, given the fact that Ma Inonge becomes old, Ma Ilenge produced four daughters and Nsala is barren. Although following the African tradition, the fact that he did not consult his wives reveals that women are neglected in their relationships, as they have no voice in their marital affairs. The author represents women as less socially valued as a result of gender and power relations. This is evident when Lewanika devalues his wives through verbal abuse. From a Discourse Analysis view, I considered such utterances as language used in a social context to enact identities.

The teachers could have initiated debate on gender representations in the play and the way the author uses characters to convey themes required for social change. Such themes included physical violence and verbal abuse, as well as the humiliation of women. Instead of being eloquent, the author represents women as silent, living in a social milieu dominated by the attitudes and values of males who deny them their proper place in society.

7.4 Aspects that learners struggled with

Learners had difficulty in understanding the drama from the onset, citing issues with understanding the language. I observed, particularly in school B that learners often asked for

clarification on vocabulary, or the meaning of idiomatic expressions in the play. I had earlier discussed how the teachers, specifically T3, had learners use dictionaries to find meanings and how they explained the meanings of phrases to learners.

Learners asked for the meaning of the following expressions: “you danced to the chorus of the owl”, and “denied their senses”. I indicated in the previous chapters that gender discourse in all the schools I visited was silent. At some point, one may question whether this is a case of learners not actually understanding, or the interactive process being inactive. They did not appear independently capable of critiquing the representations of male and female characters in the play. They were often silent, except for those who were merely reading the play as part of their presentations. Given the inactive critical discourse on gender representations, this study revealed that learners remained attached to the traditional gender roles and stereotypes as represented in textbooks. When asked about the aspects that learners struggled with most in the drama, the teachers had this to say:

T1: Yes, some learners got confused on the part where Joyce and John met. They could not understand the relationship between John and Joyce. As I had indicated earlier on my challenge about the language, particularly in the introductory part, learners also felt that the language used is not of their level. They had to rely on a dictionary for meanings.

T2: Learners could not understand the idiomatic expressions, for instance in the introductory part where the Seer said: “father shall eat with the son” and “your known and unknown son”. They also could not understand why Lewanika’s eldest wife, Ma Inonge had died.

T3: Learners could not understand the relationship between Joyce and John. Some doubt if John was really a son to Lewanika. Most learners struggled to understand the prophecy given to Lewanika.

Van Dijk (2003) is correct when he contends that texts in many instances are challenging and demanding in their interpretations because of their ideological themes. Given the fact that

literary texts do not occur in isolation, social realities rely on socio-historic contexts that contribute to the production and interpretation of texts.

7.5 Overcoming their struggle

T1: To overcome their struggle, I had to explain the relationships of the characters in the play. I had to attend to every scene and explain it. I gave more examples relating to our modern living. Sometimes I asked other learners who understood the play to explain to others and give their opinions. I usually ask them to use their imaginations in order to understand. I also explained the meanings of the idiomatic expressions. Most of the time, I asked them to use a dictionary to figure out meanings for themselves.

T2: I gave them some activities to do. For example, I divide them into groups and each group has to present a scene. That way, they were able to figure out meanings for themselves and even become familiar with what each scene is all about. All in all, I asked them to use a dictionary for meanings of the expressions and unfamiliar words.

T3: I had to explain the relationships of the different characters represented in the play. I often asked them questions to test their understandings of the play. I also gave homework so that they had enough time to read and understand what they were reading and writing.

As I have already discussed in Chapters 5 and 6, gender roles and issues were glossed over in many instances. For instance, when learners dramatized the play, there was no further discussion about the position of men and women in the play. The lesson plans said little about what teachers say versus what they actually do in the classroom.

7.6 Outline of chapter

One of the purposes of this chapter was to look at the strategies employed by teachers in teaching the prescribed Grade 9 drama *God of Women*, selected for Namibian secondary schools. The chapter attempted to answer the research question “How are gender representations in literary texts mediated by teachers?” Through semi-structured interviews, I had an opportunity to ask the teachers about the strengths and challenges of their pedagogic practices on gender issues. The essence of the interview was to understand the teaching styles

that teachers may employ, in order to unpack whether such mediation practices shape learners' understandings of gender stereotypes and representations in literary texts prescribed for them. The second part of the chapter focused on the Senior Education Officer's criteria in selecting literary texts prescribed for Grade 9 in Namibian secondary schools. Such a selection process also required the official to give their views on gender representation in the literary texts prescribed for Grade 9.

Given the binary gender representations in *God of Women*, teachers did not critically engage learners in debate on the gendered discourse in their literature class. They continued to perpetuate stereotypical gender conceptions. Given the fact that the drama was written in a feminist tradition and at a different historical point, the text has the potential to stimulate critical engagement with traditional African cultures and values. The play could be used to initiate debate in Namibian literature classes regarding gender representations and the way authors use characters to convey themes required for change. At the moment, this study reveals that teachers do not appear to be encouraging critical engagement with the drama.

CHAPTER 8

WHAT DOES LEARNERS' WRITTEN WORK TELL US?

The first part of Chapter 7 presented teachers' thoughts on their pedagogic practices in mediating gender roles. In the process, it presented a discussion on how gender representations in literary texts are mediated by teachers. Such a discussion set out to describe the strategies employed by teachers in teaching the prescribed Grade 9 drama *God of Women*, selected for Namibian secondary schools. The chapter further discussed the teachers' strengths and challenges in their pedagogic choices in mediating the drama. The chapter then concluded by focusing on the Senior Education Officer's criteria in selecting literary texts for Grade 9.

Chapter 8 thus begins by presenting the ways teachers' mediation practices of gender roles shape learners' understanding of gender representations. Such a presentation focuses on learners' written work from the play. As I discussed in Chapter 4, such document evidence may reveal how teachers' mediation choices manifest in learners' written work and how learners interpret the situations presented to them from the play. For the purpose of this study, document evidence was selected to determine the types of discourse drawn upon from the class activity and the nature of interpretation that arose from the text.

Document evidence in the form of teachers' comments was also used to understand how learners interpreted and responded to gender roles within their prescribed literary text. Firstly, the document evidence focused on the relationship between what is in the document and the teacher's talk that went on during the lesson. Secondly, document evidence considered the extent to which the teacher's language during class time featured in learners' written work.

Thirdly, I looked at the presence in learners' written work of aspects of the teacher's sensitivity to gender issues that were introduced in the classroom, and the extent to which such sensitivities were applied by learners in their written work. Finally, I considered the extent to which teachers' feedback enhanced gender sensitivity.

8.1 Relationship between learners' work and teacher's talk

As I revealed in Chapter 6, the mediation of gender roles and issues in *God of Women* was silent, as teachers focused more on the form of literature than the content thereof. Similarly, I revealed in Chapter 7 how teachers' thoughts on their pedagogic practices did not reflect what they actually did in the classroom. For instance, data from teachers' interviews claimed that they engage learners in debates about gender issues in their societies. However, that proved to be the opposite as the drama itself reflects the construction of traditional gender stereotypes in African societies, where issues of polygamy, violence and the position of women in society emerged, but these were never challenged in the classroom.

The play represented women as oppressed and humiliated. This is evident when Lewanika marries one woman after another solely to gain a son who would take over as heir. Girl children are not valued. This is evident when Ma Ilenge says: "I brought to this earth four lovely daughters. He has given all to his kinsmen for failure to labour his fields" (p. 26).

Given the value of females as quoted above, it appears that girl children are perceived as items to give away to males in the domain. As I discussed in Chapter 5, Chief Lewanika verbally and emotionally insults his wives after they fail to bear him a son. Women are humiliated by traditions such as polygamy, since it creates a sense of inferiority and fosters female enmity, whilst being considered a sign of prestige for men both in the text and in real

life. For instance, Lewanika has power to decide in marital affairs, whereas his wives have but to accept their husband's decision. Such inferiority as represented in the drama was uncritically dealt with in the classroom.

In other words, the teachers' talk around text did not create an opportunity for learners to critique how *God of Women* represents femininity and masculinity. This reveals that teachers' mediation practices did not re-shape learners' understanding of gender representations in literary texts. As a result, teachers promoted uncritical gender stereotypes, resulting in learners accepting patriarchy as a natural order.

Feminists have argued that under patriarchy, women are all reduced to the status of sex objects. This is evident when Ma Ilenge is shocked by being asked among her co-wives whether she had sex before she was married to Lewanika. Another piece of evidence is Ma Inonge's surprise at being asked among her co-wives whether she was "still untouched" when she first met Lewanika. Moreover, Ma Inonge cries after hearing that Lewanika has decided to marry for the fourth time.

It is through such roles assigned to women in the play that learners continue to accept that women are weak and cannot stand up for their rights. Similarly, it is the frequency of gender representation in literature that depicts more power and better social status for men that women continues to be placed at the bottom in their society. From a feminist lens, the matter of women's sexuality is a many-faceted topic, rarely treated sanely. We saw in Chapter 2 that the role of women in a patriarchal society is to serve as sexual playmates. The fact that learners' written work did not critically engage gender issues as represented in *God of Women*

could lead to the understanding that women are sex objects in general. This could mean that women are formally perceived and treated as objects of sex.

I revealed in Chapter 6 that gender roles and issues were not critically engaged with in the classroom. As a result, learners' written work did not critically engage with how women have been reduced to objects for men. It is therefore likely that learners will accept the way a woman has been constructed as a man's "Otherness", denied the rights to her own subjectivity and to responsibility for her own actions. As discussed in Chapter 2, Yasa (2016) draws attention to the exploration of women in literary texts, wherein women are often assigned stereotypical emotional reactions and equally represented with stereotypical different characters.

Nyathi (1998) depicts females as tending to play subservient roles like bearing children, caring for family, tending the field and availing themselves for sex, as exemplified through the characters of Lewanika's wives. The power relations in the drama *God of Women* is embedded in men, which is highly likely to result in learners to conform to the behaviour of the characters that may result in stereotypical thinking of learners towards the other gender in their society.

All these disadvantaged women's position in society and thus regarded as inferior to men who lead the family. Such absence of debate and unchallenged representations of males and females in literature continue to foster gender stereotypes as normal and acceptable in our society. None of the learners' written work clearly reflected a critical analysis of gender power relations (see learners' document evidence).

8.2 Teachers' language and learners' written work

Language practices can be better understood to shed light on the dynamics of power relations and identity in literature. Yasa (2016), as referred to in Chapter 2, believes that language is viewed as constructing knowledge and interactions between learners and teachers. Learners' written work reflected less of the gender sensitivity issues from the drama *God of Women*. As I previously discussed in Chapter 3, humans tend to use language to deconstruct what was constructed and reconstruct it again in, as Jank (2013) names it, a "redesign cycle". Learners' written work did not reflect such deconstruction and reconstruction of what Nyathi portrayed through literature, that is, the social action that is developed through language. For instance, T1 asked the class to give their views on whether there is gender equality in *God of Women* (see learners' written work). Learners' written work from school A revealed that there is no gender equality. Their document evidence revealed that men have more power than women.

Learners consumed what is produced in the text as their social reality and none of them challenged the author's views on power relations as portrayed in the play. Learners' written work did not produce different identities but rather retold what happened in the play. I discussed in Chapters 6 and 7 that teachers' teaching methods were more focused on form than the content of literature. Thus, most of what happened in the classroom was to do with reading the play and answering questions directly therefrom (see literature tasks).

From a Critical Literacy perspective, this study revealed that learners did not use their power to choose and name their world but rather accepted the world as depicted in the drama. Given the fact that literacy is not merely about reading and writing, but also the relationship between the teacher, text and learner to read both the world and interpret the relation to power, difference and identity.

As I indicated in Chapter 6 (see section 6.5), gender sensitivity was not tackled or developed critically in the classroom. For example, Lewanika openly tells Ma Inonge that he is not convinced that she was “still unattended” when he first met her. This literally means Ma Inonge is questioned about her virginity. On the other hand, Lewanika asks his second wife (Ma Ilenge) if she was “unattended” or “simply on the moon”. All these are gender sensitivity issues wherein women are questioned about their virginity while men are not expected to reveal information about their sexuality. I discussed in Chapter 2 how radical feminists argued that the construction of gender is grounded in male’s attempts to control female’s sexuality. This is evident when Lewanika controls his wives’ sexuality. He tells them: “Women, I shall continue feasting in your huts. Make sure you update your huts for my visit” (p. 5).

Literally this means that women should avail themselves for sex. The fact that a daughter is considered a commodity for exchange, as is evident when Joyce was exchanged for marriage to save her family from poverty, was among the gender sensitivity issues that were not engaged critically in the classroom. The fact that teachers failed to mediate gender issues in their classrooms could mean that the school is not gender neutral. As a result, this placed schools as patriarchal sites that perpetuate women’s inferior position in society.

The gender sensitivity in the play is often represented with women characters as they are often related to their sex. I discussed in Chapter 5 that *God of Women* is written in a feminist tradition. By placing this drama in a feminist tradition, one may understand the gender issues that transmit the values woven through the fabric of our society.

Feminist criticism unveils the prejudices that are promoted and transmitted by linguistic media in society through texts. When one reads the drama *God of Women* through a feminist

eye, it is apparent that gender stereotypes and representation of female characters continues to receive the short straw in classroom situations. Gender equality and gender sensitivity are unlikely to be achieved unless the interpretation and deconstruction of what has been constructed through language use in literature in classrooms are addressed by teachers.

8.3 How teachers' feedback enhanced gender sensitivity

Of all the activities that were written by learners, there is no evidence that showed how gender sensitivity was commented on in the classroom. T1 gave learners the chance to discuss gender equality as portrayed in the play but none of the learners' written assignments were marked (see learners' document evidence). T2 on the other hand, praised learners with encouraging remarks such as "Wow, keep it up", "You are such a star, please keep shining", "Good attempts," etc. (see learners' document evidence). Similarly, T3 also praised learners with remarks such as "smart" and "good". None of these remarks were gender sensitive. In addition, such remarks were not discussed in the class, as learners just handed over their written work without any corrections.

CHAPTER 9

PEDAGOGIC PRACTICES FOR GENDER EQUITY: IMPLICATIONS FROM THE STUDY

The purpose of this chapter is to summarise the key findings that emerged from the study, to draw together a conclusion arising from the findings, and to consider the future implications of the study. The chapter is organised as follows: first, it describes the introduction and contextual background regarding the purpose of the study, followed by an analysis of the implications of the study for mediation of gender roles, selection of literary texts by policy makers and challenges regarding gender equity in Namibia's secondary schools. A summary of key issues that emerged from the study is outlined. Following the research described in the previous chapters, the study has suggested the kind of interventions and changes that might be undertaken in the teaching, curriculum design, and policy making of the literature curriculum in Namibia's secondary schools. These are all stated in the section on recommendations. The chapter ends by drawing out a conclusion.

The study aimed to investigate the role of pedagogical practices in the mediation of stereotypical gender representations in *God of Women*, a prescribed Grade 9 drama for secondary schools in Namibia. The primary purpose was three-fold:

1. to analyse how *God of Women* represents gender roles,
2. to investigate how gender representations in literary texts are mediated by teachers, and
3. to understand in what ways teachers' mediation practices of gender roles shape learners' understanding of gender representations.

I wanted to investigate the pedagogical practices employed by teachers during the English literature teaching to gain an insight on whether such practices shape learners' engagement with literature to promote critical thinking. The focus of mediation (teacher "talk around text") formed close analysis of teachers' engagement with the text during the lessons. As indicated earlier in Chapter 1, the motivation for the study is born out of my interest in the contribution of tradition to social development in Namibia, particularly to the goal of equalising power imbalances between men and women and enhancing women's position and power in society.

9.1 Implications of the study for mediation of gender roles

This chapter draws strength from the magnitude of the roles which gender equity and inequality play in the classrooms of Namibian schools, where traditional views appear to be problematic. This study revealed that gender discourses are not merely constructed through literary texts that are prescribed for schools, but also through the gendered interactions which take place in the classrooms. The study used Critical Discourse Analysis as a paradigm and analytical tool to study the construction of gender relationships through classroom interactions in the Namibian context.

One of the outcomes of the study is the finding that teachers unconsciously perpetuate these gender stereotypes. From this study, it emerged that teachers were generally unaware of instances of gender stereotyping as represented in the drama *God of Women*. Despite being separate individuals as noted in Chapter 1, teachers collectively perpetuated the patriarchal, oppressive and male-biased ideological worldviews, and also subverted these through, among others, their pedagogic practices and mediation of such worldviews. One of the challenges facing Namibia is the need to transform traditional norms, cultures and social structures which

shape women's lives. Part of the reason for this is that, traditionally, society tends to differentiate the roles of men and women based on biological differences.

While gender parity is a significant milestone towards achieving gender equality and the empowerment of women, the process of reinforcing gender stereotypes in schools remains unchallenged through the teaching and learning processes in the classrooms. These include the teachers' mediation practices with the text (teacher's "talk around text"), their engagement on gender representation in the play as represented by the author, and learners' general engagement with the text. Such engagement is necessary to ensure that women can be empowered to have decision making abilities in their matrimonial relationships, rights to express their opinions, and a voice to address issues that affect their lives. Although such changes are crucial, this study revealed that they remain difficult to achieve as debates on gender representation in literary texts are inactive in Namibian secondary schools.

If policy makers are serious about achieving the gender goals collectively described in literary texts, teachers need training on how to include gender issues in the complex teaching-learning process. If teachers are well trained, their pedagogical practices will be suited to challenging gender stereotypes in literary texts. This will result in learners developing critical and analytical skills. Given the fact that learners' engagement with the text was passive, it is likely that such learners may continue to accept the gender stereotypes as presented in *God of Women*, where women are depicted as weak, inferior, voiceless and regarded as sex objects.

Meanwhile, the Namibian curriculum (The National Curriculum for Basic Education, 2016) does not address gender issues. Like many other African countries, Namibia too has a strong culture which is characterised by African society. Given the absence of gender issues in the

curriculum, teachers may not consider gender representation in literary texts as essential. This is likely the reason why gender debates were absent in all the schools I visited. The curriculum was not developed based on an understanding of gender issues, taking into consideration the learning needs and interpretations of literary texts by both teachers and learners. Teachers and learners using literary texts should be seen as active and gender-responsive readers, and not merely accept gender representations as given.

Challenging the different notions which are expressed without taking them for granted, learners should be empowered to critique and question the natural gender representations in society. This is likely to result in learners being actively involved and taking control of their own lives in spite of the often symbolic injustices inflicted on them. We saw in Chapter 6 how learners lacked the understanding of gender in literature. For instance, at school A, learners were asked how they understood gender equality and learners responded that this term referred to the biological differences of being either male or female. Another definition provided by learners was “when men and women are treated the same”. Given such responses from learners, it appears that there is a lack of understanding in the Namibian context about what gender equality involves culturally, socially and politically speaking. Thus, there is a need to address gender inequalities in the curriculum across all school subjects. In other words, the Namibian curriculum designers need to develop the curriculum based on an understanding of gender issues. This is crucial if the trends in literary discourse in Namibian schools are to be rejected critically. There is a need for both teachers and learners to be active and gender-responsive readers.

The general findings of this study, as revealed in the previous chapters, show that Namibian learners could not engage critically with the discussion of women’s position in African

societies and the cultures which underpin inequality. The silent interactions on gender issues as represented in the drama *God of Women* by teachers resulted in learners remain uncritical about gender roles in their prescribed literary text. Teachers were reluctant to engage fully in critical discussions with their learners about gender issues which may have an impact on their lives. It emerged that the discussion on gender representations in literary texts was not sufficiently or fully developed in Namibian secondary schools. Learners are likely to believe that the work of art, in a form of a fictional drama, mirrors the social reality of African men and women without necessarily critiquing those realities.

Given the fact that *God of Women* deals with issues of maleness and femaleness, the issues of power relations in literary texts remained uncontested and reproduced through teachers' pedagogic practices. As noted in Chapter 3, the drama lacked a womanist approach in dealing with gender representations. The drama itself did not provide an avenue that fostered a strong relationship between men and women.

As I indicated in Chapter 6, the drama is written in a feminist tradition unlike the stiwanim tradition (see Chapter 3 for a detailed discussion about the stiwanim approach), where African women want to build a strong and harmonious society wherein both genders have a social responsibility in transforming the livelihood of an entire African society. Unlike the feminist approach, stiwanim appears to state that the discussion about gender should not be based on female characters only, as it is now a theme of the "position of women in society". Rather, teachers and learners should look at a text as a cultural product, and what is necessary is the interaction between the reader and the text. English literature teachers need to develop sophisticated understandings of texts as cultural products, so they can transmit gender concepts to learners.

Since the Namibian Curriculum for Basic Education (2016) emphasises language as the most essential tool for all communication and learning, reading and analysing literary texts is also essential in improving language skills and literary criticism. It is thus necessary to make teachers aware of the classroom implications attached to the teaching of literature, specifically with regard to the elimination of gender inequalities. This is so, given the fact that literature uses language as a powerful medium through which realities are reconstructed and reproduced through text. Often, authors depict and create social realities using characters and language to convey a message intended for a particular audience. It is through literature that we unpack the contradictions and particularly the oppressive gender relations within societies. Therefore, there is a need in the Namibian context to transform education policy and practices for gender equality, requiring the curriculum developers to integrate gender concerns when selecting schools' textbooks. It is obvious that during such transformation, some changes in cultural norms and values are inevitable, including society's views and perceptions about gender representation in literature. Henceforth, Namibia's curriculum requires us to reinforce gender integration to have teachers and learners interacting critically on issues related to gender representations in literary texts.

Talking about gender equality not only draws attention to more distinct issues related to gender stereotypes, gender violence, arranged marriages, polygamy and so on, but also to women's empowerment in their societies. Unlike the feminism approach that fights for women's rights and positions in patriarchal domains, Ogundipe-Leslie (2006) championed *stiwanism* not only to address the needs of African women, but as a foundation on which to build a stronger and harmonious society. Ogundipe-Leslie sees *stiwanism* as a foundation where both African men and women have social responsibilities in reconstructing and uplifting their livelihood as an entire African society. *Womanism*, on the other hand, is

foregrounded in African culture and centres more on the experiences, needs and desires of African women.

The implication of analysing literary texts in the Namibian context relies on the fact that literary texts instil and shape learners' perceptions, concepts, expectations and beliefs about who they are and what their roles in society are. The fact that there were poor classroom interactions, the representations of male and female characters may result in learners positioning themselves with the characters as represented and constructed in terms of gender. It is a fact that the drama *God of Women* reinforces the gender stereotypes which are held in some societies in Namibia and more so in some African societies.

Given the fact that *God of Women* is written by a male, this may explain something significant regarding gender in African society. For instance, readers may accept that the cultural patterns in many African societies subject women to male power. Given such cultural patterns, learners may believe that the male power that dominates women resulted in women being marginalised and weakened, taking an inferior position in their societies.

9.2 Gender representation in *God of Women*

God of Women seeks to represent African culture with an African audience in mind, depicting rather than critiquing its all-pervasive culture of violent masculinity. The drama portrayed the consequences of male dominance and cultural practices which lead to sexual exploitation of women in Africa. It is explicit that Nyathi (1998) predominantly represents women characters negatively, showing a patriarchal bias. From a feminist lens, it is evident that the author, using cultural perceptions of women's position in patriarchal society, has purely represented women as sex objects.

As for feminists, the fact that Chief Lewanika is engaged in polygamous relationships with four wives in order to bear a male heir to his throne is an indication that he is using women for sex. This is evident when, in Act I Scene II, Ma Inonge is called to hear about the prophecy and she immediately questions whether Chief Lewanika wants his “daily food”. The metaphor, as used by Nyathi, indicates the extremity of sex in Lewanika’s compound. “Daily food” is a metaphor used indirectly to compare sex to daily meals in the compound. The metaphor gives the sense that these women may not willingly want to engage in daily sex, but given the fact that they are women, they have to avail themselves to their husband’s desires.

God of Women presents imbalanced gender representation, wherein all four women are under the control of one man. Their voices are silent and Lewanika’s voice is powerful throughout the text. As I indicated earlier, the drama has some elements of patriarchal bias, as the author silences women’s voices. The reader rarely hears or gets into the heads of these women to explore their feelings and opinions regarding their marriage. Given the fact that the drama is written in a feminist tradition, this could have opened possibilities for teachers to mediate and interact with such literary texts with their learners in a way that allowed the development of gender critique of African societies. Such possibilities could lead to a situation where classroom interaction becomes central in dealing with gender roles and issues in the educational context. Sunderland’s (2001) notion of “teacher talk around text” could stimulate gender discussion in the classroom.

Considerably, and like many other authors, Nyathi’s drama might be written to expose social realities in some parts of Namibia and equally to explore the gender issues in an African culture. However, given the gender representation as depicted in the drama, the male characters are often presented as dominant whereas female characters are subservient. Nyathi

predominantly uses abusive language in reference to Lewanika, the main character in the play. Lewanika often verbally insults and physically beats his wives into submission as a means of patriarchal control. This is most evident when Lewanika calls his wives to inform them why he is marrying Joyce, insulting them with derogatory metaphors. Such metaphors carry strong connotations that are demeaning not only to his wives, but to any society. This also shows how women are perceived in an African patriarchal society.

The same patriarchal society perceives young girls as a source of wealth, particularly for destitute families. This too is evident when Nyathi writes of Joyce, a young girl exchanged for cattle and offered a piece of land to save her family from poverty. The author uses women characters as the property of their husbands, confining them in subservient conditions and making them voiceless and powerless in their matrimony. Such conditions may lead to psychological and physical degradation of women.

The English literature teachers could have engaged learners critically on such gender representations, particularly given the fact that many of these Grade 9 learners come from background societies where gender stereotypes are apparent.

I discussed in Chapter 1 that schools are not the only sites where gender is learned, but learners brought some understandings of gender issues from home/families before they entered school. Nonetheless, and given the teachers' mediation practices, literary texts make a significant contribution to the construction of masculinity and femininity, which is likely to challenge learners' preconceived ideas about gender. It is crystal clear that any work of art mirrors a certain society. Therefore, such works of art should be used to develop critical critiques of a particular society regarding gender representations.

On the other hand, texts alone cannot reconstruct a society, but the way teachers mediate literary texts to learners' plays a significant role in contributing to the cultural underpinnings of social change. As revealed in this study, teachers' mediation practices on gender roles did not re-shape learners' understanding of gender representations as portrayed in the drama *God of Women*. For learners, particularly from school A, gender equality merely means equal treatment between men and women; however there is no critical argument on how men and women should be treated equally (see learners' document evidence). Therefore, learners' preconceived understandings of masculinity and femininity remained unchallenged. This is to say, learners may continue to accept and believe that gender is a natural order. Having read the drama without challenging it may mean learners have taken the gender representation as put by Nyathi without reviewing it more critically.

9.3 Teachers' critical engagement with the text

One of the features noted during classroom observation was the lack of critical engagement with the drama where African cultural patterns as depicted in the play were not critiqued by teachers. There were no debates on gender representation despite teachers' mention of engaging learners in debates as one of their approaches to the drama *God of Women*. More themes such as polygamy, the position of women, violence, fornication and so forth emerged, but the teachers missed the chance to critique them. Teachers opted that learners read the play, dramatize it and answer questions directly from the play. Teachers' questioning techniques were not gender stimulating, but rather asking the form of literature over the content thereof.

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engaging learners in debates as one of their approaches to the drama *God of Women*. More themes such as polygamy, the position of women, violence, fornication and so forth emerged, but the teachers missed the chance to critique them. Teachers opted that learners read the play, dramatize it and answer questions directly from the play. Teachers' questioning techniques were not gender stimulating but rather asking the form of literature over the content thereof. There were no opportunities to explore the gender issues in all the schools I had visited. In most instances, teachers tended to teach from the front and either read the play or ask learners to read the play. School A's learners with their teacher managed to finish reading the whole play whereas in School B, learners did not complete reading the whole play. Given the fact that there were no opportunities to explore the gender issues in the classrooms, the critical thinking on gender issues between boys and girls was not successful. Both teachers and learners appeared to have had not considered the play in-depth. It appears that they were not often aware of the invitation from the play to critique social realities as mirrored in the play.

9.4 The process of selecting literary texts for schools

While teachers and some Senior Education Officers are involved in the selection of the literary texts for schools in Namibia, this study revealed that they were often not conscious of the social and cultural significant in selecting such texts, and thus be influenced by these in their selection. It appears that the mechanism to involve quite a large number of teachers from the regions in selecting and evaluating literary texts at NIED is inherently limited as only one teacher from each region represents the rest of the teachers. This could mean that teachers' views on any selected literary texts are not considered. In other words, teachers do not get direct opportunity to give their views about the literary texts.

Moreover, an English Senior Education officer who has to oversee the teaching of English in the entire region indicated from an interview that she had not read the play and is not aware of the gendered issues represented in the *God of Women*. This is despite the fact that the teaching of literature needs to incorporate gender equality issues to promote change. There is thus the need for both teachers and curriculum planners to collectively evaluate the gendered discourse embedded in literary texts for schools. This, however, is only possible if teachers are trained on how to incorporate gender roles and issues in their daily teaching.

9.5 Recommendations

The focus of this study was to investigate the mediation of gender roles in a prescribed Grade 9 drama *God of Women* in two selected schools in Namibia and how such mediation practices shape learners' understanding of gender representations in literary texts. As indicated elsewhere in this study, gender issues were often ignored in classroom interactions. Thus, there is a need for teachers to be trained on how to incorporate gender issues in their classroom contexts. This shall be possible if the curriculum addresses gender issues in teaching across the curriculum. It is the Ministry of Education, curriculum planners at NIED and Senior Education Officers' roles to ensure that teachers are properly trained and are able to incorporate gender issues in their daily lessons.

The curriculum planners from NIED and the Subject Advisory Board could adopt other measures such as organising conferences and symposium on the teaching of literature with gender perspective. Teachers attending such symposiums could learn new methods on dealing with gender discourse among school learners.

Moreover, the curriculum planners at NIED could incorporate in the syllabus and prepare manuals to be distributed to schools to offer guidance on how to teach about gender, analyse literature texts using a gender-focused lens; how to be gender sensitive throughout the teaching process; how to deconstruct traditional gender roles assigned to both male and female characters, how to avoid language bias and subvert misconceptions; and how to use gender inclusive language to create an awareness among teachers and learners.

The criteria in selecting literary texts for schools should consider the basis that offer a different perspective to more current texts that have obvious traditional gender representations. There is a need to have a literature syllabus in its own right that allows much wider exposure of literature teaching and learning. There is a need for teachers, learners, curriculum planners and Subject Advisory Board to understand that literature is not about reading for pleasure but it requires in-depth reading, understanding meanings, and developing an awareness of literary form and content. This awareness could be made through active and critical engagement with the text.

All these could be possible if the literature syllabus is well equipped with texts written by both male and female authors by Namibians and non-Namibians and would include older texts and recent texts to provide the opportunity for a wider exploration and critical approach to the subject. This enables teachers to examine progressive assessment system in encouraging gender critiques within literature thereby encouraging learners to engage in deep thinking and discouraging superficial and instrumental responses.

9.6 Further study

Future studies might investigate the roles of learners in critiquing gender stereotypes within literature in schools' textbooks. This might encourage learners to engage critically with their textbooks to promote gender sensitive among learners. Other studies may explore the authors' intentions as to why they represent women at the bottom in their writings. Chapter Five offers a critical analysis in order to understand how the literary text selected for this study represents gender. Thus, one-on-one interview with authors might reveal their intentions to reflect the social reality and the message they intend to convey to the audience.

There is also a need for studies to investigate parents' attitudes towards gender equity in society and to understand their views on how traditional gender stereotypes should either be reconstructed or deconstructed in teaching literature to achieve social and cultural change. Other scholars might be interested to interview parents on their awareness of the literary texts that their learners read at school. This would create an awareness if the texts had influence on the gender representations conveyed in the text and also to understand whether parents raise their children in gender aware and sensitive manner for the betterment of society at large.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Permission to conduct research



REPUBLIC OF NAMIBIA

MINISTRY OF EDUCATION, ARTS AND CULTURE

Tel: +264 61 -2933200
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Enquiries: C. Muchila/ G. Munene
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Luther Street, Govt. Office Park
Private Bag 13186
Windhoek
Namibia

File no: 11/1/1

To: Mrs. Josephine Nashongo

Dear Mrs. Nashongo

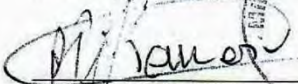
SUBJECT: PERMISSION TO CONDUCT RESEARCH DRAMA IN OSHIKOTO AND OHANGWENA REGIONS.

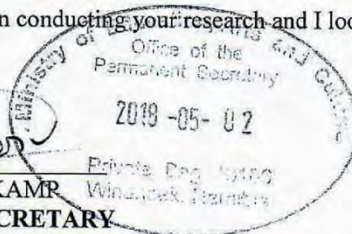
Kindly be informed that permission to conduct an academic research for your Doctorate of Philosophy degree Studies on *An investigation on the mediation of gender roles in a prescribed drama "God of Women" in Oshikoto and Ohangwena Regions*, is here with granted. You are further requested to present the letter of approval to the Regional Director of Education, Arts and Culture to ensure that research ethics are adhered to and disruption of curriculum delivery is avoided.

Furthermore, we humbly request you to share your research findings with the ministry. You may contact Mr C. Muchila/ Mr. G. Munene at the Directorate: Programmes and Quality Assurance (PQA) for provision of summary of your research findings.

I wish you the best in conducting your research and I look forward to hearing from you soon.

Sincerely yours


SANEL L. STEENKAMP
PERMANENT SECRETARY



Date

All official correspondences must be addressed to the Permanent Secretary

Appendix B: Learner tests

God of Women
Section A

Act one, Scene one

1. Who is the main act in the play God of Women? (1)
2. Who is the chief's first wife and her daughter? (2)
3. What is the name of his fourth wife? (1)
4. What is a seer, mentioned in the play and what is he doing at the chief's palace? (2)
5. What relationship is between the chief and Neo? (2)
6. What are the names of the other two wives of the chief? (2)

{10}

Section B

1. What is the voice, and how does it make itself heard by the chief? (2)
2. What does the seer prophecy to the chief about the taboo that will happen? (2)
3. What is the use of the 'rod of correction' given to the chief by the seer? (2)
4. From whom does the chief expect to get a son and why? (4)

{10}

Section C

Give literal (Ordinary) meanings to the following expressions.

1. "Go back to your caskets of doom" (2)
2. "Lords of the soil" (2)
3. "Were you unattended before, or were you simply on the moon?" (2)
4. "He shall defile a taboo". (2)
5. "She shall ooze a perennial spring of tears" (2)

{10}

Section D

1. Quote an expression from the play, which shows that the chief abuses his wives by
 - (a) Beating them / physical assault (3)
 - (b) Insulting them (their intelligence) / Verbal abuse (3)
 - (c) Referring to them as objects/properties that he owns (4)

{10}

Total Marks 40

Website: <http://www.allofficeidool.com>

Grade 9 Literature task: Drama/Play

God of Women
Section A

Act one, Scene one

1. Who is the main act in the play God of Women? (1)
2. Who is the chief's first wife and her daughter? (2)
3. What is the name of his fourth wife? (1)
4. What is a seer, mentioned in the play and what is he doing at the chief's palace? (2)
5. What relationship is between the chief and Neo? (2)
6. What are the names of the other two wives of the chief? (2)

{10}

Section B

1. What is the voice, and how does it make itself heard by the chief? (2)
2. What does the seer prophecy to the chief about the taboo that will happen? (2)
3. What is the use of the 'rod of correction' given to the chief by the seer? (2)
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{10}

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4. "He shall defile a taboo". (2)
5. "She shall ooze a perennial spring of tears" (2)

{10}

Section D

1. Quote an expression from the play, which shows that the chief abuses his wives by
 - (a) Beating them / physical assault (3)
 - (b) Insulting them (their intelligence) / Verbal abuse (3)
 - (c) Referring to them as objects/properties that he owns (4)

{10}

Total Marks 40

Appendix C: Learner homework

30 May 2018

God of Women

In my opinion as I have read God of Women, I have shown that there is no gender equality. It's because Chief Lewanika did not respect women. He married more than one woman. The book is all about ruthless and women abuse, violence as Lewanika has been mistreating his spouses by insulting them, calling them idiots, incompetents, numb and chilly wives. He also sometimes beat them as he has no sympathy. And he also uses abusive words. And his women are jealous of each other. That shows to me that there is no gender equality.

29 May 2018

God of Women

No gender equality represents in the book because Chief Lewanika was treating his wives badly, they wives of the chief did not have say about what the chief doing, the wives of the chief used to call the chief "my lord" that means that the chief had the power to control them all. So the chief Lewanika acted as if he is God, Chief Lewanika used the rod to beat his wives when they did mistakes.

28 May 2018

Home work

Reading the drama or play 'God of Women', do you think there is equal gender representations.

Explain your answer in relation to characters.

- AD There is ^{equal} representation because Chief Lewanika never treated his wives equal and with respect. As we all know that Chief Lewanika married lots of wives and between them there was always conflicts and fighting. He also abuses his wives a lot. He also betrayed people so he can be a king. Before they got married with Ma Inonge, she was pregnant and the chief Lewanika told her to abort the baby so he can be a king, because people were not choosing someone to be a king while he have got kids already. He also cheat a correction rod into a district rod towards his wives.

Learner 4

9A

6 June 2018

~~Home work~~



Good attempt.

English

Act one scene one God of women

1. What is the voice and how does it make itself heard by the chief?

- ..- The voice is coming from the brave ancestor and it is speaking through the seer. Telling him that a curse is upon him, then he shall die of disease, of hunger and of lust.

2. What does the seer's prophecy to the chief about the taboo

He prophesies that Lewanika should feast with his sons. He still refuse to do so. There are two things he can do, he can be gone by the time the baby bears teeth, allowing him to escape the jaws of shame or he shall warn him in the time left to fulfil his prophecy.

8
10

1 of June 2018
wow, keep up your
good work.

name: Learner B
Literature task: Drama
God of Women

Section B

1. This were the ancestors speaking through the whitch doctor (poet) and it was repeated many times
2. The prophesy that the king will have a son which he and he shall eat with his father, meaning the son will take one of his father's wives which is unexptable and an embarrassing thi to do.
3. It was something like a stick given to the chief by veer, with it he shall put together his wires to him, with it he shall keep his wires together, with it he shall beat his drum to call those of ancestry.
4. Joyce, he is the futh wife and she was ^{sr} wife, she was also young, smart and industrious meaning she was productive. The is Kawanika also expected a son from Joyce, because other two wife Ma Inoje and Ma Henge weren't able to give him a son, and Nsala wa barren.

Name: Learner 3

Grade: 9A

06 June 2018

3
10

Please get hold of the book again Katuranga

Homework

1. What is the voice, and how does it make itself heard by the chief? (2)

- It is a witch doctor and it ~~is~~ speaks the voice of the man and the language of the elders.

2. What does the seer prophecy to the chief about the taboo that will happen? (2)

- It was ~~to~~ to keep his wives together and have a fourth wife.

3. What is the use of the rod of correction given to the chief by the seer? (2)

- It is used to keep spouses together and beat the drum to call those of ancestry.

4. From whom does the chief expect to get a son and why? (4)

- From Joyce, because she was the best to Kwanika.

- She was the ~~last~~ ^{fourth} wife and they did not have a son with her.

Name: Learner C
Grade: 9A

English (GOD OF WOMAN)

9
10
wow! keep it up.

6 June 2018

1. Who is the main act in the play God of Woman (1)
= ~~to~~ King Lewanika because he ~~started~~ ^{has} acting from the beginning to the end.

2. Who is the chief first wife and her daughter? (2)
= His ~~to~~ first wife is Ma Inonge and her daughter Inonge.

3. What is the name of the fourth wife (1)
= Soice

4. What is a seer, mentioned in the play and what is he doing in the chief's palace? (2)

- The seer mentioned in the play is a witch doctor

5. What relationship is between the chief and seer.
= They are ^{best} friends

26 June 2016

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Grade 9 literature

Good of women

Act one, Scene one

Section a

1. Young women have easily broken hearts. Old men take good care of them ~~and young men~~ them or hurt them. Young men can influence young women but older men can take good care of them

2. All things that are done in secret ~~secret~~ or in the dark are soon revealed so they may come to light and known by the people. (10)

3. When I get old

4. The good gods shall calm our souls? Define 'Sooth' - see ~~of~~ for

Section b

In scene 1, Neco suspects that Joyce might betray the chief and that she is not entirely trustworthy, but lacks values. As we come into scene 2, Neco's instincts about Joyce are proven to be true as he finds her embracing with another man, John, while she is still married to his friend, chief Lewanika.

Smart!!

Section A

Date?

9B

Act 1 Scene 1

1. Lewanika ✓

2. The chief's first wife is Na Inage and her daughter Inage ✓

3. A seer is a person who claims to witness the future ✓

before other people, claims to see events in future, he was

cleansing the chief's kraal from an evil curse

4. Joyce ✓

5. Neo is a very good friend of Lewanika, they are

good friends ✓

6. Mallenga and Ntala (10)

Section B

1. The voice is the words/warning from ancestors and it make itself heard through the seer and signs

2. That his unknown and yet known son will ruin him for one of Lewanika's spouses/wives

3. That with the sword he shall bind his subjects to him,

Learner D "God of Women"

9
10

106 June 2018
would keep it up

Act one, Scene one

1. Who is the main act in the play God of Women

→ The main act is King Lewanika, because he appeared in the play from the first beginning until the end.

2. Who is chief Lewanika's first wife and her daughter

⇒ The first wife is Ma Inonge and her daughter is Inonge.

3. What is the name of the fourth wife?

⇒ Is Joyce

4. What is a seer, mentioned in the play and what is doing at chief's palace?

⇒ The seer is the witch doctor and his role is to protect the chief and speak with the king's ancestors

06 June 2018

Name: Learner E

10
10

Wow, you are such
a star, please keep
shining!

God of Women
Section 0 A

Act one, scene one

1. Chief Lewanika is the main act because all the other actors in the play are known because of him, (his wife wives.) ~~74~~ 1
2. Ma Inonge is the Chief's first wife and her daughter is Inonge. 2
3. Lewanika's fourth wife is Joyce. 1
4. A seer is a prophet. He was invited to the Chief's palace to cleanse the compound / Chief's palace. He also told the chief about what ^{was} going to happen that; there ^{was} deaf surrounding the compound. 2
5. Chief Lewanika and Ma Inonge and Lewanika Ma Inonge

09 May 2019

Home work

1. There is no gender equality because women are not treated good by Chief Lewanika. His wives are beaten up because of a single mistake with the creation god. Lewanika married a small woman and the reason was just to have a son in her and she will be treated like other wives in the compound. Lewanika liked his best friend John and he did not treat his wives as he treated his best friend. I also think there is no gender equality because a married man cannot just treat his wives like Lewanika did. There is one sentence that says "father shall eat with his son" which means Lewanika sharing the same wife with John his son. This means the chief married Joyce while she has his boyfriend John, and I think there is no equal treatment in this play.

In the book of God of Women, women are not treated the same as men. In other words there is no gender equality in the play. The chief (Lewonika) use to treat his wives with no respect and with violence. Lewonika use to be respected but he doesn't respect anyone in the compound. He use to make decisions and he don't care how they affect people. He abused his wives (Nkhalonge, Ntallenge, Neda and Jajca) especially one day he slapped Nkhalonge. The chief doesn't respect them either. All this means there is no gender equality because men (chief) are more respected or seen more important than women.

Appendix D: Standardized lesson planning sheet

Appendix F

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**HAIMBILI HAUFIKU SENIOR SECONDARY SCHOOL
SCHOOL STANDISED LESSON PLANNING SHEET FOR ALL
PREPARATION**

TEACHER: Mrs Ndleniwoangela L TIME: 40 min

SUBJECT: English DATE: 4/June/2018

GRADE: 9(A)

LESSON TOPIC: Literature

THEME: Phrases and Idioms in the play

NEW TOPIC CONTINUATION TOPIC REPETITION LESSON

✓ Tick appropriate box

LEARNING CONTENT	LEARNING OBJECTIVES	TEACHING METHODS	TEACHING AND LEARNING/AIDS
Read and Respond to the play context	Demonstrate and understand the play	Whole class	God of women

1. INTRODUCTION (Catch and Focus)

one learner would be asked what she/he already know about idioms.

2. LESSON PRESENTATION (Implementation/processing)

2.(a) Teaching activities	(b) Learning activities
Idioms used their meaning would be written on the chalk board explained	write what was put on the chalkboard for them ask questions
3. Evaluation/Reinforcement/Conclusion	4. Homework
Recap the topic	was given

**HAMBILI HAUFIKU SENIOR SECONDARY SCHOOL
SCHOOL STANDARDISED LESSON PLANNING SHEET FOR ALL
PREPARATION**

TEACHER: Mrs Ndlemwoangela L TIME: 40 mins

SUBJECT: English DATE: 7/ June/ 2018

GRADE: 9 A J

LESSON TOPIC: Literature

THEME: Plot, Setting and broad content in the play

NEW TOPIC CONTINUATION TOPIC REPETITION LESSON

✓ Tick appropriate box

LEARNING CONTENT	LEARNING OBJECTIVES	TEACHING METHODS	TEACHING AND LEARNING AIDS
Read and respond to plays	Demonstrate and understand meaning of the play	God of Women MRETT the whole class	The God of Women

1. INTRODUCTION (Catch and Focus)

A learner would be asked about the plot.

In general

2. LESSON PRESENTATION (Implementation/processing)

2.(a) Teaching activities	(b) Learning activities
- Define Plot, Setting and broad content in the play - Give examples	- write down the notes - give examples - ask questions
3. Evaluation/Reinforcement/Conclusion	4. Homework
Summarise the topic	Home work was given

**HAMBILI HAUFIKU SENIOR SECONDARY SCHOOL
SCHOOL STANDARDISED LESSON PLANNING SHEET FOR ALL
PREPARATION**

TEACHER: Mrs Ndemwoangela L TIME: 40 mins

SUBJECT: English DATE: 6/June/2018

GRADE: 9 (A)

LESSON TOPIC: Literature

THEME: A play

NEW TOPIC CONTINUATION TOPIC REPETITION LESSON

✓ Tick appropriate box

LEARNING CONTENT	LEARNING OBJECTIVES	TEACHING METHODS	TEACHING AND LEARNING AIDS
Respond to the play	Demonstrate and understand what would be shown	Whole class	God of women

1. INTRODUCTION (Catch and Focus)

A learner would fill the whole class what will be happen

2. LESSON PRESENTATION (Implementation/processing)

2.(a) Teaching activities	(b) Learning activities
- Teacher would take notes	- Prepare themselves - Dramatise the scene one

3. Evaluation/Reinforcement/Conclusion

Some of the learners would be asked a moral lesson in the play.

4. Homework

Not homework was given

HAINBILI HAITIKU SENIOR SECONDARY SCHOOL
SCHOOL STANDARDISED LESSON PLANNING SHEET FOR DAILY PREPARATION

TEACHER: P.D. Silume **TIME:** 40 mins
SUBJECT: English 2nd language **DATE:** 23/05/2018
GRADE: 9A & B
LESSON TOPIC: God of Women
THEME: Literature Comprehension
 NEW TOPIC **CONTINUATION OF TOPIC** **REPEITION LESSON**
 Use envelope & box

LEARNING CONTENT	LEARNING OBJECTIVES	TEACHING METHODS	TEACHING AND LEARNING MEDIA/AIDS
God of women	Ability to read with understanding & relate characters	Teacher exposition and question and answers + pair work	Hand out & Chalk board

I. INTRODUCTION (Catch and Focus)

Review of literary terms - Exposition, setting & character
 Some questions on the cast of the play - God of Women.

2. LESSON PRESENTATION (Implementation/processing)

(a) Teaching activities	(b) Learning activities
Set learners in pairs, ensure task for home work well completed by each one. Monitor feed back on response provide question to help complete.	Learners already read act 1, scene 1. In pairs they exchange their written activities and peer mark. They answer questions from the task.
Some more questions prompting more detailed understanding of the act	Read act one, scene two and answer the questions provided on the hand out given.

HAIMBETI HALTIKU SENIOR SECONDARY SCHOOL
SCHOOL STANDARDISED LESSON PLANNING SHEET FOR DAILY PREPARATION

TEACHER: P. D. Silume TIME: 40 mins
 SUBJECT: English 2nd language DATE: 01-06-2018
 GRADE: 9
 LESSON TOPIC: Women rights / rights for women, past and present
 THEME: Factual / expository writing

- NEW TOPIC CONTINUATION OF TOPIC REPETITION LESSON
 Use appropriate box

LEARNING CONTENT	LEARNING OBJECTIVES	TEACHING METHODS	TEACHING AND LEARNING MEDIA/AIDS
Factual essay writing	learners must be able to introduce, develop and conclude a factual piece of writing on a given topic	teacher exposition	Chalk board & handouts

1. INTRODUCTION (Catch and Focus)

Review some writing skills, paragraph styles / techniques for such as statistic, quote, fact, question

2. LESSON PRESENTATION (Implementation / processing)

2.1 (a) Teaching activities	2.1 (b) Learning activities
On a different topic the teacher demonstrates how to introduce, develop and conclude an essay.	Learners observe, note and copy the writing technique presented and write their own given topic

2.2 (a) Evaluation / Reinforcement	2.2 (b) Homework
Provide peer editing handouts and explain some common errors to look up i.e. Concord: & punctuations.	Peer editing during study time and write revised / edited draft

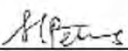
Appendix E: Consent forms

Appendix E

Consent Form

This is to confirm that I have read the purpose of this study and my involvement as a participant in the study and that I agree to take part in this study. I have been informed of my rights regarding my participation prior to the research getting underway. These include: confidentiality and anonymous treatment of all information provided by me, unless, I willingly waive this rights in writing and the right to withdraw from the study for any or no reason at any time.

Name: Petrus Shikoyeni Date: 21/05/18

Signature: 

Appendix E

Consent Form

This is to confirm that I have read the purpose of this study and my involvement as a participant in the study and that I agree to take part in this study. I have been informed of my rights regarding my participation prior to the research getting underway. These include: confidentiality and anonymous treatment of all information provided by me, unless, I willingly waive this rights in writing and the right to withdraw from the study for any or no reason at any time.

Name: POSANI DANIELS SILUME Date: 20/06/2018


Signature: 

Appendix E

Consent Form

This is to confirm that I have read the purpose of this study and my involvement as a participant in the study and that I agree to take part in this study. I have been informed of my rights regarding my participation prior to the research getting underway. These include: confidentiality and anonymous treatment of all information provided by me, unless, I willingly waive this rights in writing and the right to withdraw from the study for any or no reason at any time.

Name: Mrs Ndlovuwoofjela Lalmi Date: 21 May 2018

Signature: 

Appendix E

Consent Form

This is to confirm that I have read the purpose of this study and my involvement as a participant in the study and that I agree to take part in this study. I have been informed of my rights regarding my participation prior to the research getting underway. These include: confidentiality and anonymous treatment of all information provided by me, unless, I willingly waive this rights in writing and the right to withdraw from the study for any or no reason at any time.

Name: Mb NOUNCENTHO KARINA K.P Date: 18/06/18

Signature: 

Appendix F: Lesson preparation forms

Appendix F

LESSON PREPARATION FORM

T1

Teacher: Mr. Shitanga	Grade: 9A - B	Date: 23-24/05/18
Subject: English		Time: 45 minutes
Theme and Topic		
Teaching materials/resources to use the play God of Women		
Lesson objective(s): Learners will: Answering simple questions from the play		
Basic competencies (refer to Syllabus): Learners will be able to figure out themes, opinions and perspectives in texts read		
Monitoring of the home work done: No homework was given		
An appropriate short introduction: Teacher will emphasise on the general knowledge of drama		
Presentation of the lesson:		
Teacher's work(s) Teacher will give a background of the play to be discussed and ask learners to try to answer some simple questions from the play orally in class	Learner's work(s) Learners are expected to be thinking critically and come up with the answers to questions. Learners are also expected to be in discussions with others so that they share what they understandings	
Consolidation: Learners were able to provide the correct answers to most of the questions		
Assessment/homework/tasks/exercise:		
Reading activities: God of Women by Sidiiso Nyathi		
Writing activities:		
Compensatory teaching:		
Reflections: Learners were able to figure out most of the themes through answering the questions they were asked		

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LESSON PREPARATION FORM

Site: <http://www.allofficeetool.com>

Teacher: Mr Shikyezi | Grade: 7A - B | Date: 28-29/05/18
 Subject: English | Time: 45 minutes

Theme and Topic: literature (drama)
 Teaching materials/resources to use: the play God of Women

Lesson objective(s): Learners will: carry out presentations

Basic competencies (refer to Syllabus): Learners will be able to demonstrate and understanding of and respond actively to key aspects of texts such as -actions and consequences, characters and relationships between characters.

Monitoring of the home work done: Text read, home work monitored

An appropriate short introduction: Teacher will brief learners on what they are going to present

Presentation of the lesson:

Teacher's work(s)	Learner's work(s)
Teacher will be making comments paying close attention to key aspects of the text on Act 1, the first and such as actions and relationships between characters	Learners will present on the play God of Woman Act 1, the first and the second scene

Consolidation: presentations were successful

Assessment/homework/tasks/exercise:

Reading activities: God of Woman Sifiso Nyathi

Writing activities:

Compensatory teaching:

Reflections: learners demonstrated good

LESSON PREPARATION FORM

Teacher: Mrs Shikanyani Grade: 9A-B Date: 30/3/18
 Subject: English Time: 45 minutes

Theme and Topic: Literature (drama)

Teaching materials/resources to use: the play God of Women

Lesson objective(s): Learners will analyse the text and present on it

Basic competencies (refer to Syllabus): Learners will be able to sequence events in texts into chronological order

Monitoring of the home work done:

Home work monitored

An appropriate short introduction:

Teacher will ask learners if they are able to recall what they have discussed from the previous lessons regarding the play

Presentation of the lesson:

Teacher's work(s)

Learner's work(s)

Teacher will give learners some notes that they should be making use of when doing their presentations and explain to them. Learners will be presenting on Act I scene three to four. Questions will be posed on them and they are expected to be bearing and giving answers.

Consolidation:

Presentation carried out

Assessment/homework/tasks/exercise:

Reading activities:

God of Women by Sifiso Nyathi

Writing activities:

Compensatory teaching:

Reflections:

Learners were able to demonstrate understanding of what they were presenting on.

LESSON PREPARATION FORM

Teacher: Mrs Shikanyani Grade: 9A-B Date: 30-3-18
 Subject: English Time: 45 minutes
 Theme and Topic: Literature (drama)

Teaching materials/resources to use:
 the play God of Women

Lesson objective(s): Learners will:
 analyse the text and present on it

Basic competencies (refer to Syllabus): Learners will be able to:
 sequence events in texts into chronological order

Monitoring of the home work done:
 Home work monitored

An appropriate short introduction:
 Teacher will ask learners if they are able to recall what they have discussed from the previous lessons regarding the play

Presentation of the lesson:

Teacher's work(s)	Learner's work(s)
Teacher will give learners some notes that they should be making use of when doing their presentations and explain to them	Learners will be presenting on Act 1 scene three to four. Questions will be posed on them and they are expected to be hearing and giving answers

Consolidation:
 Presentation carried out

Assessment/homework/tasks/exercise:

Reading activities:
 God of Women by Sifiso Nyathi

Writing activities:
 Compensatory teaching:

Reflections:
 Learners were able to demonstrate understanding of what they were presenting on

Appendix G:

<http://www.allofficetool.com>

- We must consider ^{time} advice from our friends, but not insulting them
 - Battering/Beating them is inhuman and not good
 - Being married to someone ^{when} who do not love you creates problem
 - Practice of polygamy
 - Make your choice before marriage
 - Trust your husband and wife, Joyce ^{did} ~~was~~ not her husband and Lewanika considered her as the lovely wife among them
 - ^{an} ~~an~~ ^{way} ~~way~~ ^{to} ~~to~~ ^{live} ~~live~~

Theme
 Is an idea or a topic that is important in the text, the main idea of the book, the so-called main talk of the story/book
 -> Trust ~~breakage~~ ^{breakage} / woman ~~secret~~ ^{secret}
 - Violence and abuse against women
 - Lewanika have no mercy on his wives, beat them and did not respect them or love them
 - Women roles and position in traditional African society traditions
 - The duties of women is to prepare food for their husband, be children, and do all house ~~works~~ ^{work}
 - The truth ^(secrets) is always come out even if it takes years, when the truth is finally revealed, confusion, disappointment and pain will be caused
 - Bigotry (behaviours or beliefs typical of a legit. people who think that their opinion is ~~correctly~~ ^{correctly} own strong opinion are correct)
 - Denials of people of their birth rights
 - Adultery / fornication
 - Respect others is important

Setting
 The place where the specific story originated.
 The drama was played in the Caprivi region in Namibia ⁱⁿ rural

been, because it is ^{the} ~~the~~ ^{can} ~~can~~ ^{find} ~~find~~ ^{kranis} ~~kranis~~, traditional ~~be~~ ^{being} brewed, people fetching water from rivers, pounding grains. The drama was played during summer specifically in Chief Lewanika's palace (compound).

Plot
 The main focus, thought of the story, the order of events what happen and when (storyline arrangement)

Characters' characteristics sympathy

① Chief Lewanika (Kran)
 - He was a chief with no sympathy/love
 - He was an ~~abuser~~ ^{abuser}, treat his wives badly, uses a rod of correction to punish them. (he also use abusive/offensive words to them)
 - Does not know about his son (John) existence
 - Married to four wives, namely, Ma Long, Ma Long, Nkalo and Joyce
 - Fooled by his wives that they were free (untouched/virgin)

② Ma Inonge
 - She is a jealous woman
 - She like quarreling and insulting others
 - She is a liar, she lied to Lewanika that she had an abortion.
 - ^{Her} ~~her~~ ^{reason} ~~reason~~ ^(brave) ~~(brave)~~ ^{because} ~~because~~ she succeeded to hide John

③ Ma Inonge
 - She is jealous and selfish
 - She like fighting and quarreling
 - She is helpful, assist other during work

1. PHYSICAL CHARACTERISTICS / LAYOUT		
1.1	Durability: Quality of paper and binding. Is it likely that the material will be usable for five years? (5 Yes to 1 No)	
1.2	Typeface and size: Is the type, including captions and labelling of illustrations clear and large enough for learners intended? (5 Yes to 1 No)	
1.3	Layout and appearance: Is the material aesthetically appealing? Look at general layout, width of margins, etc. (5 Yes to 1 No)	
1.3.1	Does the book contain a table of content? (5 Yes to 1 No)	
1.3.2	Does the material contain an adequate index? (5 Yes to 1 No)	
1.4	Cost: Is the cost reasonable compared to similar materials? (5 Yes to 1 No)	
Sub-total: 30		
Comments:		
.....		
.....		

2. CONTENT <i>(Please see if section is relevant to a course book (*), a reader(&) or a reference book (#).)</i>		
2.1	How consistent is the approach used in the material with the syllabus? (5 Fully to 1 Scarcely) (*,&,#)	
2.2	To what extent are relevant knowledge objectives catered for in the material? (5 Fully to 1 Scarcely) (*,&,#)	
2.3	To what extent are relevant skills objectives catered for in the material? (5 Fully to 1 Scarcely) (*,&,#)	
2.4	To what extent does the content reflect current knowledge and culture? (5 Fully to 1 Scarcely) (*,&,#)	
2.5	Is the content of the material factually accurate? (5 Fully to 1 Scarcely) (*,&,#)	
2.6	How free is the material of bias unacceptable to teachers, learners, communities and MBEC policies? (5 Entirely to 1 Scarcely) (*,&,#)	
2.7	To what extent do the materials reflect the contributions and perspectives of various ethnic and cultural groups where appropriate? (5 Fully to 1 Scarcely) (*,&,#)	
2.8	Is the material free of stereotypes? (5 Yes to 1 No) (*,&,#)	
2.9	To what extent does the material encourage a positive attitude towards gender? (5 Largely to 1 Scarcely) (*,&,#)	
2.10	To what extent does the material encourage a positive attitude towards issues? (e.g. population, environmental, etc.) (5 Largely to 1 Scarcely) (*,&,#)	
Sub-total: 50		
Comments:		
.....		
.....		

Appendix H:

Appendix G

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Moral lesson (5)

- We must consider ^{me} advice from our friends, but not insulting them
- Battering/beating them is inhuman and not good
- Being married to someone ^{often} who do not love you creates problems
- Practice of polygamy
- Make your choice before marriage
- Trust your husband and wife, Joyce ^{did} ~~was~~ not her husband and Lewanika considered her as the lovely wife among them

Theme

Is an idea or a topic that is important in the text, the main idea of the book, the so-called main talk of the story/book.

- > Trust breach / woman secret
- Violence and abuse against women
- Lewanika have no mercy on his wives, beat them and did not respect them or love them
- Women's roles and position in traditional African society traditions
- The duties of women is to prepare food for their husband, bear children, and do all house ~~works~~ ^{works}.
- The truth is always come out even if it takes years, when the truth is finally revealed, confusion, disappointment and pain will be caused
- Bigotry (behaviour or beliefs typical of ^{bigot} people who think that their opinion is ~~correct~~ ^{correctly} own strong opinion are correct)
- Denial of people of their birth rights
- Adultery / fornication
- Respect others is important

Setting

The place where the specific story originated.

The drama was played in the Capric region in Namibia of rural

area, because it is the region where traditional beer being brewed, people fetching water from rivers, pounding grains. The drama was played during summer specifically in Chief Lewanika's palace/compound.

Plot

The main focus, thought of the story, the order of events what happen and when (storyline arrangement)

Character's characteristics sympathy

① Chief Lewanika (Kruu)

- He was a chief with no sympathy
- He was an arrogant abuser, treat his wives badly, uses a rod of correction to punish them. (he also use abusive/offensive words to Neo)
- Does not know about his son (John) existence
- Married to four wives, namely, Ma Inonge, Ma Inonge, Nkala and Jesse
- Fooled by his wives that they were free (untouched/virgin)

② Ma Inonge

- She is a jealous woman.
- She like quarrel and insulting others.
- She is a liar, she lied to Lewanika that she had an abortion.
- Heroine, because she succeeded to hide John

③ Ma Inonge

- She is jealous and selfish
- She like fighting and quarrel
- She is helpful, assist other during work