

Representations of Masculinity in Selected Post-2000 South African Fictional Narratives

Research submitted

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Declaration

I **Blessing Phakathi** student number (16011280) declare that this research is my original work and has not been submitted for any degree at any other university or institution. The study does not contain another person's writing unless specifically acknowledged and referenced accordingly.

Signed (Student).....Date.....

Abstract

Studies have shown that there is an increased awareness and direct engagement with masculinity/masculinities creation in South African fictional novels written in the post-2000 epoch. The sensitivity to the construction of black men's masculinities creation in fiction has been necessitated by what some scholars have termed focusing away from struggle literature and a constant misrepresentation of what black masculinity creation entails. The study placates itself around Connell and Messerschmidt's (2005) theory of the creation of power and hegemony around men, opening spaces to explore power relations between ideal masculinity and non-hegemonic masculinity and between men and women. The study engages with novels authored by young black authors whose ideas of masculinity creations have not received academic attention. This study argues that while there are still reflections of stereotypical black men, there is a distinct breed of man seeking to perform and transcend hegemony but face a crisis as old traditions still hold. The selected primary novels for this study are Angela Makholwa's *The 30th Candle*, (2009), *Black Widow Society*, (2013), Cynthia Jele's *Happiness is a Four Letter Word*, (2010), Zukiswa Wanner's *Men of the South*, (2010), Thando Mgqolozana's *A Man who is not a Man*, (2009), *Un-importance* (2014) and Songeziwe Mahlangu's *Penumbra*(2014).

Key words: fiction, hegemony, masculinity, post-2000, power, South African

Dedication

To my birth mother, friend, confidante and nurturer, Christina Isabel Phakathi and my family who all believe in me. Malumbo Phakati-Nyika, Craig and Thembani Phakathi, for always being the strongholds that hold up my backbone

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List of Acronyms

AIDS-Acquired Immuno Deficiency Syndrome

ANC-African National Congress

BEE-Black Economic Empowerment

BWS-Black Widow Society

CEO-Chief Executive Officer

CV-Curriculum Vitae

DLF-Down Low Friend

DSTV-Digital Satellite Television

FIFA- Fédération Internationale de Football Association

HIV-Human Immuno Virus

NGO-Non Governmental Organisation

NP-National Party

RDP-Reconstruction and Development Programme

SRC-Student Representative Council

TRC-Truth and Reconciliation Commission

TV-Television

UCT-University of Cape Town

UWC-University of the Western Cape

1. Chapter 1

1.1 Introduction

The study aims, among other things, to explore how male and female authors depict urban masculinities in fictionalised accounts in a chosen selection of black authored novels in the post transitional period. A review of what most scholars have come to define as the South African “canon” in literary studies clearly points to a porosity of narratives written by young black novelists in the contribution of national grand narrative. Moreso, there is a gap in the study of men and masculinities through fictitious works. Female authored novels in this study are particularly selected because of a gap in female scholarship on masculinities and as a result of suggestions from scholars like Crous (2005) who notes the female gap in masculinities studies and notes that [he] ‘should probably have included female authored texts to show non-masculine focalisation on masculine issues’ but did not. This study concerns itself with the addition of the female voice of scholarship to balance the male views on masculinity.

The selection of both male and female authored novels speaks to the need for equal treatment and engagement with literature produced by young black authors for inclusive academic scrutiny. Female authored novels such as Jele’s *Happiness is a Four Letter Word* and Zukiswa Wanner’s *Men of the South* are more often than not, treated as superfluous and pedestrian novels that lack real academic value because it deals mostly with women’s views of the world. However, as will be demonstrated in the study, these female authors use the very aspect of superfluity to draw on serious issues on contemporary masculinities that are useful in the

contribution of not only the literary discourses but also in other disciplines such as gender studies, particularly studies that entail masculinities and femininities. Interestingly, male scholars and critics such as Crous and Mahala note the importance of female voices in the ‘contours’ (Mahala 2008: no page number) of the South African literary world. Dlamini (2015:12) observes that academic works from acclaimed South African canonical literary compilations signify a ‘paucity of systematical critical work’ on black authored novels. Similarly, De Kock (2008) argues that there is an almost nonexistent representation of female authored novels in the South African canon.

1.2 Mapping Masculinity in the South African Context and Literary Culture

The study of masculinities, as it has come to be known as a discourse in the studies that focus primarily on men in South Africa, has seen a growing trend within what is arguably referred to by some as the ‘post-transitional’ era in South African literary studies in English. Grounding itself on masculinities studies, this study endeavors to contribute to the growing studies on fictional representations of masculinities. Masculinity in the South African context suggests the developments of existing modern forms of masculinity representations in works of fiction by both male and female South African authors. While critical work on masculinities in the literary works is still relatively new, studies on men have been going on for decades in other domains in the South African context.

The earliest noted engagement of masculinities as a field of study in South Africa seems to have been identified as such by Historian Robert Morrell (1998a) and Kopano Ratele (1998). Morrell

aligns his study of masculinity to the historical contours of South Africa by tracing how masculinities evolved through South African historiography. Tracing masculinity back to ‘colonialism’, Morrell (1998:605) identifies and explores the creation and transformations of what he calls ‘existing masculinities’ in the South African context. Similarly, Ratele (1998:60) advocates constructions of what he terms as the ‘black man’ which in his view, is dying. While Ratele (1998:61) focuses on the ‘politics of blackness as a political community’ that is easily ‘imprisoned, in ways that are both like and unlike whiteness’, Morrell explores how the dominance and power play is shifting between white and black masculinities, observing that the dominance of white masculinities seems to be decreasing, while there is an increase in black masculinities domination since the advent of the post-apartheid era in South Africa. In his assessment of black masculinities Ratele (1998:64) cautions against an over exertion on black masculinity because he claims that black masculinities still appear to be ‘fragile’ in their execution as they are subject to ‘white racism’.

South African theorists such as the fore mentioned have dedicated resources into studying the behaviour of men as a part of gendered studies of South Africa. The study of masculinities as a discourse has propelled the growth of literary works that focus solely on men’s interests, behaviour and livelihoods which signal the growth of fictional works on men. This study participates in the growing field of masculinities studies, albeit, through works of fiction which often times reflects and mirrors real life occurrences. The focus mainly on the depictions of black masculinities by both male and female authors, the suggestions that are made by this study point to misconceptions of and about the emergent modern black masculinities that are negotiated within the contemporary spaces of South Africa. The spaces in the chosen novels seem to be

suggestive of peculiar characteristics that define the emergent black man within the complex South African space that is not evident, nor synonymous with other spaces.

The focus on the trajectory of South African literary and urban cultures within which masculinities find expression and growth showing interconnectedness between culture and the growth of masculinity studies. Theorising the city can be seen as directly proportionate to theorising urban masculinities in the performance of their masculine expression. Nuttall and Mbembe have extensively studied Metropolitanism and city-ness in Johannesburg, both in factual writings and in fictional accounts showing how urban culture impacts on the resultant identities found in these spaces. In reading post-apartheid South African literature, Nuttall (2009) proposes various rubrics of entanglements in the formation of a post-apartheid space, arguing that the city space in the “now” is established from the rubric of history and temporality. This is similar to Morrell’s view of the historiography of masculinities that he claims is connected to South Africa’s history.

Nuttall’s idea of both the character of present forms of South African identity and culture is based on the notion that ‘there are continuities between the apartheid past and the present’ (Nuttall 2004:732). Nuttall further contends that the ‘city, migrants and youth cultural formations’ warrant new tools of exploring South African culture, rather than focusing on apartheid as the sole characteristic of the ‘contemporaneity’ of being South African narratives. Thus the choice to study urban masculinities in the metropolitan space in part speaks to the culture that is a result of different cultural backgrounds of people living in metropolitan places such as Johannesburg and Cape Town. The figure of the migrant, the youth and the city all point to a newer trajectory of South African cultural expression as these are not a direct result of apartheid, as Nuttall observes but are nonetheless an integral part of identity formation in the

metropolitan spaces that are depicted in the selected novels. However, while some of this study's arguments centre around the globalised city, the reflective view on the apartheid history of South Africa is grounded on present day citiness of the constructions of place in the creation of modern masculinities. Modern masculinities are shaped by history despite the highly lauded notion of the globalised city; black masculinities show persistent attachments to historical views of the city.

Nuttall's theorisation confounds the school of thought that presents the city as a space of 'Jim comes to Jo'burg trope'. Her assessment of the city in post-apartheid fiction points out that the contemporary city is a space that offers 'a fruitful site for understanding city-culture in a more extended idiom-the intricacy of the city as a spatial formation, its density as a concentration of people, things, institutions and architecture' (Nuttall 2004:740). Nuttall's observation of the changing character of the city space helps in making sense of the novels selected for this study. All the novels have characteristics that she proposes in the construction of not only the male characters but also their female characters. Contemporary South African novelists appear to engage with the city and urbanity in the way that Nuttall suggests, that is, the characters depict the contemporaneity of the modern city space, not only from a post-apartheid perspective but also as a space that shows the progressive nature of metropolitanism, globalisation, post-national characteristics and transnationality, notions all present in the selected novels.

Similar to Nuttall's observation of the city space and its entanglements is Bhabha's notion of hybridity that speaks to the volatility of a post-colonial space, addressing identities that are constructed by the male characters depicted in the selected novels. Bhabha contends that the 'third space' is an integral part of constructing identities through processes of 'negotiation and translation' in post-coloniality (2006:156). True to this expression, the selected novels showcase

a spectrum of male subjectivities that form their identities through processes of negotiation and translation as allotted by Bhabha's theory. While not always producing model masculinities in that some of the masculinities, particularly migrant masculinities from beyond the borders, flout the concept of South African hegemony in many ways, these masculinities do exhibit hegemony in other spaces outside the South African city spaces that the characters are part of but are not resident in. Without pre-empting all such characters, Wanner and Mahlangu's novels portray such masculinities embodied in their male migrant characters, who according to South African standards of hegemonic masculinity, flout the attributes of being model masculinities by a large margin, yet these men are representative of model masculinities in their respective countries of origin.

Gagiano (2004:740) suggests that 'various voices have to be raised as well as heard in order to perform' a process of 'recognition' of a diverse identity in South Africa rather than a collective identity. Gagiano's point is to contend with giving prominence to any one such voice, which does not perform a 'process of acquiring identity', should be treated as a dictatorship. Gagiano demonstrates the diversity in exploring three different novels, capturing her argument on the new South African identities that are diverse but all still authentically 'South African' in their own different ways. As will be demonstrated by the choice of thematic concerns in the selected novels, this study speaks to Gagiano's perception of 'shifting identities', in addition to Nuttall and Bhabha's theories of the city and third space respectively. The various male and female voices of the selected novels show continuity from the apartheid era and the post-apartheid era, sometimes as a referent and at other times as a distancing mechanism that underlies the imaginary of South African culture in the present.

Echoing the notion of continuities embedded in the apartheid period instead of discontinuities in contemporary South African literature, De Kock suggests that “most of post-apartheid literature is distinguished by disjunctive continuity” and that literature produced in this era is embedded in what he refers to as ‘mashed-up temporalities’ (2015:55). Similar to De Kock’s findings, Akpome (2016) writes about reconceptualising and problematising the concept of post-transitional literature, contending that the notion of post-transitionality puts an unnecessary cap on time, as issues of works done after the demise of apartheid still contain elements that are synonymous with the era. He also highlights the fact that cultural production in South Africa does not result from linear processes but from processes of disjunctures and swings in the transitions that take place simultaneously. The selected novels in this study suggest that this notion is true as these authors capture the essence of both continuities from the apartheid era in nonlinear manner. Particularly, Wanner’s *Men of the South*, Mahlangu’s *Penumbra* and Mgqolozana’s *A Man who is not a Man* and *Un-importance* all embody disjunctive continuities alluded to by De Kock. While they do not directly refer and touch on the apartheid era *per se*, they do have their roots and foundations that appear to highlight a palimpsest approach to contemporary South African issues.

On the other hand, Frenkel and MacKenzie (2010) conceptualise post-transitionality as temporal marker of the end of the South African political transition period suggesting the year 2000 as roughly the marker of the post-transitional era in South Africa. Despite these contrasting theoretical viewpoints, this study utilizes both views in analysing some novels such as Wanner’s *Men of the South* that are grounded and embody what Frenkel (2013) defines as a ‘palimpsest’ view of South African culture through history. Wanner’s novel reflects a continuity of black livelihoods that are directly affected by the apartheid era. On the other hand, a novel such as

Jele's *Happiness is a Four Letter Word* appear to represent what Frenkel and MacKenzie refer to as the 'unfettered' characteristic of contemporary novels about an emergent black middle class in South Africa. At the same time, Makholwa's *Black Widow Society* straddle both apartheid and post-apartheid capturing the transience of black masculinities and the construction of those masculinities beyond the post-transitional era confounding the notion of temporality.

Akin to the theorisation of the metropolitan third space as a creolised space and the cultural creation of masculinities, transnationalism plays an important role in the creation of masculine subjectivities in those spaces. Crous' (2005) assessment of urban masculinities concludes that a 'modern or Cosmopolitan man' is one who has the ability to attain 'wealth and position from the modern state of Capitalist economy' (2005:61). Thus a breed of men from across Africa and from within the borders of South Africa pursue masculinity hegemony in a manner that estimates this view. This however exposes these men to such elements as criminality, petty thieving, corruption and all other forms of lawlessness that render them undesirable menaces in the South African social fibre or as targets of xenophobic attitudes. This gives rise to the elements of crime that characterise some parts of the city space, as the space becomes lawless and dangerous. Thus urban Johannesburg and Cape Town become transit areas that are 'elusive' in Nuttall's words, and are full of criminal elements as men compete for hegemony in these spaces.

1.3 Fiction, Masculinity and the Metropolitan Spaces

South African literary cartographies take into cognisance spatiality, particularly urbanity, metropolitanism, citiness and transnational underpinnings of contemporary Johannesburg and Cape Town cities, the study foregrounds the changing face of black masculinities in post

transitional stages of South African society. These city spaces are a breeding ground of hostility, uncertainty and xenophobic tendencies alluded to by many critics such as Pavlov (2014), Ndlovu (unpublished paper:20), Lorenzo (2001:xiv) and Nuttall (2004:744). The study focuses on different males who seek opportunities in the metropolitan space in the wake of the blurring of the national boundaries of ‘transnationalism’ as observed by De Kock (2009:28).

The expansion and division of the city space as a metropolis, expands to accommodate both local outsiders and migrants producing class differences as a new black middle class emerges out of the process of expansion. Nuttall’s observation that Johannesburg is a dwelling of ‘largely black, highly tensile, intra-African multicultural society’ (2004:743) suggests that the metropolitan space is intolerant. Thus, the selected novels are ‘preoccupied with the figure of the migrant’ within the highly transnational metropolitan spaces. The ‘male migrant’ in Nuttall’s words, enter the formerly ‘white’ spaces within South African borders as they seem to occupy a more powerful position within the working and domestic position, leaving a trail of hostility amongst their black South African counterparts. Selected novels such as *Penumbra*, *Men of the South*, *Happiness is a Four Letter Word*, *The 30th Candle*, *Red Widow Society* and *Un-importance* all touch on migrant male characters whose identities are directly affected by their citizen status within South African borders. These characters’ experiences range from being accepted to being excluded and ostracised, leading to these characters developing identities that suit their circumstances.

A study of fictional accounts of urban masculinities in the metropolitan spaces of Johannesburg and Cape Town, speaks to the culture that is born out of different cultural backgrounds of male subjectivities living in the metropolis. The metropolitan spaces depicted in the selected novels expose the metropolis as a space of transitions where masculinities undergo transformations as

observed by Dlamini's work on masculinities (2015). The contemporary urban spaces appear to undergo constant transitions within transitions, resulting in ever evolving identities. In essence, the constructions of masculinities that are depicted as occupying these spaces are epitomes of lack of stability, especially those masculinities that represent hegemony. The selected novels show that the so called progressive masculinities that possess economic power through ownership of businesses and by being beneficiaries of Black Economic Empowerment form a new black middle class that suggests a lack of stability in the family structure. The evolution of the black middle class family is characterized by infidelity and male absence in the households. This also promotes female infidelity and the breaking down of the African family institution.

The selected novels portray an element of transnationality in the city spaces of Johannesburg and Cape Town that is directly proportional to the growth of South African culture. De Kock refers to this growing trend as the 'transnational rapture' (28), showing how the borders of South Africa seem to be opened up for other nationalities to emigrate to South Africa and compete for resources and hegemony, the same way other global cities have opened up their borders. De Kock's observation is aptly demonstrated in Makholwa's *The 30th Candle* where the novelist depicts characters like Mzwakhe, whose masculinity is constructed from and embedded in different vantage points in different locations, both within and outside the South African borders but still remaining and exhibiting authentic South African characteristics. Mzwakhe performs his criminal acts under the instructions of female assassins, essentially, thereby flouting hegemony yet in his household, he may be characterised as being an epitome of hegemonic masculinity in that he is an embodiment of a model man; that is, he is a husband and provider to his wife. Mzwakhe is but one example in a myriad of others showcased in the selected novels to be examined.

The use of the notion of transnationality demonstrates a straddling between both local and international spaces, opening up for the possibility of viewing one man from different vantage points of masculinity, thereby justifying the multiple definitions of hegemony attained from or challenged by a transnational man. While Mzwakhe is used to exemplify the multi-pronged face of hegemony in a transnational man, his local and international credentials vary in terms of hegemony and model masculinity within these spaces. All the selected novels suggest this aspect in all transnational male characters, whether it is South African men traveling outside the South African borders or migrant masculinities establishing their lives within the South African borders. Men's hegemonic stance is subject to their spaces of mobility and depending on where they are, their stance changes rapidly showing an elasticity of hegemony and masculinity.

Furthermore, growing transnationalism in the city space has encouraged a culture where migrants forge relationships with South Africans for various reasons. Mostly, however these relationships are forged to legalize their stay in the South Africa. Men in particular seem to benefit from such relationships of convenience as they marry South African women to obtain documentation, accommodation and legality in South Africa. Portrayed in a number of the selected novels, this trend will be scrutinised as an agent that propels xenophobia against migrants. Nkeala (2008) discusses such relationships between South African women and foreign men, suggesting that some xenophobic reactions from South African men opened spaces of violence and xenophobic attacks in May of 2008. Nkeala writes:

[T]he perpetrators of this violence were using the existing relationships between South African women and foreign men as a just cause for eliminating the latter. The claim that foreigners were taking 'our women' implied that the women were

unwilling partners in the relationships; it is as if they were pulled into them by force. (2008:4)

The characters in the selected novels who find themselves in this situation demonstrate that modern urban South African masculinities are complicated by the fact that they are forged at the intersection of economic imperatives and xenophobic attitudes.

1.4 The Selection of Novels

The representation of masculinities in South African post-transitional authored fictional narratives points to a crisis in masculinity. This is clearly evident in the selection of the novels in this study authored by young black South Africans whose works of fiction has not received much attention in the academic spheres. Focusing mainly on narratives about young male characters who carve their lives in city spaces such as Johannesburg and Cape Town, where progress seems to be measured by material worth and wealth, the study uses Nuttall's (2009) notion of 'entanglement' problematising complications of the city created by and emanating from transnationalism and other phenomena such as globalisation. The complex nature of one culture coming into contact with other cultures in entanglements of 'history, race and space', Nuttall (2009) complicates the construction of the masculinities created by the authors whose novels are used as primary sources of this study. The male characters in the selected novels are depicted as having to adapt to an environment that has 'entered into fluid waters' of 'trans', the 'translative cusp of crossing and recrossing the absorbing fictional self', in De Kock's (2009:33) words. In

fact, the selected novels are situated and positioned within these fluid waters referred to by De Kock, giving form and characteristics of the constructions of masculinity in the novels.

The primary texts used in this study are Jele's *Happiness is a Four Letter Word* (2010), Wanner's *Men of the South* (2010) Makholwa's two novels *The 30th Candle* (2009) and *Black Widow Society* (2013), Mgqolozana's *A Man who is not a Man* (2009), *Un-importance* (2014), Mahlangu's *Penumbra* (2014). These novels are expansive in their thematic concerns that address men's creation of masculinity, justifying their selection. Patriarchy complicit masculinity still dominates over other types of masculinities while rendering other male types as weak. The gay man, migrant man, the man who chooses to be 'kept', the failed man, among others, are seen as subordinate men, as compared to men who are husbands, financial providers, present fathers and business owners who are seen as model men occupy these spaces solely because of various institutions they subscribe to. The female and male authors centering on masculinities display interesting views on masculinity as their treatment of the subject differs in various ways that shed light into the various traits of masculinities.

In its exploration of masculinities, the study investigates whether the portrayal of masculinities in the selected narratives reflect the lived social and political experiences of South African males, including migrant men whose experiences may be captured as South African, thereby extending the conception of the term 'South African' as, not just a country but, as mentioned earlier, a transnational fluid space where a South African experience is captured. Some of the masculinities in the selected novels are depicted as being patriarchy complicit, while some are congruently opposite, for instance gay masculinities and immigrant masculinities, are both queered in various ways. The queered masculinities all encounter marginalisation, ostracisation and othering because of the lack of characteristics of hegemonic traits. This accounts for the

hierarchical continuum web for the masculinities that are found in the selection of the novels in this study.

The selection of both male and female authored novels speaks to the need, within the South African literary canon, of equal treatment of literature produced for academic scrutiny. Female authored novels such as Cynthia Jele's, *Happiness is a Four Letter Word* are often treated as superfluous and pedestrian novels that have no real value in contributing to the South African narrative. Interestingly, male scholars such as Crous and Mahala, note the importance of female voices in the contours of the South African literary world. As noted in De Kock's (2008) survey of literary novels studied in the post-transitional era, only a handful of the novels published and studied are representative of female, and only a few are black female authored novels, showing the need to take into cognisance the importance of the female voice in the national narrative about men. While authors like Zukiswa Wanner's *Men of the South* use the very aspect of 'chic lit', their novels draw serious analogues on issues of changing masculinities. This is an important aspect that is useful to the contribution of not only literary studies of men but also the inferred meanings suggestive of masculinity changes in South African urban masculinities.

This study takes cue from Crous' study and to a larger extent extends on some of Dlamini's (2015) engagements of similar subjects of depictions of masculinities in fiction. While Dlamini's work focuses on the transformations of masculinities in various South African authored novels, this study focuses not only on masculine transformations but also on the impacting factors such as urbanisation/urbanity and changing female sex roles that drive these transformations. Furthermore, in light of De Kock's (2008) study of the production of novels in South African literary canon since the demise of apartheid to the post-transitional era titled "*Judging New 'South African' Fiction in the Transnational Moment*", which shows little or no improvement

with regards to black female authored novels, this study inserts itself among the pioneering works to examine black female authored novels that depict issues surrounding masculinity and the different constructions of masculinities that are impacted by the phenomenon of the metropolitan space.

Focusing on novels written between 2009 and 2014 shifts the attention from the spectacle of early post-transitional era evident in the novels of Mpe and Duiker. Therefore, the study focuses on newer novels that some critics have relegated from academic study due to ‘lack of sophistication in the use of irony and ambiguity’ and their ‘superfluous nature’ as observed by De Kock (2009:25-26). Moreover, focusing on novels between 2009 and 2014 brings newer perspectives on the depictions of masculinities in crises in the urban space.

1.5 Role of Theory

This study is grounded primarily in Connell and Messerschmidt’s reconstruction of hegemonic masculinity. However, because the study focuses on literary works, a synergy of frameworks etched in post-colonial theory and other theories are made use of. Theories from different discourses such as gender and politics, guide this dissertation and through them, notions of masculinities are extensively explored, showing how different black authors’ writing in the post-2000 South African era construct masculinity and/or masculinities and how they portray black men in particular, as citizens living and working in the metropolitan spaces of Johannesburg and Cape Town, ‘negotiate and *translate*’, (my emphasis) in Bhabha’s (2006:156) words, their lived experiences in the contemporary South Africa urban transnational space. Masculinist theorists like Morrell (1998 b), Ouzgane (1998) and Ratele (1998) among others, have engaged with the

constructions of contemporary masculinities showing the different forms of masculinities that emerge under contemporary South African conditions.

Conditions prevailing in the post-2000 South African environment suggest a shift in masculinity or masculinities. Connell and Messerschmidt (2005) speak of reworking hegemonic masculinity which manifests in different ways constructed and expressed through different author's imaginations. A perusal of early post-transitional narratives such as Phaswane Mpe's *Welcome to our Hillbrow* (2001), Sello K Duiker's *Thirteen Cents* (2000) and *The Quiet Violence of Dreams* (2001) and Kgebetli Moele's *Room 207* (2006), suggests a general shift, both in expressions of and representations of black men that South African authors are increasingly engaging with in fictional narratives. Also, female authors whose fiction have more often than not been excluded from academic scrutiny because of misconstrued conceptions that it addresses petty issues, has been considered in this study. On the other hand, both male and female authored narratives seem to generally capture what Frenkel and MacKenzie (2010:1) call the 'unfettered to the past in the way that apartheid writing was'. Thus novels written in the era of post-transition reflect 'a wide range of concerns and styles' (Frenkel and MacKenzie 2010:1). Hence, included in this study are a variety of novels written in different styles that capture the shifts in black masculinity in the time frame marked as post-transitional South Africa by Frenkel and MacKenzie, opening spaces of engaging with masculinities from different stand points.

1.6 Approach and Methods of Exploration

The study uses a combination of approaches to analyse issues presented in the selected novels. Nuttall's (2009), Best and Marcus' (2009) surface reading and De Kock's (2009) depth reading

are notions that are deployed extensively in this study. The novels' 'literal meaning' as proposed by Best and Marcus, (2009:9) is used to read the fictional accounts at face value and then symptomatic reading is used to make inferences that the novels make in terms of issues raised within the novels. The use of a combination of approaches employed in the study is imperative, not only to show how difficult it is to use a single literary analysis method over another but also to exhaustively explore the urban masculinities in post-transitional era. The study seeks to transcend the use of one approach over the other because literary approaches overlap one another providing deeper insights as a result.

1.7 Chapter Breakdown and Outlines

The second chapter examines how men in their thirties in various locations of the metropolitan, the township, the suburb and other spaces construct their masculinities. The chapter examines depictions of a queer masculinity and how these masculinities are silenced in the face of hegemonic masculinities. Gay masculinities face deracination at the hands of the heterosexual masculinities, inspiring male on male violence. Women on the other hand, seem to accept and sympathise with queer masculinity dispositions. Moreover, gay masculinity is depicted as an equal or even better form of masculinity in terms of carrying out masculine duties, such as fatherhood, being providers, protectors and other socially acceptable masculine roles that qualify men as "men". The chapter also focuses on the deracinating nature of othering and queering that migrant men face in some South African urban spaces.

Chapter three explores different types of mature men who are forging masculinities within urban settings. The chapter also explores the depictions of female characters and their constructions of masculinities in novels that are female authored. The chapter scrutinises Makholwa and Jele's depiction of masculinities as female characters engage with men. The depiction of the masculinities show that class structure, race, gender and other aspects of society are important in men's constructing stable identities.

The fourth chapter focuses on recently graduated young men who struggle to construct productive and positive masculinities. In a quest to establish themselves in a metropolitan space, these young men suffer internal dislocations. The chapter also deals with how misconceptions about and of Cape Town by the young men prior to their arrival instils a false sense of hope which subsequently affects their constructions of stable masculinities. Background such as family, home, parentage and various other institutions have a powerful effect on how the depicted young men forge their masculinities in Cape Town. While spatial dislocation seems to disempower the young masculinities, other cognitive and psychological dislocations complicate the young men's attempt at constructing respectable masculinities. The toxic relationships that result from complications associated with the young men's grappling to form stable identities threaten their own development as young men. The chapter also deals with issues such as madness and the notion of inter-border migrancy which impact on the construction masculinity of these young men.

The fifth chapter with conceptions of masculine constructs in *A Man who is not a Man* (2009) and *Un-importance* (2014) which are authored by Thando Mgqolozana dealing with multiple

issues that affect teenage and college going masculinity constructions. Dealing with the depictions of younger masculinities first allows for a projection of the causes of complexities that affect young boys as they enter into manhood. The chapter looks at how social constructs of older men who are guardians of culture is imparted to the young transitioning boys. Older social constructions of masculinity that appear to be predominantly patriarchy complicit seem to come into conflict with the newer forms of masculinity as their sphere of influence narrows. Both novels foreground conflicts that emanate from the interaction between older forms of masculinities and the younger masculinities albeit in different ways. While *A Man who is not a Man* deals with teenage masculinity of a young man who faces ostracisation at the hands of his surrounding community due to a botched circumcision, *Un-importance* deals with youthful masculinity of a young man who suffers an identity crisis because he was molested by his aunt when he was a boy. Therefore, this chapter deals with challenges and crises that young men experience during periods of transition.

Chapter Six sums up all the arguments from the preceding chapters, making connections in the chapters visible

'Women's voices are a fundamental factor in the renewal of a society, and more so in the reconfiguration of a nation's literary contours'-Siphiwo Mahala

2. Chapter Two

2.1 Chick lit and Masculinities in Wannan's *Men of the South*

2.1.1 Introduction

This chapter utilises the notion of 'chick lit' to explore Wannan's depiction of masculinities in *Men of the South*. This is done in the light of Dlamini's (2015:71) call that chick lit should be afforded academic recognition as literary genre. The chapter discusses existing arguments about the ambiguities surrounding 'chick lit' in addressing key components of nation building. The point of departure from Dlamini's notions of chic lit is that this chapter's exploration exerts itself on how Wannan uses this platform to interrogate existing modern male challenges by writing from a male point of view although she is a woman. Wannan's stance and position as three urban men trivialises the challenges that men face in their everyday attempt to live out their masculinities thus challenging critics of the notion of chic lit as a pedestrian type of literature.

Wannan's novel *Men of the South* also confronts masculine privilege by using the notion of chic lit to feminise men and to bring awareness to the dangers of discriminating against women because of their sex. Wannan constructs her three male characters to occupy traditionally female spaces, and thereby challenges age old gendered notions between the sexes. On the other hand, her female characters occupy traditional notions of masculine roles as these females play the more masculine roles as compared to their male characters, suggesting an absurdity in the traditional views of patriarchy and pointing to a need in a shifted view of gender and the

changing roles in the South African contemporary space. Wanner captures the change and complication of gender roles in a ‘humorous and light hearted manner’ as captured by Dlamini (2015:71). Emphasising the importance of women’s writing as key to the study of the development of masculinities in the South African society as continued disregard of female voices is silencing an integral part of progress.

Taking a cue from Crous (2005:19) whose study only explores male authored fiction, this chapter takes on a ‘non-masculine [authorship] on masculine issues’, and enters into an ongoing literary conversation on issues of young black urban men viewed from a black female author’s perspective, who inhabits male voices. The chapter also explores female driven views of contemporary South Africa in view of entrenched traditional patriarchal views of masculinity and what the consequences are for those men who embrace less traditional ways of masculinity. Wanner captures the complexities of Mfundo, Mzilikazi and Tinaye’s struggles and changing roles of urban masculinity with an unapologetically feminine attitude and in a ‘humorous and light hearted manner’ Dlamini(2015:71.). Since these novels demonstrate Ndebele’s (1991:55) theorisation of ‘rediscovering the ordinary’ by grappling with complexities of day to day modern Johannesburg black middle class society, Wanner’s narrative depicts challenges of embracing the shifting roles that challenge the status quo of traditional views of masculinity and raises questions of how far society is ready to embrace the ‘new men’ socially constructed roles as opposed to traditional constructions of manhood.

Men of the South is structured as three eponymous fictional autobiographies of men who are grappling with finding a place in society as their masculinities clash with traditional views of masculinity. Mfundo is a ‘kept man’, his best friend Mzilikazi is a professed 100% Zulu gay man and Tinaye is a migrant caught up in a love triangle where he is forced to marry a woman he

does not love. These three men's lives revolve around one woman, Slindile, as the back cover of Wanner's 2010 Kwela edition indicates. The first section traces the life of Mfundo from his childhood in Soweto through his youth into adult life which purportedly accounts for his chosen roles as an adult man. As early as thirteen, circumstances force him to take up the role of 'the man of the house', selling 'amalahle' (16); that is coal, in order to help earn money for the family's upkeep. The novel highlights that Mfundo becomes a teenager in the dying years of the apartheid regime without any positive male role models and that he becomes conscious of his manhood in the early post-apartheid period as he starts his romantic affair with Slindile on the day of Mandela's release from prison in 1990. His subsequent relationship with Slindile years later suffers a tremendous strain as Mfundo continually chooses to be a stay-home-boyfriend as Slindile works as a doctor.

The second section follows the life of Mzilikazi, Mfundo's best friend, who is born and raised traditionally in rural KwaZulu Natal before he moves to Johannesburg where his father is a teacher. He moves to Johannesburg at the age of eight to start school where he is brought up by his father and a step-mother in Soweto after his biological mother dies in the rural Kwazulu-Natal. . His step mother is a kind woman who works as a nurse and brings up her step-children as her own. Mzi, as his friends call him, hides from everyone, including Mfundo his best friend, the fact that he is gay. Strangely, both lose their virginity to the same older girl with whom they take turns to have sex. Mzi later on studies journalism at the University of Cape Town where he is a Casanova of sorts, especially with foreign and white girls. This is yet one of his strategies of concealing that he is gay. Similarly, he marries a beautiful woman named Siyanda so as to divert attention away from his homosexual affair with Tshepo whom the narrator calls a 'neighbourhood thug' and DLF, acronym for Down Low Friend in Mzilikazi's words (*Men of*

the South 107-108). Later, upon the accidental revelation of his sexual orientation, Mzi moves to Cape Town where he feels the environment is more welcoming to homosexuality. He meets and falls in love with Thulani whom he refuses to introduce to his family as the family is still traditional when it comes to an individual's sexuality orientation.

Tinaye Musonza, is the third narrator-protagonist who depicts yet another unconventional type of masculinity in contemporary urban South Africa. He and Mzilikazi are colleagues and friends who work for a non-governmental organisation AfriAID. He professes that he is a 'British born Zimbabwean, living in Johannesburg, South Africa' (153) as his introduction. Tinaye is a typical global transnational character in that he is a citizen of multiple countries and is in search of a way to be a South African resident. Born in London and growing up in a middle class family, he travels to a number of countries before deciding to permanently settle in Johannesburg. Tinaye fails to secure a comfortable job in the United Kingdom where he acquires Master's degree in Development Studies so he moves to Johannesburg hoping for better economic opportunities. Although he finds work at a non-governmental organisation, AfriAID, he suffers discrimination by being underpaid and overlooked for promotion because of his foreign background. In the end, Tinaye gets into a marriage of convenience with a South African woman, Grace, in order to acquire residency papers so that he gets equal treatment. Tinaye's father is a very strict and patriarchal university lecturer teaching law at the University of Zimbabwe who has a great influence on his son. When Tinaye approaches him about his predicament about the two women in his life, the father is quick to point out that Tinaye is bound by tradition to marry the pregnant woman instead of Slindile whom he loves.

2.2 Fatherhood: Painful Transitional Masculinity and Discontinuities

Wanner depicts a society that is in transition and so there is confusion in how the society progresses from apartheid to a now free society, especially for the black community. Wanner's South Africa makes painful transitions politically, socially, educationally and somewhat economically. While the rest of South Africa is seemingly moving progressively, families seem to be disintegrating as fathers lose their patriarchal status within their intimate family set ups. Mfundo, Mzi and Tinaye all experience different types of conflicts with their respective fathers as they negotiate their own masculinities later. While the older generation of fathers still practices stern patriarchy in their fathering styles, the younger fathers seem to adopt their own version of manhood and fatherhood. In addition, the absence or presence of a father seems to instill fear in the younger men and this impacts on their subsequent masculinities.

Wanner's narrative also bemoans the well-intended efforts of the TRC that failed to bring to book rascal individual who took advantage of the confusion brought by transitioning from apartheid into a democratic dispensation. The narrative shows that by 'aligning himself with the ANC' (16), James Congwayo did not have to account for the crimes he committed despite the fact that he was responsible for the terror that led to the disappearance of many activists, leaving a Soweto community without men role models for boys. The volatile space is depicted as having encouraged black on black ruthlessness as the government of 'Botha' (16) used black 'Special Branch men' (16) to kill activists who struggled against apartheid. Congwayo's notoriety spills over into the present space where he continually terrorises those around him. For instance, Congwayo uses his seniority at AfriAID to patronise Tinaye who has a contract with the organisation into accepting underpayment just because he is a foreign citizen. Thus, the fact that

he is not made accountable for his transgressions at the TRC is the very cause of transitional pains not only for Tinaye but also Mfundo who refuses to accept a job offer at AfriAID because Congwayo is the current Secretary General there, after many years since he abducted his father.

While Congwayo is depicted as the main source of Mfundo's fatherlessness at a young age, emotional absence and patriarchy are the main causes of Mfundo's dissociating with his father's way of parenting while the father was still alive. Mfundo recalls how his father was 'the law in [the] house' (13) and how it was his father "who put '*respect*' in respectable' (13my emphasis), signifying what Morrell (2006:19) describes as present but dominant and uncaring stern patriarch. Mfundo's father laid the rules in his household and no one dared challenge him until Sindiso, his first son, challenged him at the age of sixteen. The emotional distance that Mfundo's father keeps from his immediate family alienates his children and causes Mfundo later on to try and look for alternative ways of being a father to his daughter Nomazizi. Wanner uses Mfundo's dissociation from his father's style of fatherhood, to show the willingness of the new generation of fathers to tackle fatherhood in their own experimental way.

Unlike Mfundo who experiences a consistent harsh type of parenting style from his father, Mzilikazi experiences two very different parenting styles from his father. The foundations of Mzilikazi's masculinity are purely traditional and patriarchal. Mzilikazi witnesses his father emotionally abuse his rural and uneducated mother because she had stood up for herself when she heard rumours of his cheating. The relationship deteriorates even further because of the intellectual gap between the two parents. On the death of his wife, Mzilikazi's father who is now a qualified teacher, assumes responsibility of his three children and brings them to Dube in Soweto with him. In Dube, Mzilikazi witnesses a different side of his father's masculinity as he washes their hands and displays less violent characteristics that the three children witnessed with

their mother. Mzilikazi's responsibility and love to care for his family seems to stem from this basis. However, Mzilikazi is never able to come out into the open to his father about his sexuality because his father despises gay men.

Tinaye, like the other two protagonists, experiences a traditional upbringing where his father is an authoritarian provider. Tongai's father studies law and becomes a lecturer at the University of Zimbabwe soon after that country's independence in 1980. In addition, Tinaye's father is a traditional man subscribing to his Shona culture of taking care and providing for his extended family's problems upon the death of his own father. Thus, Tinaye has to choose between honouring his father's authority or use his own discretion when choosing to marry Grace, the mother of his child or Slindile, who is a left over woman in the old man's words. Tinaye is forced to choose a loveless relationship because, like his father tells him,

How will you explain that you have married a woman with someone else's child while leaving the mother of your own child? In our culture we don't do that. (206)

In essence, the fatherly authority, combined with the need to legally remain in South Africa, prevail over Tinaye's love for Slindile. While his culture seems the right thing to do, Tinaye regresses on his word after the baby he shares with Grace dies at birth. Cultural transitions seem to limit Tinaye's freedom to choose the woman he wants to marry as he is obliged, by his culture, to honour the woman he impregnates.

Fatherhood patterns henceforth determine the younger generation's construction of their masculinities; they have a choice of either following in the older generation's footsteps or to follow a different path altogether. The transitions are all painful to the younger generation as the trio seeks to define for themselves what it means to be a man in South Africa during the post-

apartheid years. Mfundo, Mzilikazi and Tinaye are all face the burden of constructing their masculinities in a volatile urban space. Mfundo's choice of masculinity flouts all that his father stands for, in fact his masculinity is just too radical for any of his surrounding society to understand; hence he describes himself as the 'Kwame Nkrumah of the Equal Rights, Empowered Woman Generation' (61) as he feels there are no role models to this type of masculinity. Mzilikazi on the other hand is afraid to announce his sexual orientation because of fear of his father's judgement as he is a model son, hence he lives in the closet despite having a boyfriend. Tinaye follows his father's cultural advice to marry the mother of his child but in the end he is miserable despite having followed tradition and acquiring permanent residency in South Africa.

2.3 Mfundo, a Kept-Man, 'No hurt quite, like being unloved, unwanted, among one's own'

Mfundo's experience challenges gender stereotyping in contemporary roles that men play in relationships as he is a revolutionary of new forms of masculinities by embracing being a kept man. The novel traces Mfundo's background as he grew up in the midst of revolutionary years in the South African history and was parented with very traditional parents. As a young man, he chooses to follow a non-traditional path in his role as a stay at home father and boyfriend-cum-husband. This revolutionary stance he takes in embracing these roles alienates him from his immediate community he ironically calls home while foreign countries feel more like home to him.

Wanner uses Mfundo's troubled masculinity to think through an adulthood fettered by a childhood upbringing that is surrounded by confusion, not only in his immediate family but also

in Soweto, where the black community was relegated to second class status during the apartheid era and transitioning period there-after. While Mfundo emphatically dismisses and distances himself from his formative years, his choices of masculine roles and identity point to a confused childhood that is suggested by his troubled time during apartheid where he witnessed the abduction of his father and his brother's exiling, leaving him 'as the man of the house' (17). Mfundo tries to dissociate himself with his past saying: 'The events that happened in my childhood were not my story. It's the story of my father and my brother. And perhaps my mother and her heartbreak', (18). This shows that according to him, nothing of significance in his childhood happened that marks his masculinity as unstable. This denial however, haunts him later when he tries to negotiate his life as an adult. His ambivalence thus demonstrates that Mfundo's definition of masculinity and the challenges he faces are embedded in patriarchy and anchored in traditional expectations of masculinity, though he is quick to dismiss the fact himself.

Wanner seems intent to educate her audience about global trends in transitions in gender roles that are all encompassing and that embrace a less brute and violent type of man and at the same time advocating for the same for a financially independent woman. By deliberately placing Mfundo's section first as the opening section of the novel, the narrative suggests the difficulties that urban black South African men face when trying to defy age old patriarchal complicit traditions by embracing what Morrell (1998 b:7) calls the 'new man'. Unfortunately for Mfundo, his background is void of any models who are good examples of what a man is supposed to do or behave like. The narrow types of men he learns from are the 'happy-go-lucky' and the 'salt-of-the-earth' type of men (17), none of whom Mfundo feels he wants to emulate. On the one hand, the 'happy-go-lucky' type of men are repulsive to Mfundo because they sit around all day and do

nothing but smoke what he calls ‘skyfs’ as they drink alcohol, while on the other hand, the ‘salt-of-the-earth’ type of men are the authoritarian patriarchs who were ‘feared by their wives and children’ (17). Mfundo refuses to fall into either group of men because to him the two groups do not define his masculinity.

By strategically placing Mfundo as the first narrator, Wanner also suggests that the novel is about post-apartheid urban masculinities that are shaped and grounded by the apartheid environment of the 1990s while at the same time finding new definitions of masculinity in the transitioning events of that period. This catapults both sexes into a confused space where both masculinity and feminine roles are sites of struggle. Wanner uses Mfundo to test the validity of the claim of the so-called urban ‘liberated women’ in accepting their equality to their male counterparts. When Mfundo stretches the idea of equality of sexes to include his staying at home while Sli goes to work and financially providing for him, she finds that her notions of male-female equality are not flexible enough and do not work even in their seemingly socially progressive space. Her very name Slindile, which means ‘we are waiting’, may be seen in the context of the novel as a metaphor for her waiting for Mfundo to become a ‘real man’, that is, taking his financial responsibilities as the head of the family seriously instead of expecting her, as his woman to provide for their family. Her surname ‘Maguga’, meaning the one who grows old or weary, is suggestive of the fact that Slindile tries to be patient with Mfundo’s journey of change but soon her patience wears out as she assumes that she will wait until she gets old for him to start executing his masculine duties. In this light, Wanner’s narrative is a social commentary on the power of traditional masculinities as well as the education on the challenges faced by young men in trying to oppose traditional views of manhood.

Mfundo's attempt to carve his own masculinity that is neither old nor modern but one that is revolutionary in the household he shares with Sli stems from a difficult to solve ambivalence. The paradox that he is exposed to after embracing his role as stay-at-home boyfriend bring to fore issues that he was not exposed to during his working days. For example, Mfundo is homophobic but yet embraces his best friend's sexuality, he embraces his masculinity but at the same time embraces traditional motherly roles for Nomazizi, his daughter, and enjoys watching TV programs like house wives without a problem. His life after losing his job is punctuated by reading magazines and watching TV shows such as Oprah, Nigella and Martha Stewart (2010:55) which are all day time shows, activities mostly synonymous with full time house wives. This negotiation of his personal roles suggests that while Mfundo ultimately occupies a 'modern space' in Edenvale and is a product of very traditional parents, both spaces provide a limitation to his efforts of becoming a man on his own terms hence he sees himself as a Kwame Nkrumah or a pioneer when it comes to roles of modern urban men. Although Mfundo is very playful about his status when he calls himself the 'Nkrumah of the Equal Rights, Empowered Woman Generation' (61), he sees his actions as being revolutionary when it comes to the reversal of traditional gender roles. By comparing himself to Kwame Nkrumah, one of the pioneering African nationalist in fighting against white colonial rule, Mfundo sees himself as a pathfinder when it comes to the new roles for urban South African men, a role that neither his background nor his present offer.

The first line of the novel opens with Mfundo declaring: 'I met Slindile on Sunday, 11 February 1990 - an insignificant date to some but to my artistic soul, a fact that we were meant to be' (11). This suggests a metaphorical meeting space that is uncertain in its course of direction. Mfundo's words emphasise not only the intersection of his romance, a marker of manhood to one of the

most significant events in the history of modern South Africa, but also symbolises the uncertain space the new South African dispensation is entering. This pivotal date allows Wanner to show that although Mfundo had his formative years in the apartheid environment, he is a new man as implied by his new romance coinciding with what many view as a new beginning for South African politics. The image of Nelson Mandela walking hand in hand with his then wife Winnie symbolises to Mfundo that he and Sli are walking into uncertain future as a young couple who embrace a confusing modernity.

However, while the starting of his romance coincides with the release of Mandela which serves as a metaphor for the forging of new urban South African masculinities, Mfundo's views about manhood are very much anchored in his troubled childhood although they are apparently futuristic. Mfundo reminisces how he, at the age of thirteen, had to take on a manly role by helping his mother around the household by selling '*amalahle*' and how his father was 'law' in their household (13). Mfundo suffers from 'discontinuities, reversals, inertias and swings' that (Nuttall 2009:4) highlights in a different context, as his life revolves around Slindile and he becomes what Slindile's mother calls a 'kept man' (42). His decision to become what he views as a progressive man by being a stay-home boyfriend and father while his girlfriend financially provides for him, is frowned upon by his girlfriend, her mother, his sister and even his friends, who occasionally refer to him as Slindile's 'wife'. Mfundo is viewed as such, not only by his immediate friends and relatives but also by Pule his childhood Soweto friend.

The relationship between Mfundo and Slindile in itself is presented as a site of many struggles that cascade into Mfundo's private life which are representative sites of education as alluded to by his very name. His name means education. Mfundo's willingness to experiment with the new and unconventional masculinities is seen in his tradition defying move from his parents' home in

Soweto into Slindile's apartment in Edenvale. However, this move lands him into trouble once he loses his job. By moving into Slindile's apartment, Mfundo publicly declares that he is the one who has been "taken" and has therefore relinquished his manly responsibilities to his woman. His family, Slindile's mother and even his male friends openly disapprove of his action of moving into his girlfriend's apartment by calling him a 'wife' (54). The disapproval shows clearly Mfundo's immediate community's attitudes towards his embracing roles that are traditionally viewed as feminine.

Moreover, after Mfundo loses his job, Slindile begins to challenge his masculinity by uttering demeaning and provocative statements because of his financial disadvantage. She says: 'I want you to be the man of the house for once' (57). 'Maybe it's your mom you should be talking about. Maybe if she had told you what is expected of a real man, we wouldn't be having this conversation' (58) and '[W]e don't eat your dreams around here' (69) and also 'If you loved your daughter, as you so love claiming to do, you would be busy trying to get a job instead of waiting for me to pay all the bills, in order to show her just what real men are like' (76). All these demeaning words push Mfundo over the edge as he beats up Sli in a fit of drunken rage. Soon after, he is thrown out of Slindile's apartment and is forced to go back to his mother's house in Soweto. Slindile's contempt for Mfundo's lack of financial contribution to the family's expenses signifies that new forms of masculinity are not yet well received, more so if the man concerned does not earn a salary, as Mfundo muses: 'Is a man judged by a pay cheque or by his deeds?' (59). Slindile feels burdened by duties that are traditionally reserved for men and so feels justified to throw him out of her apartment due to his shortcomings as a 'real man', as she puts it. Furthermore, the degeneration of Mfundo and Sli's relationship sparks new possibilities for Mfundo to exercise newer forms of masculinity in foreign spaces outside the confines his

relationship and beyond his Zulu form of masculinity and traditions, as a composer and trumpeter. His relationship with Sli proves to be a limiting factor to a perceptible form of masculinity so the break up is a form of a blessing in disguise for Mfundo. After their second break up with Sli, Mfundo is able to pursue his dream to compose full time and his lucky break comes in the form of a German producer who spots him in a club as he performs one of his compositions based on Nomazizi his daughter. When the opportunity presents itself, Mfundo is free to travel and is not bound by the roles of father or stay-at-home-boyfriend. In essence, a learning curve is suggested by Mfundo's experience, as he is only able to become a financially stable man once he is outside the confines of his boyfriend/girlfriend institution and his Zulu traditional culture, which narrow his definition of what it is to be a man.

In addition, Mfundo's fight to be present in his daughter's life conforms to Morrell's (1998b) version of the 'new man', as historically, black man tended to neglect their offspring. His presence, even as a non-providing father and boyfriend, promotes the balance of his relationship with Slindile; even if it is for a short while. He bonds well with his daughter Nomazizi when she is born. Mfundo quips that the relationship he and Nomazizi have is stronger than the relationship Slindile has with her daughter (56-57). This father and daughter bond negates Morrell's view on father absenteeism in most black South African families as Mfundo is very present and active in the upbringing of Nomazizi while he does not necessarily reside in the same space as Sli and his daughter do. Mfundo even begs to stay with Slindile for the sake of Nomazizi but is unceremoniously thrown out of the flat. Wanner seems to be of the view that the post-apartheid urban South African society is hypocritical since it sympathises mostly with women and disregards men's rights of fatherhood. On the one hand, it masquerades as embracing equal treatment for all genders, such as accepting that a man, who loses his job with a working

female partner as in Mfundo's case, should be allowed to perform domestic duties while the woman provides financially for the family. However, through Mfundo's bitter experiences, the reader soon realises that the stereotypical perceptions about manhood and misconceptions about masculinity still hold.

The emotional abuse that Mfundo suffers at the hands of Sli drives him to focus more on his role as a father and his artistic career which both eventually lead to economic success as he uses his composition about Nomazizi to secure a recording deal with a German producer. Fatherhood softens Mfundo's masculinity in that he focuses his energy away from his failing relationship with Sli to their daughter Nomazizi's development. Despite his disappearance at the birth of Nomazizi, Mfundo becomes a hands-on father as soon as the baby is taken home. While Mfundo displays qualities that are gender sensitive towards Sli in taking care of Nomazizi, these efforts become his main source of ridicule from Sli and his immediate community. Mfundo is dedicated to his daughter such that he composes a song about her and Sli. Mfundo's love for his daughter propels him to compose a great tune that is well received in Germany and Europe at large.

The lack of opportunity for the couple to transcend traditional constraints about gender performative roles allows the reader to think deeply about how far post-apartheid South African gender relations have transformed since Mfundo is shunned for his dreamy attitude and his failure to provide economically for his family. Mfundo laments: 'I always thought that if THE ONE existed, for me her name was Slindile Maguga. Now she was telling me in no uncertain terms to fuck off' (75). Mfundo's observation is a searing realisation about how impossible it is for romantic love to thrive if the man concerned has no income. Evidently, as Mfundo painfully learns, women, even well-paid and sophisticated urban women, still expect a man to provide for them financially. Ratele (2008:529) insightfully observes that for both men and women, '*gainful*

employment is more than just about *money*' (my emphasis) it is about 'satisfying the ego'. Mfundo's ego is thwarted by Slindile who undermines him as she soon realises that she cannot take the social pressure of being seen with a 'kept man'. Mfundo also learns that romantic love is not strong enough to subvert centuries old gender roles and expectations. This increases the pains in his transition from being a loving stay-at-home-boyfriend to a man staying at his mother's house in Soweto.

The narrative also depicts a corrupt practice involving top government officials migrating into the Non-governmental organisation (NGO) that were mushrooming during the transitioning era, replacing the white European faces but maintaining the same ruthlessness. Mfundo refuses to accept a job offer at AfriAID because he unexpectedly encounters James Congwayo, a former 'Special Branch man' (52) who is suspected of having abducted Mfundo's father towards the end of the apartheid regime. Congwayo's move from the government to the NGO is questionable to both Mfundo and his friend Mzilikazi because of his prior engagements and hand in the former white government funded disappearance of many activists around Soweto. Mfundo's recollection of Congwayo becomes stronger than his need for a pay check signifying that Mfundo's pain from the past inherently influences his choice of becoming 'part of the forty percent or so', (53) of the country's unemployed people. The narrative thus points out irregular transitions in government and the non-governmental world that in turn impact on the socio-economic well-being of the general people.

2.4 Mzilikazi Khumalo: 100% Zulu, 100% Cosmopolitan and 100% Gay

'Ungqingili, faggot, fag, is'tabane, queer, gay is the new black' are some of the words used to describe gay men by some characters in *Men of the South* and Wanner sets out to debunk all these stereotypes by using Mzilikazi's character who describes himself as '100% Zulu boy who

is a cosmopolitan [and] also gay' (85). Through the pressures that Mzilikazi experiences, Wanner's narrative addresses the prevalence of homophobic tendencies towards gay men in South Africa, both in private spaces as well as in public spaces of society. She utilises Mzilikazi to confront traditional male roles as provider *vis-à-vis* the man's sexuality as the two do not affect nor influence one another in any way in Mzi's case. Furthermore, Wanner's narrative suggests the debilitating consequences of othering on gay men despite provisions of respecting people's freedom to sexuality as enshrined in the South African 1996 constitution. Mzilikazi's life is centred on institutions that do not support his same sex preference, so he lives under wraps for a while in Johannesburg, in order to satisfy the *status quo*, which he does perfectly without anyone's knowledge until he is forced to come out of the closet. Through Mzilikazi, Wanner is able to explore what Mzilikazi calls 100% Zulu and 100% gay (85), a character who appeals to all societal norms except for his sexuality.

Mzilikazi's dramatic introduction is a direct confrontation against all labels used on gay men because Mzilikazi defends his authenticity as a Zulu man while also being gay. He proudly declares: 'If there were anything like a 100% Zulu boy who is cosmopolitan, I am he. I'm also gay' (85). Mzilikazi's words are a challenge and provocation to the so-called heteronormative sexualities in a society where sexual diversity is constitutionally recognised. Being 100% Zulu boy presupposes being conservative in many respects, especially in his sexuality. Mzilikazi displays excellent Zulu masculinity in that he can stick fight, take care of himself and his younger siblings, he displays traits of being a Casanova while at university (105-106). He is set on a life of patriarchal complicity and prosperity as his life coincides with the transitioning of life in the new South Africa, more so in the NGO environment. Expectations are that a proudly Zulu boy, and indeed man, would also be 100% heterosexual which in Mzilikazi's case is not, he

merely ‘reiterates the phantom of materiality of the body’ in Butler’s words (1993:2-3) as he repeats what society expects he does as a man.

Wanner deliberately names Mzilikazi Mntungwa Khumalo to evoke images of historic and powerful break away Zulu lieutenant turned king of the same name who was a warrior serving under King Tshaka in the 1800s. Mzilikazi who defied and desecrated king Tshaka and moved north to avoid execution by the king had to pioneer a way for his new kingdom, away from King Tshaka. Thus, Wanner seems to ironically use this name as a plethora for perceived heteronormative gender role playing as a gay man clearly displays capabilities of his expected roles as a man and not impeded by his sexuality. Through the text’s deconstruction of heteronormativity, the notion of sexuality and its impediment on masculine traits is questioned. Mzilikazi’s sexuality does not in any way hinder him from performing tasks and duties traditionally assigned to men. In fact, Mzilikazi executes such said tasks more than his best friend Mfundo who seemingly exhibits less masculine traits than Mzilikazi does. Essentially, Mzilikazi’s naming signifies a challenging call to move away from narrow traditional views of masculinity to a more enlightened view of masculinity that includes gay men who are not limited in playing their roles by their queer sexuality.

In addition, the declaration by Mzilikazi of age old perceptions of sexuality is suggested by the meaning of his name, Mzilikazi, which according to some sources means ‘the great road’. Perhaps in Mzilikazi’s case, there is still a ‘great road’ to accepting homosexuality as one’s private matter that does not point to nor is affected by one’s performance of one’s gender roles. The name suggests Mzilikazi’s journey to discovering his sexuality. Wanner seems to have created a pioneer man when it comes to being a homosexual man in contemporary South Africa, as Mzilikazi describes his circumstances as being disadvantageous for his sexuality to be made

public, hence he allows Siyanda to annul their wedding instead of filing for a divorce. Traditionally, Mzi is a model man as he is able to bear children with his wife Siyanda and is able to provide for his family. Furthermore, he takes care of his extended family as well. Outwardly, there is no marker that Mzilikazi is a gay man, so his public life is unhindered; in fact, he is a celebrated member of his society. There is nothing in Mzilikazi's exterior or demeanor that suggests that he is gay, but since he is gay he therefore challenges the status quo as far as masculinity is concerned.

The fact that nothing from Mzilikazi's childhood suggests any reasons of his sexual orientation like an 'uncle who gave him sweets and touched it' (86), directly denounces views that try and justify sodomy at a young age of a boy's life as a reason for homosexuality. In other words, Mzilikazi declares that his homosexuality is natural. For instance, Mzilikazi dismisses crying as something that 'just wasn't done' and that 'men had to take things like beating like 'men'' (98). He further quips: 'I am not your archetype of a gay man' (86). He also says: 'I use zambuk and not gloss for my lips' (86). He playfully adds: 'I could probably out-Zulu Shaka Zulu. So no more talk of homosexuality being un-African' (87). Mzilikazi moves from emphatically dismissing homosexuality in front of his father, to secretly embracing it by unequivocally clinging to his new lover Thulani when he moves to Cape Town. Mzilikazi says: 'I always felt a certain attraction to men, found myself secretly looking at their arms and thinking 'he looks nice', but like most people in the closet, I was also the most vociferous critic of what I called 'this gay shit' (87).

Moving to Johannesburg from rural KwaZulu Natal exposes Mzi to a newer form of masculinity that confuses his view of what masculinity is meant to be. Having been exposed to a violent rural type of masculinity, like Witness who bullies him while younger (90-91), and his uncle who

slaps him for not fighting with Witness, Mzi is exposed to his father's calm temperament in Johannesburg and this throws him into confusion about masculinity. In Johannesburg, Mzilikazi's father demonstrates what Morrell (1998a:622) observes to be 'African masculinity having interacted with urban black masculinities' when he washes his children's hands and tells them to wash plates which is a violation of masculinity according to the young Mzilikazi (96).

Morrell (1998 a: 625) discusses the changes that took place when Zulu traditional masculinities were exposed to urbanity and new masculinities were created in the process as the men acquainted themselves with the urban space. Such are the characteristics that are exhibited by Mzilikazi's father, although he remains an authoritative figure in Mzilikazi's life. Prior to this spectacle, Mzilikazi experiences the emotional abusive and strict husband and father (88). The culture shock is too much for Mzilikazi that he cries when he and Vusi wash the dishes on that first night in Johannesburg, which to him is a 'girly' chore (96). This is suggestive of the perceived ideas that structure Mzilikazi's life as a man before he is bold enough to embrace his homosexuality. He is afraid to publicly live out his sexuality and hides under the *façade* of being a responsible man. He hides his sexuality from everyone around him, even his best friend Mfundo and especially his father who dies without knowing his son's sexual orientation. When he does come out of the proverbial closet, it is in Cape Town, for fear of being discovered by his very traditional father and to escape his society's harsh judgement.

Through the use of Mzilikazi, Wanner shows that to be defined as a man goes beyond just being a provider and having the right traits and attributes. Wanner forces the reader to rethink and redefine what is acceptable male behaviour in the new South African dispensation, that is, the role of Mzilikazi as a husband and provider or his sexuality. Provisions for and acceptance of gay men in the African context appear to be marginal, if not none existent as Mzi is forced to

marry Siyanda and fathers twins by her demonstrating the heightened obligation of traditional masculinity by materially providing for his family, rather than his gay sexual orientation. While he holds a good job at AfriAID, as a Communications Manager, takes financial care of his wife and children as well as his parents, he still suffers from silenced sexual orientation and fails to fully express himself as a gay man. While colluding with masculinity hegemony in his roles as husband and provider, Mzilikazi flouts the same hegemony because of his homosexuality, validating Connell and Messerschmidt's (2005:832) observation that, it is difficult to attain the principle of hegemony. Wanner seems to be meditating on whether it is sexuality or the roles that a man plays that defines his masculinity. She seems to be pushing social boundaries about the definitions of manhood as Mzilikazi is a 'provider', is 'sporty', is a 'responsible husband' echoed by Morrell (1998b:7) elsewhere and does everything society expects of him as a man, yet would still be 'subalternised' because of his homosexuality if his sexuality were to be made public.

In addition, Wanner attributes the abusive nature of some men to the pressures they have in trying to hide their same sex orientations by engaging in heteronormative relationships, which is unnatural for them. Both Mzilikazi and his first gay sexual partner Down Low Friend, known to Mzi as DLF, publicly denounce homosexuality because Soweto denounces it, yet they have an active sex partnership behind closed doors. Both Mzi and DLF have no outward marker that show that they are gay. In fact, DLF is known for his being a 'tsotsi and famous in the hood for being a father to many neighbourhood kids and for his macho lifestyle' (107). Mzi on the other hand, is despised for his penchant for 'foreign girls and white girls' (105), when he studies journalism at UCT. However, for both these men, the macho behaviour is a *façade* for having romantic feelings for other men. Mzi points out that many men conform to what society expects of them, like marriage, having children, supporting those families and all that which is deemed

manly. However, gay men resent these expectations of them and never are happy in what they feel is unnatural for them; heterosexual relationships. Thus, Wanner castigates the narrow views that the space of Johannesburg has in appreciating same sex oriented couples hence the prevalence of queer people living in closets.

In sharp contrast, the space of Cape Town is more accommodative of same sex oriented individuals who are able to live in the open. This is the space where Mzi encounters Thulani, another gay man who later becomes his lover. Wanner seems to compare the acceptance of gay men in Johannesburg and in Cape Town; showing the later to be more accepting of same sex oriented couples. For the larger part of his life, Mzilikazi lives in secrecy while in Johannesburg because he is afraid of being ostracised by his father and the society around him. The secrecy may be suggested by the naming of Mzilikazi's lover, Thulani. Thulani is a Zulu word which is an "admonishing" for people 'to be quiet' as Mzilikazi's sexuality is a hush-hush affair. While Mzilikazi pushes boundaries in being 'the first black anything' (106) in many aspects of his career and personal life, his coming to terms with his sexuality is not openly celebrated but silenced so as not to upset the *status quo* of a largely conservative society that Johannesburg is.

2.5 Tinaye: British-born, Zimbabwean-bred, South African Resident;

Economic Refugee

Wanner uses Tinaye, a British born, Zimbabwean-bred and South African residing man, to confront nuanced xenophobic behaviour displayed towards economic migrant men. Wanner uses Tinaye's plight to bring out a growing trend of works about nuanced, stratified and systematised xenophobic attitudes and policies that leave black economic foreigners trapped in low paying jobs despite being legal migrants. Wanner also interrogates the authenticity of the so called international NGO presentations as a domain of systematised alienation and potential sites of

migrant strife in legitimising themselves. She cites binding and rigid contracts offered to migrants with stringent conditions as a prison, leading to the unconventional ways some migrants use to legitimise their stay in South Africa. Through Tinaye, Wanner also interrogates the complicated challenges of culture coming into contact with new diasporic spaces. Masculine duties seem to take precedence over romantic obligations hence displaying migrants as cultural social misfits, in the new space.

Tinaye's determination of staying in South Africa legally, despite all the hindrances he is faced with addresses the volatility of South Africa as a host country for other African migrants. In discussing social and economic change in South Africa in the post-apartheid epoch, Tessier (1995:255) shows how the emergent democracy was faced with multi-faceted challenges inherited from the apartheid regime which designed and 'set it up for failure', (Muiu and Martin's 2009:170). As a young democracy, according to Muiu and Martin, the transition from the National Party (NP) to the African National Congress (ANC) was not a smooth one, as depicted in unscrupulous individuals like Sindiso and James Congwayo who strategically aligned themselves with the nationalist goals. The new South Africa under Nelson Mandela had no resources to address socio-economic differences let alone host immigrants (Tessier, 1995:170; Muiu 2009:255). Therefore, stringent anti-immigrant policies had to be adopted by the government to combat or minimise migrants coming into South Africa.

Despite this fact, however, the newly democratic nation attracted refugees and economic migrants because of its attractive economic prospects. On arrival, however, the migrants find what Tessier calls 'a little more than grinding poverty and xenophobia' (1995:255). Tinaye thus though legally residing in South Africa, faces subtle xenophobia in the form of a binding contractual agreement and risks expatriation once his permit expires when he asks for a salary

raise that is rightful due to him as per his contract. The text, therefore, seeks to address part of the underlying problems that lead Tinaye to opt for a loveless relationship with Grace his wife in order to change his legal status in South Africa. Tinaye is determined to stay in the country he loves to achieve his goal of a better life and will do so in any way he deems fit, (2010:153). The union is marred by strife as Tinaye reaches out to Slindile after the stillbirth of his child.

Wanner's use of Tinaye as a victim of xenophobic tendencies from his boss at AfriAID, exposes deep seated post-apartheid nationalist migrant intolerance exerted on legal economic migrants that simulates the constitutionalised oppression of black people during apartheid, leaving migrants vulnerable. Tinaye's contract at AfriAID as a regional manager is not flexible to allow him to get employment elsewhere. After being overlooked for a salary increment, Tinaye attempts yet again to present his case to the new Secretary General at AfriAID, former Special Branch man of the Nationalist Party, James Congwayo, who unceremoniously informs Tinaye that the organisation's 'budget' is not big enough to award such increments. Upon Tinaye's request to transfer his work permit to another company, Congwayo patronisingly overexerts his power as a Secretary General over Tinaye, insulting him on the basis of his country of origin. Tinaye recounts how Congwayo addresses him as though addressing a 'three year old' (165). In essence, Congwayo's refusal to allow Tinaye to transfer his permit borders around his sense superiority over Tinaye's migrancy status, despite being backed up by contractual correctness.

In addition, AfriAID uses the fact that Tinaye is a Zimbabwean to overlook him for the bi-yearly salary increase the contract promises. There are studies that have shown that institutional or governmental xenophobic tendencies exerted on foreign nationals emanates from senior officials and this incites xenophobic tendencies at an individual level, leaving foreign nationals, legal or illegal, in fear. Congwayo and his predecessor, Livingstone Stanley, are representative of an

international organisation that takes advantage of Tinaye's migrancy status, awarding him with a four year contract that is not transferable to other companies thus perpetuating Dobson's (2010:3) assessment that 'foreign Africans living in South Africa, whether economic migrants, asylum seekers, legal or illegally resident are marked by discrimination, exclusion and fear'. This aptly captures Tinaye's predicament at AfriAID. Congwayo is merely a mouth piece carrying out the NGO's policies.

Furthermore, Wanner's text demystifies the view that xenophobia is directed only at undocumented, illegal and uneducated foreign nationals but also at documented economic migrants through binding contracts and policies that work against economic migrants. As aforementioned, Tinaye is bound by his contract to work for one company, and cannot transfer it to another company. Breaching the contract risks Tinaye's prospective employer paying AfriAID for the remainder of the duration of his contract and that company seeking a new permit for Tinaye (166). Congwayo mindfully reminds Tinaye of his 'fellow Zimbabweans with degrees at the Central Methodist Church' (164) after the latter requests that his permit be transferred elsewhere. Tinaye summarises what seems to be a central problem that he faces as a foreign man on South African soil, the same way he does in England, thinking to himself thus:

To the white South Africans who sat on the board of AfriAID, I was probably filling the quota of the black headcount. To the black South Africans, I was one of the "kwerekweres", because I allegedly took the job of one of their brothers.
(2010:168)

The double bind that Tinaye faces as an economic migrant between two feuding groups of a seemingly progressive established South Africa dispels the view that only undocumented and illegal migrants suffer from xenophobia. Muiu and Martin (2009:163) argue that South African

democracy was set up to fail under black leadership. Tinaye questions himself after his child is stillborn if his life would have been different if he had been white or South African or both (*Men of the South* 214). The answer to his question is a ‘resounding YES’ (214). As a result, Tinaye is fearful that his work permit may not be renewed if he insists on getting the salary review he was promised in his initial contract so he decides to marry Grace, a South African woman so as to attain a residence permit. Dobson (2010:5) posits out that ‘migration to South Africa remains heavily male dominated likely *contributing* to both a perception and the reality of foreign men forming intimate relationships with South African women’, a site that proves as a cultural struggle. Attwell (2005:177) observes that the predicament of such characters as Tinaye is that they are caught up in a ‘cultural struggle’ since their positions are defined and delimited by a social and historical order. In this sense, Tinaye is caught up in a struggle between doing what is right culturally or what he desires as an individual because of the situation he finds himself in. Tinaye feels that Congwayo’s seemingly xenophobic attitude towards him leaves him with no choice but to marry Grace so as to keep his legal status in South Africa in the event that his contract expires and he is out of a job.

The love triangle between Tinaye, Grace and Slindile speaks to Tinaye encountering being a social misfit because the cultural obligation demanded by his culture is that he takes care of Grace, the mother of his unborn baby, and not Slindile, the woman he loves. Patriarchy is against his desire to be with the woman he loves. Tinaye respects his father who is depicted as the epitome of Shona culture and so when he gives Tinaye advice about being a father to his unborn baby, Tinaye takes the advice without any protests. He breaks up with Sli, the woman he considers to be ‘THE ONE’ (204). Although Tinaye exploits Grace for the sole purpose of wanting to remain a legal resident in South Africa, he has to face the consequences of being in a

loveless relationship with her and also the wrath of Slindile's for breaking her heart in the process. Slindile ridicules Tinaye's loyalty to his culture because she fails to understand how Tinaye's father could have a say in how he lives his life in South Africa. Thus, Tinaye experiences unprecedented alienation from the woman he loves because of his obligation to his culture, in the process becoming a social misfit.

Wanner uses Tinaye's name and surname to suggest Tinaye's blind ambition and determination to make a comfortable life for himself in Johannesburg. Musonza, Tinaye's surname means "one who searches for something" and so Tinaye is in search of a comfortable life in Johannesburg and goes about this by planning to marry Grace whom he does not love. Tinaye's predicament as the common denominator of a love triangle leaves him with a burden of choosing between Grace who gets pregnant in the course of their courtship and Slindile who is the epitome of his happiness and a true definition of an independent woman by South African standards. Culture comes into play when he has to involve his father for advice on how to fix his messy relationships with the two women. His father quickly reminds him that a man does not neglect the mother of his own child to look after another man's child (206).

In conclusion, Wanner's 'chick lit' novel takes on a radical stance in addressing challenges that are faced by men negotiating their masculinities during the volatile transitional period in South Africa. Mfundo, Mzilikazi and Tinaye, who are all interconnected through friendships and romantic relations all, experience a form of alienation from their immediate spaces of occupation because of their non-traditional approaches to masculinity. Thus Wanner's trivialisation of men's issues by feminising her protagonists serves to challenge traditional views of masculinities. Wanner's protagonists all become social misfits because their positionality challenges dominant traditional views of patriarchy. However, at other instances, the pioneers of new forms of

masculinities are forced to embrace patriarchal traditions of executing their masculinities in order to satisfy society's obligations.

Wanner captures the volatile space of Johannesburg as a space that is not ready to embrace stay-at-home-boyfriends, straight-looking gay men as well as transnational and cosmopolitan men who all push boundaries of the society and force the same society to wake up to newer forms of masculinity that work in the rapidly growing city. Wanner's narrative offers newer forms of masculinity that are less violent but suffer because of the conflicts between the existing patriarchal gender obligations and the newer forms of masculinity that embrace characteristics that are traditionally viewed as feminine. By the same token, Wanner's narrative challenges the impracticability and hypocrisy of some so-called independent women who advocate for equality, yet when confronted with the opportunity of becoming equal, cry foul at the prospect of such. Slindile's lack of patience of Mfundo's unemployment and Siyanda's total denial of Mzilikazi's queer masculinity shows how far women still have to go in appreciating equality in relationships. Wanner's text also interrogates subtle workplace xenophobic tendencies against economic migrants who face discrimination and exclusion who face difficulty in legitimising themselves resulting in pervasive ways of grounding themselves in South Africa. The novel foregrounds cultural differences between migrant men and South African women that become sites of conflict if not properly addressed, challenging to the construction of model traditional masculinities.

3. Chapter Three

3.1 Female Decadents and Black Diamonds in *The 30th Candle*, *Black Widow Society* and *Happiness is a Four Letter Word*

3.1.1 Introduction

This chapter follows the preceding chapter in that it focuses on female centred views and representations of constructions of hegemonic masculinity in suburbia, arguing that hegemonic masculinities are not always model masculinities as depicted by the novels in this chapter. Using the typical rendition of chic lit, with its seemingly superfluous focus on women's issues of the genre, the chapter employs Manase's understanding of the 'black diamond', and their 'conspicuous consumption', (2016:88) and Bristow's theorisation of 'female decadence', to examine representations centred on relationships between black middle class men's power and domination expressed through consumption patterns and also on female decadence adopted by women through displays of increased female infidelity that fosters different violent reactionary patterns from men. As witnessed in the last chapter, an increased display of emotional violence between the sexes, especially by men, appears to be meticulously silenced behind the high walls and well-manicured lawns of suburbia to maintain a serene view of the space. However, the novels in this chapter paint a different picture altogether, as violence is still seen as a present and active force in the black middle class populated spaces.

Jele and Makholwa's narratives are an attempt to balance, challenge and address oppression of seemingly emancipated women who are in positions of authority both in the work and domestic spaces. This attempt by the two authors accounts for the depictions of increased female infidelity that men unscrupulously silence through emotional and physical violence against women, which in turn demonstrates a very active but subverted male on female domination power play, suggested by the texts under examination. For those women who are depicted as suffering overt forms of violence under the traditional marriage institution, account is given as women's subscription to traditional patriarchal views on marriage. Like the depiction of emancipated Slindile in Wanner's *Men of the South*, whose view of masculinity is grounded in traditional forms of patriarchy, so are the views of some of Jele and Makholwa's female characters. Though the last chapter focuses mainly on chic lit as a tool that challenges traditional forms of masculinity creation by Wanner, this chapter engages with female-penned authors' views on silenced subverted violence against women as a result of traditional patriarchal assumptions of masculinity.

Makholwa's *Black Widow Society*, (BWS), *The 30th Candle* and Cynthia Jele's *Happiness is a Four Letter Word* all depict female decadence as impacting on the masculinities that they construct in their novels and foreground how these men construct their masculinities around strong 'untraditional forms of femininity' (Bristow 2016:88). The women's changing gender roles and shifting positions from home makers and wives to providers and/or co-providers or business owners complicate the traditional views of gender roles as the female characters in Makholwa and Jele's narratives occupy male spaces. Thus, as earlier mentioned, these novels challenge the patriarchal *status quo* which undermines women's roles in male dominated spaces and brings to the surface men's power and/or weaknesses that manifest in violence as they

grapple with the emancipated woman. Through the depictions of female characters who hold key positions in male dominated spaces alongside their male counterparts, Makholwa and Jele, like Wanner in the previous chapter, are able to feminise masculinities and masculinise women to address the changing face of gender violence and its silencing in suburbia.

Jele's *Happiness is a Four-Letter Word* and Makholwa's *The 30th Candle* are fictitious biographies that chronicle the lives of four young, black vibrant middle class women who live in the upmarket suburbs of Johannesburg. Through these Johannesburg wise women, it is possible to trace the depictions of their male significant others whose masculinities are shaped by these women. All the women in the novels hold key positions and are financially stable, enjoying a measure of affluence either as single women or in romantic partnerships. The women regularly meet at posh restaurants to caucus on issues that they face on creating an impression that they live progressive lives. While the bond amongst the friends seems strong, the sisterhoods formed by these friendships live under threats of secrets being revealed that are potential hazards for the friendships. The secret of Nolwazi's pregnancy by Tebogo in *The 30th Candle* is echoed in *Happiness* in Tumi's secret about her marriage and Nandi's secret about Chris' return from the United Kingdom. Sade and Tumi all hide their abuse behind high suburban walls to protect their abusive husbands and to maintain a serene façade of their marriages. Unfortunately, their dirty laundries get aired in public in the end. Linda, Sade, Dikeledi and Nolwazi's friendships in *The 30th Candle* seem to mirror the lives of Princess, Nandi, Tumi and Zaza in *Happiness is a Four Letter Word* in the plush suburbs of Johannesburg. While the women in Makholwa's novel are approaching their thirty year mark, hence the title *The 30th Candle*, the women in Jele's novel are older and wondering what 'happiness' is. The difference in the ages of these two groups of

friends is significant in that these women's reactions to romantic relationships are strikingly different hence different masculine traits in their partners are displayed. While the younger group of friends in *The 30th Candle* look forward to lives with their partners, the older group of friends in *Happiness* seem to be keen to re-live their single years and reflectively think and question their happiness in their relationships.

Makholwa's *Black Widow Society* differs from the other two novels as it depicts women whose sole aim is to deliberately obliterate their abusive husbands. The novel foregrounds gender violence perpetrated by women who react from violence at the hands of their husbands. The business savvy Triumvirate, headed by the enigmatic Tallulah, operates at a high level of strict protocol and secrecy that all the widows are sworn into, with the only visible inclination linking them being a bracelet worn by all the widows after initiation into the widow's fold. The planning of all the murders of what the widows call the 'mark', *BWS* (2013:11) happens behind the high walls of suburbia while Mzwakhe, the 'feminist' hitman carries out the murders at whatever location he is ordered to go to. This picture of suburbia is in contrast with what some of the characters, like Tumi in *Happiness* believe about it, that it is a quiet and safe place compared to townships such as Soweto. By contrast Soweto offers some of the characters, like Tumi herself, refuge away from the harsh realities of her less than perfect married life to her emotionally abusive husband Tshepo, in the suburbs. The Triumvirate heads the BWS, forming legitimate businesses to mask their criminal activities of eradicating abusive husbands. In the end, the BWS is itself obliterated by an indignant Mzwakhe, their hitman, who feels indignant after killing his wife Marie after he mistakenly believes she is out to kill him for insurance.

All the novels capture the assertive nature of all the women as they hold jobs or are business owners who provide or co-provide with their partners, all traits traditionally viewed as masculine. Positionality of these women play an important role in the construction of both the masculine and feminine roles played by both sexes. As the novels also capture traditional views of men as providers and as family custodians and patriarchs, the traditional subjectivities set a contrastive view to the matriarchs who arguably do the same masculine roles for their families as those that the patriarchs do. Across the three novels, some of the women who are depicted as possessing masculinised qualities more than their male counterparts solely take responsibility of providing for their men, or in engaging in extra-marital relations. Princess, Zaza and Tallulah single-handedly take care of their families in the absence of partners. In fact, Zaza cheats on Bheki, her husband, in a bizarre attempt to give life to their obsolete marriage. Tallulah preys on younger men to dominate them sexually while enjoying the benefits of her life as a single woman.

3.2 Female Infidelity, Coping Mechanism or Challenging Masculinity (?);

Masculinised Women and Feminised Men

Bristow's (2016:94) understanding of the phenomenon of decadence and the 'New woman' help in analysing Jele's and Makholwa's portrayal an emergent female 'black diamonds' who by virtue of their positionality assume what has been traditionally viewed as masculine spaces and in the process expose feminising processes on their male partners. By focusing on the female characters' perceived decadence, it is possible to understand the male partners' masculinities. Smith's (1987:58) notion of 'the line of fault' where women operate from a place of disjunctures between 'the world' and their 'social experiences' helps to focus on these 'untraditional' Bristow

(2016:88) female characters' experiences. This justifies exploring the reactions that both they (female subjects) and their male partners, and indeed their social surroundings display.

While the selected narratives suggest that women's emancipation emasculates black men who react negatively to having female superiors both in the work spaces and the domestic spaces, men are depicted as opportunists who ride on this wave. Jele and Makholwa attempt to use strong, emancipated female characters in *Happiness* and in *The 30th Candle* to demonstrate a new wave of financially strong women who challenge the masculinity of their romantic partners in the domestic and work spaces. However, the men in these women's lives use this emancipation as springboards to emotionally manipulate and frustrate efforts of continued independence expressed through freedom and decadence, practiced in various ways.

In *Happiness*, Jele's attempt to show female independence is undermined by heavy tones of male centred promotions of women. Nandi's inauguration as a partner in the masculinised environment at Le Roux, Mathaba and Associates is a culmination of hard work and merit but this promotion comes as a suggestion as a result of her successful multimillion rand deal with her ex-boyfriend's company. While this seemingly challenges the view that women occupy top positions through the quarter system rather than merit, Chris' involvement in Nandi's promotion as partner, undermines the hard work that Jele foregrounds. Nandi's ascension to the position of 'chartered accountant and senior manager' (*Happiness* 46) offers her financial flexibility and hence more freedom on the domestic level. Nandi's promotion to junior partner through the aid of Chris' deal challenges Thomas' dominant masculinity in that Nandi is given a voice to speak out about the arrangements between Thomas and the mother of his child, Pinky, who seems content with a docile life, using her son as a leverage against Nandi who does not have any children yet. This animosity between these two women further illustrates the undermining of

female independence as both these women depend on Thomas to define their femininity, while Thomas' action of jumping between the two of these women suggests male domination at play as he manipulates the two women by his act.

In addition, Nandi's position as junior partner gives her more control over Thomas resulting in Thomas' feelings of emasculation. Thomas refuses to be dictated to by Nandi as she out rightly tells him to break all contact with Pinky. This position causes a rift between the couple who share a house in Fourways as Thomas frequently goes to Pinky's house whenever he and Nandi have a quarrel suggesting an ongoing manipulation of Nandi's feelings by Thomas. Jele's reversal of roles in Nandi and Thomas' relationship suggests a feminised man in the way that Thomas handles his problems with Nandi. Thomas is essentially not different in comparison to Chris who leaves Nandi with financial burden to pay off debts as he emancipates himself from her and settles in London. The behaviour demonstrated by both Nandi's current and former fiancés signals new forms of manipulation of women viewed as emancipated. This appears to be a popular trend as this is foregrounded in Makholwa's depiction of the love triangle between, Tallulah, Khaya and Thami in *Red Widow Spider*. This type of abuse against financially stable women seems to be an emotional domination by men who do not resort to physical violence as a means of dominating on women.

Nandi's reaction to Thomas' rejection by reconnecting with Chris, her ex-fiancée who jilts her and migrates to London, shows similar patterns of openness to manipulation. Nandi's cheating on Thomas may be viewed as appropriating a behavior often associated with men in many relationships. However, Nandi's move is portrayed as lacking insight and calculation, as would be expected in a female perspective of men's infidelity, showing an expansive difference between her and the typical cheating man. Women who are subjected to cheating are usually

expected to handle infidelity quietly and exhibit resilience and strength of character, as depicted in Sade and Winston's marriage in the *The 30th Candle*. Jele's narrative henceforth suggests men's continued violence and domination of women, albeit emotionally. Nandi's begging of Thomas to return to their home shows how traditional social norms of women defining themselves around men transcend the seemingly advanced freedom that still exists in the African set up. In essence, Nandi, like most of the seemingly emancipated women in these three novels, implicitly subscribes to her society's notion of womanhood, that a woman should be married, as opposed to what she wants and desires; that is financial freedom and independence.

Jele's centering on Nandi's ordination into what she (Nandi) comprehends as 'moving upstairs with the big boys' (*Happiness*: 46) seemingly positions her on a subliminal powerful position above a group of men commonly viewed as violent and vulgar, the taxi drivers. The description of Nandi's office as a 'matchbox-sized private office that came with spectacular views of the taxi rank below' (46) is a far cry from real emancipation from patriarchal emancipation despite her financial emancipation. On a macro level, Nandi's position seemingly challenges some patriarchy complicit views that a woman's place is in the kitchen as she transcends the kitchen boundaries and excels in the work environment. Although Nandi muses at how once, she and Sonja were addressed as 'Tjerrie' (49), a word loosely translated to describe an insignificant girlfriend by their middle-aged white male colleagues because of their presence in the company of male dominated accountants, her subliminal position of power speaks against personal emancipation as seen in her need to be with Thomas to define herself as a complete woman. Thus, Jele's novel is seeded with undetected connotations of female domination by males.

Decadence in Jele's characterisation of Zaza epitomises the coping mechanism used by some women in marriage as Zaza's comfort in cheating on her husband is used to depict issues of

spousal infidelity from a female's perspective. From the onset, Zaza's treatment of Bheki signifies her lack of respect for him as she treats him as a project dared by her friends to go on a date with him (*Happiness* 71). Zaza's poverty stricken background propels her into taking advantage of the very much older Bheki who comes from a rich background, thus showing her predatory characteristics, shown by men like Leo, in the same novel and Tinaye in *Men of the South* who find themselves in positions of desperation. Zaza's predatory tendencies continue into marriage resulting in her infidelity. Marriage and the life in the suburbs, does not offer her the 'happiness' she thought it would, hence she constantly cheats on Bheki in search of the elusive happiness. Zaza's outright immorality is an attempt by Jele at the reversal of gender roles as Zaza becomes the pace setter in her relationship with Bheki, who is feminised by level headedly accepting his wife's infidelity after suspecting that his wife is cheating on him. In fact, Zaza's infidelity doubly feminises both her husband and her boyfriend Bongani who is so besotted with her that he starts divorce proceedings with his wife. While Bongani begins divorce proceedings, Bheki clings to his cheating wife, calculatingly and gently urging her to stop her infidelity.

Interestingly, Zaza's infidelity brings out different reactions and characteristics in Bheki and Bongani, showing that represent different types of masculinities. While Bheki demonstrates level headedness and a mastery of manipulation, when he discovers his wife's infidelity, Bongani's reaction demonstrates irrationality and impatience when Zaza attempts to halt their relationship. Bheki stands for maturity and anchorage and uses this maturity and financial power to manipulate Zaza who has a penchant for the good life and fears returning to a life of poverty likely to happen if she divorces Bheki. Hence, Zaza promptly ends her relationship with Bongani. Despite the infidelity and disrespect of their marriage vows by Zaza, Bheki forgives her on condition that she stops her wayward behaviour. Perhaps the age difference between wife and

husband accounts for Bheki's calm response. Bheki uses reward centred forgiveness with full knowledge of his wife's love for the good life. Essentially, Zaza ultimately defines her happiness as the material benefits she obtains from Bheki, showing the use of material as a form of subordination of women, despite Zaza's flamboyant credentials in the business world.

In contrast Bheki, Bongani stands for instability and is less materially endowed in comparison to Bheki, hence Zaza chooses to end her relationship with Bongani in favour of her cold but stable marriage. Marriage is presented in as a space of master manipulation and violence towards women, perpetrating notions of patriarchal strongholds in contemporary marriage institutions depicted by Jele and Makholwa's narratives. Bongani displays a patronising attitude towards his wife when he seeks to divorce her to marry Zaza. Similarly, Bheki patronises his wife by rewarding her with material things to keep her as his wife. Lebo, Bongani's wife, speaks up about her husband's infidelity unlike Bheki who remains silent as a calculative measure to keep his wife grounded Jele's attempt to dis-centre traditional conventions of gender roles therefore seems to be thwarted by her presentation of the manipulation of the women in marriage

Another aspect of infidelity in marriage intersecting with black diamond consumption in masculinity is shown in *The 30th Candle* in Sade's past that is used to showcase Winston's physical violent behaviour towards her and other women who have low self-esteem issues, like Dineo the prostitute and Palesa one the church congregants. Murray (2016:14) suggests that gender violence against women can be traced back to their gendered lived experiences. Sade experiences physical violence because Winston wrongfully assumes that she is sexually pure because their nuptials had a foundation in the church. The disparities between his imagined bride and the reality of her promiscuous past emasculates Winston who then retaliates by violating Sade to 'facilitate the repair of masculinity' in Javaid's words (2016:288). In essence,

Makholwa's depiction of Sade and Winston's marriage subscribes to the notion of hegemony through aspects of violence. However, as Connell and Messerschmidt caution, Winston fails to attain the model masculinity status as his violence towards Sade disqualifies him from such a status.

Makholwa's use of Winston and Sade's problems in marriage is to show that these problems have to do with Winston's need to exert his total dominance over Sade, and all the other women he engages with sexually. What Sade protects from the beginning of their relationship is a pointer to an abusive man, yet Sade tolerates the behaviour. Winston's total transformation into a full blown violent man is suggestive of a destructive man, as he is not only dominant towards Sade, but also to all the other women. Sade's silence about the abuse she suffers under Winston perpetrates his violent behaviour rather than solves it, so Makholwa's depiction of the silence surrounding Sade's suffering is an attempt to address a systematic form of physical violence and sexual subordination.

To add, Winston appears to have a psychotic grasp of reality as both he and Sade are more respectful of the rules of marriage and the Christian faith, rather than the practicability of their marriage. Winston uses Sade's dark past as a ticket to abuse her, as time and again Makholwa brings Sade's past to the present. Using the Malusi episode as the extreme form of violence in the married couple's experience, Makholwa's depiction of Winston shows his respect of traditions and family rituals rather than empathizing with his wife. A man of Winston's character could easily deal with Sade's former high school lover but the fact that Makholwa allows for the full story of Sade's past abortion to unravel is significant particularly to show Winston's egotistic nature. His view of marriage is about his image as a husband rather than the actual processes of protecting his wife and daughter in the face of danger. This suggests a selective indoctrinated

stance Winston takes to his faith embedded in his performance as a church elder that serves to fulfill his desires of sexually violating other female congregants at their family church. Thus, the introduction of Malusi serves to test Winston's masculinity as a model husband, a role he fails.

Furthermore, Winston's violence against Sade begins from his egotistic centred view that a Christian wife is there to solely serve him and more so, his sexual needs. Winston imagines that Sade, because of her beauty and angelic features, makes her wife material and that is enough for him. Encouraging her to stop earning a living is Winston's way of gaining total control over Sade, serving his interests in the process and none of hers. Sade's father's suspicion about his daughter's born again status just before the lobolo negotiations is a premonition of a doomed marriage that follows. Winston's predictable breakdown after the discovery of Sade's sordid past launches him into a full blown perpetrator of violence against his wife because his ego is bruised. Instead of a strong, comforting and protective husband, Sade imagines Winston turns out to be abusive and is a sexual pervert who in his twisted sexual fantasy kills a prostitute.

Sade's docility is similar to that of the pre-widowed Tallulah in *Black Window Society*, who is more concerned with the public image of her marriage to Mphikeleli whom Makholwa uses to epitomise both decadence and black diamond qualities, later as a widow, that are used by women to contest against hegemonic masculinity as a coping strategy. Tallulah's widowed single mother status while sitting as the head of multi-national companies suggests that she owns the means of production and commands respect from a hardened ex-convict like Mzwakhe. Despite the fact that Mzwakhe abhors Tallulah's commands at times, he is forced to follow her orders because she pays his wages. Financial power seems to enable women of Tallulah's stature to occupy masculine spaces, not only on the domestic sphere, but also in the public spaces. Tallulah's widow status seems to open more spaces of power for her, in comparison to the

marriage space under Mphikeleli her abusive dead husband where she suffered the same fate as Sade in *The 30th Candle*. Tallulah's businesses thrive after the death of Mphikeleli and thus Makholwa presents an atmosphere that suggests freedom and success in the absence of a male partner challenging age old views that women do not fare well outside the domestic sphere.

Similarly, Linda in *The 30th Candle*, epitomises decadence to defy age old traditions that women are incapable of cheating on their male partners. *The 30th Candle* opens with an unconventional scenario where Lehumo's masculinity is challenged when he "catches" Linda, his *fiancé*, in a compromising position with another man. Linda is a pure 'Jezebel' (*The 30th Candle* 1), as she herself orchestrates the whole drama to be caught in the act by Lehumo because she does not have the heart to tell Lehumo that she is not ready for marriage. Like Zaza, in *Happiness*, Linda's disregard for Lehumo's feelings shows her disregard for conventional female roles thus indirectly challenging traditional views on women and marriage. Her role in the relationship can be described, at best, as masculine as she takes on male characteristics while Lehumo begs to be in the relationship. Lehumo is shocked at Linda's infidelity and uses words like 'witch' (2), 'prop' (3) and 'bitch' (5) to degrade her but Linda remains unmoved by her infidelity. Lehumo's verbal attack demonstrates an attempt to gain his dominant position over Linda, however he fails to do so. Linda's approach to Lehumo deliberately deracinates him and emasculates him. He says to Linda: 'You've taken away my pride' (4) signifying his disbelief and dismay at Linda's actions.

Moral uprightness as opposed to decadence, does not seem to reward some women who are loyalists to their partners. In *The 30th Candle*, Dikeledi and Tumi *Happiness is a Four Letter Word* are confronted by their partner's wayward ways despite exhibiting moral upright characters. Both Jele and Makholwa's novels foreground that spousal loyalty is not dependent on

moral integrity as both women suffer multiple occasions of cheating over long periods of time. Tumi suffers humiliation at the hands of her husband who impregnates a work colleague while she is failing to have babies. On the other hand, Dikeledi suffers a similar humiliation from her long term boyfriend who impregnates one of her friends and thereafter proposes marriage to Dikeledi as a cover up. In both instances, the women seem to somehow condone their partners' behavior as they repeatedly forgive their infidelity. However, Dikeledi's final separation from Tebogo redeems her femininity and humanity and she finds love in Kwame, her Ghanaian work colleague.

3.3 Gender Violence and Suburbia: Men, Women and Constructions of Violence and Silence

Makholwa and Jele's use of the suburban space as a motif that Nuttall posits is mired in an 'entanglement of *éclat* and somberness, light and dark, comprehension and bewilderment, polis and necropolis, desegregation and resegregation' (2009:33), aids in exploration of the constructions of silence surrounding issues of gender based violence in suburbia. While gender based violence is always a 'feminised' phenomenon associated with violence meted out on women by men, Makholwa and Jele's narratives accost violence meted on men by women (Javaid 2016:288). In both novels, men and women are depicted as instigating violence against each other with the same vivacity and then silencing of the violence ensues to protect the view of suburbia as a peaceful space. While Jele portrays a seemingly superfluously *éclat* suburban life, a close examination of her characters brings to the surface, 'somberness' of some of the so called black diamonds' relationships. Makholwa, in her novel *BWS* unapologetically confronts issues

such as gender violence meted out on men by women that turn the ‘polis’ of the suburban life into the ‘necropolis’.

In line with Javaid’s (2016:288) position that ‘feminising or gendering victimisation is mostly seen through the use of derogatory labels ascribed to men who have not achieved expectations of hegemonic masculinity’ is seen in Jele and Makholwa’s depiction of a number of their male characters who are subordinated by women’s leadership, either in the work space or the domestic space. Khaya, Leo and Mzwakhe all exhibit low self-esteem in the predatory characteristics they are portrayed as displaying, although these depictions signal a manipulative nature of these men. The depiction of this trio suggests that they are not docile subordinates of their female superiors but, rather, they exhibit traits of being perpetrators of different forms of violence. While all the said male characters fall short of model characteristics, both Jele and Makholwa’s depictions of these men point to newer patterns of abuse of women in power.

Makholwa’s presentation of Khaya, Tallulah’s call boy, and Thami’s toy boyfriend centres around his opportunistic abuse of women who seeks to attain a measure of “diamond” status as he tries to extort money by blackmailing Tallulah using Thami as his source of information about secrets of the Black Widow Society. Khaya’s willingness to drug and double cross a clearly mesmerised and broken Thami to get information about the BWS demonstrably points to an unscrupulous and cunning man who is looking for a shortcut to becoming rich. Khaya rides on the wave of Thami’s insecurities about her age as she considers him an achievement since he is almost a decade younger than she is but is willing to date her. Ironically, Khaya’s gay status exposes his underhanded attempt to gain material wealth through blackmail and a possible murder. Thami’s naivety makes her an easy target for Khaya’s subversive attempt at manipulating Tallulah, a seasoned manipulator herself.

Makholwa's exposition of Khaya's act castigates underhanded violence against women by men who are subordinated to other men themselves, as gay men clearly suffer from marginalisation. It is Khaya's ploy to lie and manipulate his way up the social ladder as he is lazy to complete his studies despite the fact that he is gay. This is in contrast with Wanner's Mzilikazi, who despite being a closet gay man is able to provide for his wife and children. This contrast serves to showcase Khaya's undergirded attempt to sleep his way up the financial ladder, a trait sometimes attributed to women in positions of power. Thus, Khaya's depiction gives voice to silent but violent ways that some men use against women to maintain their domination.

Through Leo's relationship, Jele comments on what Dahinden (2010:204) observes as a 'localised diasporic transnational' man as Leo finds anchorage in his relationship with Princess and once he is stable in his domestic arrangement with Princess he uses the relationship for the upkeep of his drug habit, using Princess' stolen furniture as collateral in the end. Dahinden's (2010:53) observation that migrants of Leo's disposition are 'characterised by low physical mobility and a high degree of local ties', finds expression in Leo's established ties not only with Princess but also in his conduct and association with 'Splitface' and his Boss, (*Happiness* 25), who are drug dealers. Leo's need for anchorage financially ruins Princess. Ironically, Princess is a lawyer fighting for women's rights as seen in her defending of Miriam Mabena, (*Happiness* 128) who stands and awaits prosecution for allegedly killing her sexually abusive husband. Jele seems to overshadow Princess' resolve to never allow any man to abuse her as her father did her mother. However, she is not able to defend herself against Leo's emotional abuse. As a lawyer and human rights activist, she sets a bad example hence Leo uses her generosity to feed his drug problem.

Jele and Makholwa seem to be aware of the changing power dynamics between men and women as women take on more masculine roles. Jele's depiction of Princess and Leo's relationship shows a reversal of gender roles that indicates Princess' dominance of Leo. Leo's seemingly needy masculinity serves as a cross over for Princess as he represents a welcome difference to her and she hopes through him she stands to experience a better life. From the onset, Princess notices Leo's need for attention and enjoys her dominance over him. While Princess appears to be Leo's victim of predatory tendencies, Jele's narrative depicts her as initiating her own downfall as her dominant qualities attract Leo to her. She enjoys the dominance she has over Leo as it seen on the night of his art exhibition in in Melville. Jele depicts Princess as a woman who defines her relationships according to what she wants and ironically Leo becomes her nemesis as she genuinely falls in love with him. Unfortunately for her, Leo does not share the same love for her. Thus, Princess' efforts to turn Leo into a "black diamond" by moving him into her home in Parktown to 'keep up appearances' Manase (2016:92) become her own undoing as she suffers the consequences when Leo steals everything from her house to feed his drug habit. Despite the tight security that is provided for Princess at her upmarket complex, Leo steals from her in plain sight, as Princess indirectly partakes in her own robbery by allowing an opportunist into her house.

Clearly, Jele and Makholwa debunk the misconception that the suburb is a utopian space where men do not commit gender based violence against their partners. Tshepo, Winston Tebogo, Mzwakhe, Khaya and Leo all display varying degrees of physical and emotional violence towards their partners at one time or the other. In this way, the suburban space is far from being a safe haven for many couples as the high walls are motifs of dungeons for both men and women as they are prone to gender based violence. Winston is depicted, to the outsider, as a caring

Christian man and loving husband to Sade. However, his initially emotional abuse escalates to physical abuse on his discovery of Sade's past. Makholwa depicts Sade as misrepresenting her emotionally abusive boyfriend who later turns physically violent in marriage to protect her imagined perfect marriage. While Sade presents Winston as a caring and protective husband to her friends with the intention of protecting an imagined happiness, Makholwa uses her silence to depict some women's attitudes that foster abusive behaviours in their spouses. Winston takes advantage of Sade because of her position as a stay-at-home-mother and wife and abuses his role as a husband as prescribed by the Bible he purports to live by, since he is an ordained church elder. Makholwa uses the irony that is conjured by Winston's abusive nature as a church elder to suggest abuse as a deeper phenomenon that transcends religious persuasions and class boundaries.

Tshepo in *Happiness*, also emotionally abuses through his numerous extramarital affairs and Tumi hides the abuse she suffers from her friends. Tshepo fails to provide warmth and a loving habitat for his wife and chooses instead to seek the comforting arms of Nomkhosi, a younger co-worker who falls pregnant. Tshepo's reaction to his wife when confronted with the news demonstrates a masculinity that undermines and belittles marriage vows in a contemptible manner. Tshepo's patronising attitude towards his wife at the "swanky African-themed restaurant in Sandton", suggests emotional abuse as Tumi literally gets sick and endures rather than enjoys the outing. Tshepo and Tumi's marriage, like their shared plush quiet home in Kyalami, ceases to be emblems of safety and warmth, in fact Tumi contemplates visiting her parents in Soweto, 'under the pretense of missing them' (*Happiness* 118). Lemon (1995:62) suggests that men in Tshepo's position suffer from a 'patriarchal hangover'. Tshepo displays this struggle when he initially emphatically denies any knowledge of Nomkhosi in Tumi's face but swings from

pretended shock, rage, indignation to finally acknowledging impregnating Nomkhosi. Tshepo's powerful position, coupled with the absence of a baby in his marriage, captures the emotional violence that strains his marriage. Tshepo's verbal attack on Tumi when she discovers that he has impregnated another woman shows a violent and arrogant trait in the former that eliminates his masculinity as a hegemonic masculinity.

Again, Tshepo's depiction as an emotionally abusive husband towards his wife Tumi torments and dehumanises her yet she fights to remain Tshepo's wife throughout her ordeal. Tumi imagines that she has a happy marriage but her reality is that, despite her husband's black diamond status, she suffers humiliation at his hands. This indicates what Smith (1987:50) calls the 'line of fault', where there are disjunctures between women's experiences and 'the socially constitutive experience'. Tshepo's suggestion that Tumi stop working is meant to confirm his total domination and subordination of his wife for the purpose of abusing her. Jele seems to suggest that financially stable men use their power to emotionally abuse their spouses in the full realisation of the silence that these women seem keen to maintain. The suburbs represent, for Tumi at least, tranquility and order and the intrusion of Nomkhosi upsets her imagination of this life as she longs to escape this "disorderliness" by visiting her parents in Soweto. The realisation that the suburban space does not give peace of mind is, as she initially thought, an apt epiphany for Tumi's naivety as she grapples with Tshepo's wayward consequences. Jele seems to place this as a reminder that emotional violence happens anywhere and not only in the townships as imagined by Tumi.

Similarly, Tebogo, in *The 30th Candle* emotionally abuses Dikeledi for more than a decade, fathering a child by one of her friends in the process. While Tebogo is depicted as a conniving two-timer, Dikeledi is depicted as a desperate woman as she allows herself to continue with a

man she knows is infidel womaniser. Dikeledi's views of Tebogo do not evolve from their time spent at university until they move to the suburbs. Linda, one of her friends, observes that Dikeledi, whose name ironically means 'tears', loves to be pitied. Dikeledi uses her silence as tool to solicit for sympathy from her friends. Tebogo and Dikeledi's relationship addresses the issue of women who look to the institution of marriage as a safe space while the foundations of the relationship are weak. Makholwa uses Tebogo and Dikeledi's to symbolise the emptiness of some seemingly well-manicured lawned houses in the suburbs. Dikeledi gains nothing out of her emotionally taxing relationship with Tebogo despite her firm belief in love and her reserved and mature nature. There, Makholwa's novel ridicules the view that being a Christian, decent woman, guarantees a man's fidelity as it is disproved by both Dikeledi's and Sade's relationships.

Mzwakhe, in *BWS* seeks to re-establish his masculine dominance over females by marrying Marie, a white woman, as he feels powerless and owned and silenced by the Black widow's society. This produces inconsistencies in his masculinity because Mzwakhe uses his marriage to Marie as a marker of progress as a black man in the new South Africa and not necessarily love. The marriage to Marie is Mzwakhe's attempt to be liberate himself from black women who are increasingly becoming a strong entity in the new South African dispensation. The oppression he feels matches the oppression he suffers when serving a prison sentence, hence from his inception, Mzwakhe seems to be contemplating giving up being the BWS' hitman. Mzwakhe turns to Marie because in her, he experiences an infant like love that he never has experienced in a relationship with any black woman. He feeds off Marie's need of his presence and he feels that through marrying her, he has some form of control over a woman. Mzwakhe 'developed what he believed was a healthy dose of mistrust for women, especially black women' (2013:23) because

he does not like the prospect of an assertive and empowered black woman in his life as he enjoys controlling women.

Mzwakhe as his name suggests, begins to look at prospects of a sanctuary by building his home life around Marie in upmarket Centurion, but his efforts are misplaced as his motivation for being with Marie is that he sees her as a woman in need of a savior. His choice of a white lover seems to be misplaced since he enjoys being with vulnerable women. He does not like the power demonstrated by the widow's society, whose majority members are black. It is not surprising that Mzwakhe's criminal alertness is triggered when on mere suspicion that Marie is cheating on him and is planning to kill him, he begins to plot her demise as well. The family institution fails to ground Mzwakhe because the softness of Marie's femininity does not completely eradicate his devious aspirations. Again, through this union, it is possible to see how a seemingly safe and serene surrounding that the suburb, Centurion, fails to curb spousal violence as Mzwakhe kills Marie. The seemingly 'cosy duplex' (*BWS* 25) fails to provide Mzwakhe with the happily ever after marriage he expected.

Mzwakhe's dominance over women is challenged by the fact that his mother does not recognise Marie as Mzwakhe's wife because Marie represents to her an echo of oppression she endured as a domestic worker. Through this view, Makholwa's novel is a form of meditation on the new South African dispensation that promotes rainbowism by an integration of the races. However, it appears custodians of the older dispensation are not ready to accept the rainbowism readily accepted by the newer generation. Ironically, Mzwakhe himself uses this notion to equip himself as a dominant man over his wife. This questions the ideology behind rainbowism.

Makholwa's novels depict gender violence as taking a subliminal characteristic with both men and women using it as a dominating tool to exert their power over those of a poor financial

disposition. Women are depicted as equally abusive when they are in positions of financial power. Makholwa uses Tallulah's character to grapple with a woman who uses sexual dominance as a coping mechanism to fill a man's space while doing away with committed relationships. The largely masculine sphere of sexual freedom becomes emblematic of power, authority and dominance, a tool that Tallulah uses to exploit men. Tallulah enjoys physically degrading men using Sadism and Masochism (S&M), sexual escapades arranged only at her request in a similar way that Winston in *The 30th Candle* enjoys sexual degradation games with prostitutes in Hillbrow to boost his ego.

Interestingly, both Tallulah and Winston do not conduct their shenanigans in the suburban space, but rather choose seedy spaces of Hillbrow to conduct their shenanigans away from the suburbs. The dingy space of the hotels they both conduct their sexual fantasies suggests a divorced imagination from the clean and orderly life of the suburbs. This creates a falls view of the suburb which ironically is depicted as a space that is full of gender violence as opposed to the township. Makholwa's novel foregrounds that, it is the 'black diamonds' that contribute to the filth and the 'somberness' alluded to by Nuttall.

In *Black Widow Society*, Tallulah functions from a place of brokenness and emotional emptiness, building a domineering masculine trait to combat emotional attachment like she had done in her marriage with Mphikeleli. Her dominant stance towards her chosen sex partners, is a coping strategy which she uses as a power tool to subordinate her subjects who are financially needy and younger than her. Tallulah feels in control of these relationships as only she dictates when the meetings should be held. She similarly enjoys the control she has as the leader of the BWS and both become her projects to feel that she is in control. It is interesting to note that Tallulah's strategy to heal her emotional pain is through sexual dominance by younger men.

Makholwa describes Tallulah as feeling that the only place she ‘could be handled was sexually’, (107). At the same time, Tallulah fantasises about having sex with ‘Shaka Zulu’, whom she imagines ‘was a warrior who was used to taking charge and giving instructions’ (106). Her private desire to be dominated on by a man raises questions rather than gives answers about her comfortability as a woman in a position of power and dominance. Her secret aspirations of being dominated by a man points to a woman whose view of herself is from a man’s perspective, as suggested by Smith (1987:58). This is in sharp contrast to the persona that she exudes in front of the other BWS members.

While her S&M escapades transcend racial boundaries as seen in one of the scenarios in Benoni sex club (*BWS* 106) where she is the only black woman in the brothel, she still fears her power and finds her voice in expressing her sexuality over men, which is taboo in an African sense. Tallulah hides these episodes from her close friends as she fears judgement. She even contemplates going to a therapist, an action that would bring about her emotional healing but she decides against the idea as it is too risky to speak out about her past. In essence, Tallulah finds her voice through expressing her deep sexual fantasies on financially inferior young men. The secrecy with which she treats these meetings is suggestive of a conservative suburban space where she feels will be judged negatively for engaging in such violent sexual acts should the shenanigans be discovered. The continued silence suggests a not so liberated woman in Tallulah despite the financial power she enjoys as a business woman. Violence in this instance proves to go beyond being physically abused as Mphikeleli’s legacy of abuse lives on through Tallulah’s violent acts towards men.

The active force of violence with which Tallulah and Edna handle the bloody scene of Mzwakhe’s mass murders signifies two women who are as calculating and predatory as any

violent men. Tallulah's orders that documents showing the existence of the society be destroyed at the bloody office park. She further suggests that apart from a few polygraph tests and Mzwakhe's gun be destroyed, leaving all blame pointing to Mzwakhe and none on the widows (2013:273). The scenario demonstrates women who are detached from what society imagines to be women's nurturing traits as they cover up for themselves and lay all the blame on Mzwakhe because for society, it is easy to accept violence coming from men rather than from women. Tallulah and Edna leave the boardroom showing no signs of emotion and start out a new life in Malawi as founders of an all-girls school. In an interview, Makholwa confesses that she loved Tallulah, the matriarch of the Black Widow Society too much to kill her and in so doing the novel seems to be adversely promoting violence against men as the matriarch is not made accountable for her hideous crimes, Binder (2015:7). Although building a school is a seemingly empowering end of the BWS to women, the very existence and subsequent demise of the society is a strange attempt by Makholwa at achieving the elusive gender balancing. One could argue that this attempt by Makholwa may foster attitudes of violence in some women who might be trapped in toxic romantic love relationships.

3.4 Transnationalism and Black Diamonds

Manase (2016) discusses the spending patterns of the early 2000s emergent 'black diamonds' showing how this class is prone to spending large sums of money. Jele and Makholwa's narratives depict another type of 'black diamond' whose rise within the South African space necessitates some exploration. Makholwa's other type of 'black diamond' comes from outside the borders of South Africa. True to the notion of the 'black diamond', most of these well-

traveled men have financial power. Some of them are aided by the so called decadent women to attain the ‘black diamond’ status.

Status and what Manase calls ‘conspicuous consumption’, is the driving force that leads to the black diamonds using women as commodities. While not all the emergent transnational black diamond men have an ‘obsession with the ostentatious expression of wealth’ (Manase 2016:87), most of them move between countries to boost their financial strength so as to better position themselves for taking care of their families. Kwame, Leo, Mzwakhe, Chris and Bheki all represent men who move between national borders in search of wider financial networks to sustain their lifestyles. This has direct impact on the nature of relationships they have with their romantic partners.

Makholwa uses Kwame to counter Tebogo’s rogue masculinity as his character stands to antagonise that of Tebogo’s wayward behaviour. Kwame’s calm and loving personality changes Dikeledi’s initially xenophobic mindset towards foreign people. Dikeledi unlearns her xenophobic mindset and relearns to appreciate diversity through her body with Kwame. Their private relationship demonstrates what Fasselt (2016:26) describes as ‘hospitable bodies’ where the two characters use their bodies as agents to find compatibilities and familiarity with each other. It is no coincidence that Makholwa’s narrative brings Kwame and Dikeledi’s paths together almost every time. For instance, the dance classes, (*The 30th Candle* 150), their rooms opposite each other at a getaway Spa, (212) and that the room that Seipati allows her to use is opposite Kwame’s (274). These are all orchestrated so that Kwame and Dikeledi fall in love as they begin to spend more time together. Makholwa ridicules xenophobic tendencies through Kwame’s exemplary masculinity.

Makholwa's dimension of Kwame and Dikeledi's intimate spatial relations in the foreigner/citizen binary undermines the 'underdog' perception often attached to foreigners thus embraces him as a 'black diamond', not on monetary terms but as an emotional gem who rescues Dikeledi from heart break. In Makholwa's view, the public space of academia that Kwame and Dikeledi belong to opens ways to an even more intimate space where the two share their bodily familiarities to overcome any real or imagined differences causing xenophobic tendencies towards migrants. Kwame reconstructs his masculinity in a transnational space that allows him to express himself intimately as exemplified by his first kiss to Dikeledi while at the resort (2009:213) because he is unfettered by the citizen/foreigner binary nor by inhospitality. Their differences also play as a uniting tool for them as they cook different cultural dishes in order to get acquainted with one another. Thus Kwame is a 'black diamond' in as far as his emotional stability that he offers Dikeledi. The tears that she cries for over a decade with Tebogo are wiped by Kwame's authentic love and respect for her.

On the other hand, the Zimbabwean Leo, in *Happiness*, experiences emasculation because of his dependence on Princess for his upkeep. Leo is in what Fasselt (2016:29) calls a 'guest-host-continuum' relationship. Leo's traditional ability to provide as the man in the relationship is undermined by his "guest" status in South Africa and so Princess becomes the provider in the relationship because she has the means to take care of both of them. She has a well-paying job as a defense lawyer. The gender roles in Leo and Princess' relationship become 'fluid and interchangeable' (Rosello quoted in Fasselt 2016:29) in a negative way because Leo carries the label of being a 'kept man', a situation that is not good for his male ego. Princess speaks in an 'icy and uncompromising' tone when she feels that Leo is overstepping the decorum expected of a guest. He cooks dinner and paints a large life-sized portrait of Princess after an explosive

argument between the two in his quest to seek her forgiveness. Princess subsequently lays down rules for their relationship. Leo's underdog position ironically silences the artist who is credited with lauding the plight of his 'fellow countrymen' in public.

Leo also uses Princess as his anchor in a foreign land, while Princess uses Leo to stabilise her romantic life. Theirs is a symbiotic relationship where Leo's purported refugee status is used against Princess to get whatever he wants. Leo is not a refugee in need, but one who is able to rent a gallery and sell his art. However, he uses his 'refugee status' to defraud Princess who refuses to take heed of her friends' advice. Evidence points to the fact that Leo is not a refugee but a displaced Zimbabwean citizen. For instance, according to Leo, he grew up in an affluent family in Zimbabwe and is a well-traveled artist who got his education in America and Europe (*Happiness* 89). While Leo tells these stories, his voice is unreliable as he is a drug addict who seems to be after Princess' money. Also, Princess' attempt to make a man of Leo exacerbates his drug problem. Princess protects Leo's criminal actions from her friends and provides shelter for him hoping he is sincere. She even falls pregnant by him but still Leo's drug addiction drives him to the dingy places such as 'Hillbrow and Yeoville' to feed his g habit. In this way, Jele shows how Leo exploits Princess' desperate need for romantic love.

On the other hand, Chris, Nandi's *ex-fiancée*, returns to South Africa a chauvinist after abandoning her just before their wedding. As a man who has experienced migration Chris returns more financially fit and waves his money in Nandi's face in the hope that she will take the bait. This chauvinist ploy surprisingly entices Nandi and she accepts Chris' financial restitution and uses it to pay off bills she incurs with Thomas, behind Thomas' back. Nandi's acceptance of Chris' cheque and her using it to pay off a debt emasculates Thomas because Thomas feels she does not respect his position as her future husband. When Thomas moves out of their plush

Fourways apartment, Nandi's world collapses in his absence. Her anchorage in her relationship is in contrast with her unfaithful actions of re-connecting with her *ex-fiancée*. Thus, Nandi is drawn to Chris, because he has financial stability than Thomas. In essence, Chris' character functions as a cautionary example for women who seem to value material things over love. In the end, however, Nandi reunites with Thomas after cutting all ties with Chris, proving that women's views of themselves are sometimes centred on traditional views of marriage.

In conclusion, the three novels illustrate the concept of the black diamonds or black middle class society who are now established in the suburbs and how emancipated women threaten the masculinity of their partners. Spousal infidelity reveals masculinised women and feminised men in the roles that both men and women play. Some women are forced to perform masculine roles because of their decisions to stay single. Women are also depicted as attaining previously masculine positions in the work place, a position that upsets the patriarchy inclined *status quo*. Women's highly sexualised personas challenge their partners' masculinities as these men do not know how to deal with economically emancipated women. Spousal violence takes a subliminal character in the suburbs and there is silence that surrounds gender violence. Finally, the reciprocity of transnationalism shows impact on the masculinities in terms of their spending capacity or lack thereof.

4. Chapter 4

4.1 Illusions of Cape Town and the Variance of Reality in Masculinity Constructions

4.1.1 Introduction

The last two chapters focus mainly on how female authors engage with notions of hegemony in relationships between black middle class men and women, this chapter explores the concept of dislocation and a multiplicity of masculine hegemony in a highly transnationalised 2010 World Cup Cape Town. The chapter draws on Drawe's (2013:187) observation that the perceptions of 'urbanity' can deviously undermine the construction of stable masculinity or masculinities as Cape Town is a precariously beautiful space examining how Mahlangu's main male characters grapple with the environment and how this challenges their constructions of stable masculinities. Mahlangu's presentation of Cape Town as a fluid space frustrates his characters' efforts to attain model masculinity because his novel suggests that model masculinity is linked gainful employment, affirmative action and the presence of a father figure as main vehicles of becoming model men. This chapter therefore argues that Mahlangu's depiction of masculinities embrace the notion of hegemonic and dominant masculinity albeit showing that dominance in his rendition of Cape Town takes on a sinister façade as power lies in unscrupulous hands of business men involved in criminal activities.

In an attempt to bridge the gap between perceptions of model masculinity by Cape Town's standards and their lived experiences, Mahlangu's characters resort to adopting destructive patterns of performing their masculinities thereby creating destructive and violent patterns of

hegemonic masculinity. World Cup Cape Town heightens frustrations of and undermines rather than accommodates the construction of stable masculinities of Mahlangu's characters because they are from outside the city and therefore are not familiar with the patterns of inner city Cape Town. Thus most of Mahlangu's young men as performance of masculinity is linked to different positions and different spaces.

The relationship that Manga and his friends have with Cape Town is chiefly that as university students when their living expenses are catered for by their mothers. The characters henceforth face spatial and '*psychological*' dislocation' (emphasis my own) as Farber (2009:1) observes, after completing formal education. The young men are challenged by their statuses as outsiders and are totally unprepared for the precarity of Cape Town when they occupy positions of responsibility since they associate the city with 'beautiful beaches and landscapes and a relaxed way of life that is comparable to European standards' Drawe (2013: 187).

All the links that Mahlangu's novel depicts as producing model masculinities are missing for Mahlangu's protagonists hence an attempt to find alternatives is a recurrent theme surrounding these characters. Finding and emulating a model masculinity appears to be futile as the novel is set at a time when South Africa is to host the Federation International de Football Association (FIFA) World Cup tournament, a characteristic that suggests heightened consumerism and movement as Cape Town is one of the host cities to some of the soccer games that are to take place. This suggests an increased circulation of goods, human traffic and information within and around Cape Town, undermining an attempt by Mahlangu's characters to establish stable masculinities through contacts and links for permanent and gainful employment that they view as a propensity of hegemonic masculinity.

Penumbra is a novel about three young male friends who live and work in Cape Town although they all hail from other places within South Africa as well as from Zimbabwe. These young men are out to make money and a name for themselves post-graduation with different degrees. Mangaliso Zolo, a BCom graduate from the University of Cape Town (UCT) and Nhlakanipho are from King William's Town in the Eastern Cape and Tongai, a Master of Arts student in African Studies at (UCT) hails from Harare in the neighbouring Zimbabwe. From the onset, Mangaliso struggles with psychological and mental instability which is resultant from his intake of drugs, lack of an ordered structure for himself and his self-induced unemployment which all lead to failure to develop a stable masculine identity when he moves from the Eastern Cape. Mangaliso, like his two friends Nhlakanipho and Tongai, is brought up in a single mother headed household, who does not have much of a relationship with the boy, subsequently sending the little boy to be brought up by his maternal grandmother in a little town in King William's Town. Manga is only kin to his father through photographs and memory of his physical abuse on occasional visits he paid to his paternal grandmother in Soweto as a young boy. Similarly, Tongai suffers abuse from his estranged father while living with his mother as a young boy. Like Manga, Tongai's masculinity crisis derives from the fact that he is a product of a broken family caused by his family's immigration from Zimbabwe to relocate in Cape Town after their home country's political and economic demise. While the reader is introduced to an alcoholic Tongai who juggles between studies, internship and his pursuit of writing and arts offered by Cape Town's bohemian lifestyle, his childhood background is portrayed as a normal happy childhood in Harare. Nhlakanipho, on the other hand is a childhood friend of Manga's and shares the same mother with his brother Mpumelelo who is fathered by another man. Nhlakanipho centres his masculinity on his personal academic achievements and that his self-motivation gets him through

school and university. He and Mangaliso attend the same schools in the small town of King William's Town growing up. Placing value and importance on his education disappoints Nhlakanipho as he constantly makes reference to how his brother's thug friend, Mfundo, is able to make a living out of criminal activities and seems far much better than any of the graduate population. Thus, he and his band of friends join Nhlakanipho as petty thieves and drug runners to earn extra cash to cushion themselves from a perceived poverty in the city.

4.2 Fragmented Childhoods: Absent Fathers and Single Mothers in Fatherhood Positions

The absence of father figures and assumption of a double role by single mothers gives character to all Mahlangu's main protagonists when taking position in Cape Town. *Penumbra* foregrounds the lack of father figures as one of the major factor contributing to none hegemonic masculinities, at least as far as responsible traits of masculinity are concerned. Mahlangu's text measures hegemony through violent ways of earning power, in the broken system generated by Cape Town's imbalances. Model masculinity is tied to the figure of the father as none of Mahlangu's major characters have a healthy relationship with their fathers, thus Mahlangu's female characters are depicted as facing pressures of playing a double role in an attempt to assist the young men to develop responsible masculinity, presented by the minor characters who have present and active father figures. This view undermines and frustrates the role of single women in the construction of responsible men and perpetrates stereotypes as failure in the young men's stable identities is attached to single motherhood.

Mahlangu's text foregrounds the presence or lack thereof of the father figure to account for the depiction of unstable and irresponsible young protagonists. Mothers and/or grandmothers assume responsibility of raising young boys into men, with dire consequences. It is clear in Mahlangu's depictions of Manga, Nhlakanipho and Tongai's masculinities that men brought up in a single mother headed household suffer the same the fate of failing to become responsible citizens. Coupled with exposure to the drug culture of Cape Town, the young men appear to be doomed. However, Manga and his gang of friends find alternative masculine figures that are representative of hegemony, albeit in a criminal way.

In the absence of a biological father in his life, Manga looks for and finds a role model in Ndlela's father to fill the void of fatherlessness he experiences. Mangaliso experiences what Morrell and Ritcher (2004:36) call a 'social father' in looking up to Ndlela's father who is not his biological father. However, Ndlela's father in himself is not a perfect role model for Mangaliso as he shows instability in that he straddles between Christianity and African tradition. Ndlela's father's fragmented model of masculinity later haunts Mangaliso as he tries and fails to use religion to stabilise his masculinity in Cape Town. At that time, using religion is too late to save Manga from the powerful undercurrents of Cape Town. . Mahlangu laments the lack of strong masculine figures that would help instill strong values that can sustain young men in any environment as seen in Mangaliso's total degeneration of character when he settles in Cape Town.

Additionally, Mahlangu's novel places the father role at the helm of constructing a stable identity by placing male guardians for the young men as they seek to stabilise themselves after graduating from varsity. Manga's mother tasks her friend bhuti Paul to assist Manga to stabilise himself in Cape Town as she remains in King Williams Town. However, Paul's intervention appears to frustrate rather than assist Manga's attempt to develop a stable Christian identity as

their views of life clash. Manga's Black Consciousness approach to his life stands to contrast Paul's staunch Christian views resulting in an awkward relationship between the two characters. Ultimately the effort put by Manga's mother is undermined by Manga's decision to seek alternative ways of becoming a man, exposing in the process the undervalued nature paid to female efforts in positively contributing to producing a responsible young man. Thus, Mahlangu's depiction of the futility of Manga's mother's efforts in assisting her son become a man in her absence through soliciting Bhuti Paul's expertise, undermines her motherhood role.

Likewise, Tongai's mother's efforts are depicted as affecting Tongai's judgements, despite the fact that every Sunday the two eat lunch together. Her motherly role does nothing to affect and instill value in Tongai's character, thus Mahlangu's representation of her role undermines the role she plays as both a mother and father figure to Tongai. This has adverse connotations to the picture of women in bringing up responsible young men. Mahlangu's narrative undermines the efforts of single mothers from this view point, frustrating his efforts of painting positive pictures of females in the process.

Tongai on the other hand, is certain of the type of man he does not want to be; a violent, condescending and drunkard; but he is confronted by the lack of a good model on which to build his masculinity. Tongai cuts all communication with his grandmother because she cautions him against being like his irresponsible father. In retaliation, he stops communicating with her because he is the exact replica of his father's model, a situation he is ashamed of. Tongai's desperate action of cutting all communication with his grandmother, points to desperate feelings of self-hate, that drives him further into alcohol abuse to escape the reality of having failed to amount to a respectable masculinity he aspired to be prior to moving to Cape Town.

Nhlakanipho's experience of fatherlessness is exacerbated by the lack of a supporting family structure from his immediate family as he relies on himself to forge a stable masculinity. His older brother Mpumelelo is not a role model since he underperforms in all aspects. Nhlakanipho complains to Manga that Mpumelelo's presence in his life is damaging to his masculinity. He doubts if he would have liked Mpumelelo were they not brothers. To add, his township background and his 'Model C' education in a predominantly white school, weakens rather than prepares him for the harsh realities of Cape Town. He is unable to firmly stand for either side leaving him exposed to the harshness of Cape Town's precarity. This suggests that Nhlakanipho is doubly incapacitated as he does not fit the township prototype of masculinity neither does he fit into the 'Model C' prototype masculinity which is characterised by speaking fluent English according to Mangaliso (100) leaves him with a fragmented notions of masculinity as shown by his 'hogging beers and cigarettes' and being a nuisance in Manga's view (64).

On the other end of the spectrum, characters like Ndlela and Ntaba are depicted as responsible young men because they have present and active father figures guiding or supporting them into manhood. Tongai's mother is depicted as putting no effort towards the development of her son, in fact she is depicted as a drunk who solicits the services of different men in front of Tongai when he is still a teenager. However, Tongai relies on her, more than he relates to his father. Tongai's relationship with his mother appears to enhance his drinking habit and thus his character resembles that of his father. In essence, like in Manga's case, Mahlangu's novel discredits the efforts that the single mothers put in raising responsible young men.

As mentioned above, Mahlangu's novel portrays single mother and/or guardian relationship as a contributory factor in the young men's failure to formulate stable masculinities. The single mother role taken by all of Mahlangu's young men's mothers suggests that a lack of male role

models causes fragmented ideologies of their definitions of masculinity later in Cape Town, catapulting them in a confusion of what it means to be a man. In Mangaliso's case, the absence of both his mother and father in the early stages of his development causes a ruptured relationship between mother and son, and Manga erroneously attaches his lack of respect for women to the ruptured relationship with his mother. Manga's preference of easy girls as opposed to the classy ladies is a reflection of deep set self-abating tendencies and appears to have nothing to do with the female characters he engages with.

Manga and Tongai are brought up by their single mothers. However, Manga's mother is more financially able to single handedly take care of Manga whereas Tongai's mother is financially challenged. Manga's mother's financial capabilities disempower Manga as he takes advantage of the finances his mother gives him just because of his knowledge that she provides for him. The financial assistance he gets from his mother affords Manga the luxury of leaving Trilce with no alternative plan of earning money. His mother eventually takes him back to King William's Town. Mahlangu seems to be applauding the efforts of the single mothers but at the same time castigating financial over compensation for the lack of presence in the early development of a child's life, as seen in Mangaliso case. In contrast, Tongai has to sustain himself because of his mother's financial instability and irresponsibility as she is an alcoholic. Tongai supports himself through taking up an internship position while studying for his Masters in African Studies part time. While Tongai's alcoholism shows futility in his attempts at formulating a stable masculinity, his efforts in getting a job seem to be a positive move at trying to develop stability. Tongai quips that he has to 'take it like a nigger' (106) in order to survive in Cape Town as he faces challenges in his quest to make a life for himself.

Furthermore, Tongai's ambivalent relationship with alcohol points to a deep seated confusion of what is expected of him as a man not only by his immediate surrounding community but by the community back in Zimbabwe. This extended community destabilises Tongai as he displays confusion as to which community he wishes to belong to. While he aspires to have a respectable girlfriend, like his friend Ntaba, Tongai is drawn to his equally alcoholic girlfriend of whom he is ashamed. The shame that Tongai expresses towards Doris, mirrors the fact her alcoholic behavior is similar to that exhibited by Tongai's mother, whom Manga states: 'Tongai says his mother loves him unconditionally' (106). In this view, the irony of Tongai being drawn to a character similar to that of his mother and his shame towards her, speaks of Tongai's centred problem of desperately aspiring to be seen as a stable man but the reality points to his instability. While Tongai has no choice but to love his mother, he chooses to continue with his romance although he is ashamed of being seen with her in public.

4.3 Cape Town: A place of Precarious Beauty and Paradoxes

The precarious beauty of Cape Town as depicted by Mahlangu, creates an alienating environment towards the young men who all are not familiar with the Western Cape. Mangaliso and Nhlakanipho spend their childhoods in the small town of King William's Town in the Eastern Cape while Tongai hails from Harare, in Zimbabwe. On the one hand, Mangaliso and Nhlakanipho's childhood are spent in a largely intimate environment where they are connected to power sources, while on the other hand the city of Cape Town presents a tough ground for the young men since none of them have powerful sources to help them to secure well-paying jobs. The city of Cape Town presents an entanglement of challenges to the young men who are all on a quest to become respectable and model men, however their definitions of being a model

masculinity clashes with their lived experiences leading to disillusionment. Compared to Mzilikazi's experience of Cape Town, in *Men of the South*, who has connections in Cape Town and is set up for a secure job in a few weeks, Manga, Nhlakanipho and Tongai have no real connections in Cape Town to help them secure well-paying jobs in order to attain the status they sought to portray, driving the young men to turn to criminal activities and violence to attain some form of hegemonic recognition. They opt to align their hegemony to a systematised and criminal type of masculinity to cope with the harsh conditions they experience in Cape Town.

Connections to people in powerful positions in the economic sector are depicted to be the sole indicator that aide in the development of stable masculinity in the young men because stability, according to Manga and his group of friends, is measured by a stable job. For instance, Manga measures his worth by the kind of job he wants, an artistic type of job, like writing but is forced to do finance because it appears to him to have better salary, however the job that he is employed to do at Trilce is, according to him, a waste of time. Tongai too, does not formulate any real connections with people in positions of power in Cape Town and is therefore relegated to manual labour as an intern at an advertising company. Essentially, Manga and Tongai's views of economic power are tied to the notion of earning big salaries. While Manga does not want to work in a graduate program as a foundation for a better paying job, Tongai is able to 'stick it out' and works as a 'skivvy' as the rich BEE accountant suggests in Manga's interview, (77).

Tongai's own efforts are thwarted by the lack of supporting structures in positions of power, unlike his friend Ntaba, whose father is a 'minister in the government', (164), as pointed out by Kgotso, Tongai's failure to build a model masculine identity is as a result of not having solid connections in Cape Town. Tongai's only connections in Cape Town are not beneficial in a meaningful and beneficial way to him, thus he fails to reach his potential, as a hard working

young man. Ntaba who does not have connections in Cape Town that could aid Tongai attain hegemony the expected way relocates to Johannesburg where he is better positioned and connected after completing his studied at UCT. Hence Cape Town is depicted as being a harsh environment, despite the perceived tranquility by people from outside Cape Town.

Structural, cultural and social differences undermine the development of Mahlangu's characters as all of his young male protagonists are inherently 'outsiders'. From the onset of the novel, Cape Town is depicted as a Bohemian space that owes much of its history to transnational foundations as it is a sea point and hub of activity that both celebrates and abhors 'sameness and difference' in 'converging and diverging' activities, 'sutured in a frontier', as observed by De Kock (2009:277) in his assessment of the city. De Kock's use of the term 'sutured frontier' foregrounds paradoxes such as the rich and poor classes, black and white people, and educated/uneducated binaries as demonstrable imperatives dividing Cape Town. In fact, Mahlangu uses the failure to develop stable masculinities as a yardstick to measure the city's seemingly progressive status and challenges the popular view of Cape Town as a city of 'beautiful beaches and landscapes' and 'a relaxed way of life' Drawe (2013:187). Hegemonies are therefore exerted amongst the young men, challenging an aspired peaceful engagement with one another, hence their inhabitants are marred with different types of domination against each other, in addition to the dominating forces in the work space .

The variance between the illusion of Cape Town and the lived reality of Mahlangu's young protagonists brings individual culture shock that leaves the young men unable to connect with Cape Town. A general assessment of all Mahlangu's young men suggests that none of them reaches their personal goals to set to achieve in Cape Town and as a result they resort to different reactionary patterns of survival. Compared with their peers who reside in Johannesburg, the

failure of these characters is a reflection of symptoms of a combination of a precarious nature and that of individual failure to renegotiate their perceived views of Cape Town and their lived social and economic realities. The fact that their realities counter their illusions about Cape Town, most of Mahlangu's young men find themselves trapped in dead end jobs suffering from extreme isolation.

While Cape Town is popularly portrayed as a city of 'beautiful beaches and a relaxed way of life,' Drawe (2013:187), the depiction of prisons, mental asylums and pathetic public hospitals is suggestive of Cape Town's underbelly, where criminal activity, 'psychological dislocations' and sickness coexist with beauty in the space of Cape Town. The salience of these institutions alongside privately owned establishments in Mahlangu's text predicates a serious malignancy in the seemingly well-established city not immediately visible to an outsider. The beautiful scenery of Cape Town is juxtaposed with the degraded prison life that some characters experience. Mahlangu's text mocks this prison system as it seems to fail to regulate crime and instead promotes criminal activity by the involvement of officials in the corruption at these institutions. For instance, Mfundo, a hardened criminal spends a few weeks in Pollsmoor for attacking his girlfriend Nokuzola (141) and causing her grievous bodily harm. Despite the seriousness of Mfundo's crime he is given a mere proverbial slap on the wrist and let out. Through this incident, Mahlangu shows that the prison system undermines its purpose and efforts of a safe environment for its citizens, also shown is how violence against women is perpetrated by judicial and prison systems.

Mahlangu depicts Cape Town's inner city's deteriorating infrastructure as a marker of difference that instigates disillusionment in Mangaliso. Cape Town is a space that has pronounced differences between the rich and poor classes. Places like Observatory are accentuated by

‘Victorian’ structures with ‘porches and pillars’, (57), contrastingly, Century City is an upmarket suburb with villas and complexes (160). Claremont is spaciouly adorned with shops such as Claremont BMW dealership and Edgars whereas Rondebosch is depicted as abound with ‘shops stacked next to each other: Pick n Pay, Wimpy, the chemist,’ (9, 10), along the road Manga witnesses ‘tall white block of flats, Becket’s place, in Newlands’ (9). On the other hand, Kenilworth is laden with ‘blocks of flats’ that are grey because of the many trees on the pavement which are teeming with prostitutes who tease traffic (12). Yet again, shacks are a normal sight in Gugulethu and Heideveld (88) as illegal substructures to house the influx of the people who reside there (85). These instances demonstrate the differences in class where the rich occupy the ‘Victorian’ style buildings and ‘villas’ whereas the poor occupy ‘shacks’ while the lower middle class and the poor occupy ‘flats’. These are the differences that Mangaliso only fully appreciates after living in and experiencing Cape Town firsthand.

Penumbra showcases townships like Langa, where Noziqhamo hails from, (68) to display inconsistencies of Cape Town’s ‘urbanity’ by capturing the daily struggles of people who hail from Langa. While there are a few progressive individuals who come from Langa, like Mfundo’s rich BEE dad (100), the bulk of the people from the place struggle to make a decent living. This fact is suggested by Noziqhamo’s daily mode of transportation; a train; to and from her catering job to cut back on expenses so as to sustain both herself and her son (73). The text insinuates that Mfundo’s conglomerate of card scheme swindlers; live in Langa and work in retail (77) as a criminal ploy to earn extra cash derived from their illicit act of credit card scamming. Their reliance on Mfundo’s criminal scheme for extra cash is a reflection of both a low income in the retail sector and a way of trying to assimilate into urban culture. This captures a disparity between the rich represented by retail owners and the poor represented by the unsatisfied retail

workers. Mahlangu's text in this view, counters the beautiful picture that is painted by many narratives about Cape Town as a city of burgeoning industry. Clearly, Mahlangu's text cautions against the romanticisation of Cape Town as a city of tranquility and a relaxed atmosphere as demonstrated by the organised crime of credit card schemes.

Furthermore, Mahlangu's text uses inter town comparisons between urban Cape Town and spaces like King William's Town to account for the contingencies that lead to the young men's inability to formulate stable masculinities on taking up residence in the city. King William's Town is depicted as a far more stable space than Cape Town in terms of lifestyles and living conditions. Unlike Cape Town townships of Gugulethu that are full of shacks, the RDP houses have low fences and neat lawns (49). Although the houses on Manga's street are dilapidated, the streets are 'quiet and hauntingly still' (49), a quality that ironically frustrates Mangaliso. Mahlangu's depiction of this space resembles an upper class neighbourhood where neighbours are seemingly cold to one another in the way they conduct their individual business. Mangaliso states: 'We know our neighbours only by name; there is no other connection' (49). This is suggestive of a quiet and relaxed way of life alluded to by Drawe, on explaining the misconceptions about Cape Town.

Cape Town's characteristic nature of precarious beauty and culturally hybrid nature derived from methods of suturation over a long time as De Kock (2009:266) purports, presents a cultural hegemony that stands as a barrier to Manga and his friends' being gainfully employed. This pattern of cultural hegemony is layered with inter and intra cultural masculine hegemony that results in the increased disillusionment suffered by the young men. The 'Coloureds' as Mangaliso states, are depicted as fervently gaining the most out of the precarious nature of the Cape Town. The permanent difference that thwarts efforts of responsible citizenry in Manga and

his friends is alluded to by De Kock who observes the suppression of some cultures in his argument about cultural heterogeneity as a peculiar marker of permanent difference in the South African context (2009:266). This is demonstrated by Mahlangu's text which portrays a hegemonic stance of some cultures over others.

Mahlangu's use of the hospital mocks how undermines the well-being of the citizens of Cape Town in the process promoting the ostracisation of both men and women. When Manga gets an ear infection that needs to be attended to urgently, he has to endure a lengthy period of time waiting for a doctor to attend to him. Mangaliso is only able to see the doctor at nine in the evening when he has been waiting from morning. The trainee doctor who eventually examines Manga simply refers him to an ear specialist (91). At Groote Schuur, Manga has to wait a grueling five hours to see the ear specialist, after which he discovers the administrators lose his file (92). Mangaliso is sent on 'a run around for close to two hours' (92) after which he abandons the attempt of seeing the doctor. This mapping of the tedious errands meant for the hospital staff, speaks of a failing system that does not have the people's interests as a priority but is caught up in the spirit of consumerism in Cape Town. Since Mangaliso cannot afford medical aid he is subjected to dehumanising conditions faced by the poor people in Cape Town.

Furthermore, Mahlangu use of the mental institution to question the issue of madness centres on the issue of a hegemonic divide. The mental asylum holds the right to certify madness thereby creating a class structure between the rich and the poor. On the two occasions that Mangaliso is taken to the mental asylum, he is not able to demonstrate beyond a doubt that he is mentally sound and sane. His madness is a clear case of cocaine abuse, which one doctor acknowledges is as a result of Manga's choice of quitting his job and the subsequent drug dependence. The medication he is induced with is the cause of his increased lack of awareness as he states at one

point that he is only aware of the passing days through his mother's change of clothes when she visits him. Manga's mother's challenge to the doctor's prognosis who insists on certifying Mangaliso as a mad person is a revelation of the corrupt nature of the mental asylum as the mother is financially able to release Manga from the institution. This is not the same for other patients who are poor and cannot afford to release their relatives from the same institution.

Mahlangu's young masculinities are caught up in the culture of constant movement and transitions in the inner city Cape Town that affect them personally, a practice that is intrusive to their efforts to stabilise their masculinities through responsible actions. These transitions are both on a personal level as well as a geo-national level, so the young men are all caught up in the violent cyclic nature of Cape Town and are unable to negotiate their masculinities into ideally model men. Both Mangaliso and Tongai are depicted as constantly moving between suburbs in search of a comfortable space from which they may be able to perform better roles compared to their current depictions. For instance, Manga moves houses twice in Vrendehoek (68), finally opting to move in with Tongai. Tongai moves between his mother's place and a rental place in Newlands before he moves in with Manga in Kenilworth (103). Train stations, taxi ranks and airports are also symbolic sights of movement captured by Mahlangu's text that sets the fast pace in Cape Town resulting in the characteristic motionary feel to the city. This is in sharp contrast with movement in other smaller spaces such as King William's Town where a calmer depiction of life is captured. This constant motion is debilitating to the attempts made by these two young men to adjust to the fast pace of life in Cape Town.

In addition, the prevalence of 'gigs' and book fairs that the young men attempt to use as development and/or coping mechanisms for constructing their masculinities do not appeal to some of the young men as these do not relate to their specific tastes and most of these

engagements cost money. For instance, it is ironic that the Hip hop gigs that Manga attends in Gugulethu should be taking place there as Gugulethu is largely a shanty town. Hip Hop events are a place that showcases expensive clothing like ‘skater tackies, complex headgear’ and joint smocking concerts (85), or the gigs end in violence where ‘drunkards hijack the microphone’ (169). Contrasted to the Cape Town Book Fair (142) where Tongai who is an avid book reviewer, finds that the environment at the book fairs represent a middle class life that he (Tongai) aspires to lead. Likewise, the Standard Bank National Youth Jazz Festival (107), leaves Manga angry at what he thinks is a misrepresentation of art, he feels that the event represents a superfluous ‘European crowd’ (108). Tongai on the other hand, is left elated and motivated by the same event. Despite the fact that these events show the different tastes of Manga and Tongai respectively, Mahlangu ‘gigs’ and book fairs to show the futility of these events as these do not address bread and butter issues that impede on these young men’s construction of stable masculinities, showing that without connections to the people who are economically empowered is detrimental to the development of these protagonists.

Furthermore, Mahlangu also magnifies the ubiquitous night club culture and beer places such as Mzoli’s place as sights that increase vulnerabilities in the quest to develop stable behaviours in masculinities. The availability and choice to take harmful drugs such as cocaine and dagga in the night scene is a coping mechanism to their failed attempts to attain hegemony through getting blue-collar jobs and increases the errant behaviour of the young men. The ubiquity of night clubs, catering for all classes of people, ranging from the scenic and classic clubs like Capello (126) catering for the financially savvy to run down ‘dingy spots owned by Nigerians’ (119) and taverns like the Edge (156) catering for those of humble incomes mostly UCT students (156), provides a wide choice to spend earnings depending on the time of the month. Hence, spending

patterns vary in between the months with reckless spending at the end of the month and modest spending when the cash runs low. Mahlangu shows that the young men are thrown into a choice between devils because any choice that they make seems to be one that undermines their individual quests to develop stable masculinities. This is how Cape Town milks the potential out of the initially hopeful graduands who turn to despondent and disgruntled workers.

Mahlangu's narrative foregrounds race as a pointer to young black men's dislocation in Cape Town suggesting that there are women who by their race are financially stronger. For instance, when Mangaliso takes up shared residence with Chantel, who is a former business science student at UCT herself, Mangaliso feels covetous of her 'effortless' lifestyle as she seems to be progressive financially and socially because she is white. 'This place has never felt like home. I am constantly uncomfortable. I feel uneasy when Chantel walks in from work'. Comparing his lifestyle with that of Chantel, Mangaliso is aware of the gap that exists between their lifestyles which is propagated by their different race as Chantel is a white woman. The text suggests that opportunities are still afforded to white people as opposed to black people as Chantel drives a 'grey Corsa' whereas Manga commutes in public transportation with 'mostly black women who work in Vrendehoek' (75). This glaring inequality speaks to the reality and inequality of race in contemporary space of modern day Vrendehoek, a condition that advantages Chantel over Manga and the 'black women' he commutes with.

4.4 ‘A Working Man’s World’: Dislocations, Relocations and Displacements of the Foreign Figure in Cape Town

As already alluded to above, Mahlangu’s text engages with the element of transnationality and the how this challenges the foreign figure in attempting to create grounded masculinity. The constant motion and element of the transnational migrant intersecting with the precarious cosmopolitan urban environment reveals different strategies used by migrant characters in order to cope in the new space of habitation. In turn, the spaces of occupation partly determine the type of masculinities constructed within these spaces. While all of Mahlangu’s characters living in Cape Town exhibit a degree of foreignness to the space, there are other characters foreign in other spaces such as Ntaba and Ndlela in Johannesburg. Juxtaposing Johannesburg and Cape Town, as portrayed by Mahlangu, and also drawing parallels between the characters from those spaces, reveals that the conditions they live in are either debilitating or empowering to their attempts at constructing stable masculinities.

Tongai is the chief representation of the foreign figure used by Mahlangu to think through challenges of migrancy and the burdens of constructing masculinity within a socially mobile and increasingly competitive black middle class society in Cape Town’s economy characterised by high levels of unemployment. Tongai is a young migrant who now resides in Cape Town having been economically dislocated from his home country, Zimbabwe. His are challenges that point to double dislocations in his attempt to adapt to Cape Town’s unpredictability thus formulating an unstable masculine identity.

While the narrative does not clearly show at what point Tongai moves to Cape Town, it is clear that he moves to the neighbouring South Africa because of the economic problems in his country of origin to seek a better life as seen in his pursuit of studies and employment. Mangaliso and Kgotso do not understand how Tongai and Ntaba are friends when Ntaba's father is a politician in 'Mugabe's government' (165). However, Tongai says he and Ntaba 'agree to disagree' as Ntaba is pro 'Mugabe's government' and argues that 'all is well with democracy in Zimbabwe' (165). Tongai's political differences with Ntaba however do not deter their friendship as advocated by Mangaliso as he says; '*That's very strange ... That's like me chilling having drinks with a member of the IFP,*' I said surprised" (164 emphasis my own). Tongai demonstrates that while he may not agree and condone the 'rigging of elections in Zimbabwe', his migration while also political, it is largely for better living conditions, hence he is able to sustain his friendship with the son of a minister in the 'government of Mugabe', (165).

According to McGregor and Pasura, (2014:2), the growth of Zimbabwe's economy hinges on migrants like Tongai who are forcibly expatriated to other countries from their home country Zimbabwe, so migrants essentially an important component of South Africa's economic progress. These writers observe that 'diasporic communities are imbricated with political-economic, developmental, and religious change in the homeland', (2014:1). However, Tongai fails to live up to the expectation of those in his homeland. As a result, Tongai stops talking to his grandmother because he feels he does not measure up as a 'man' as his behaviour is compared to that of his father.

Tongai is catapulted into confusion as he discovers he is unprepared to cope in the fast paced environment presented by Cape Town's life, especially the night life in clubs which results in a re-established struggle from the time he was doing his secondary school education in Zimbabwe.

Tongai's alcoholism is diagnosed by a psychologist, as a medical condition while still an undergraduate student at UCT (120). His failure to address the condition further throws him into abuse of alcohol. However, on a number of occasions he tries to remedy his drinking problem to no avail. Mangaliso gives account of how Tongai has struggled with finishing his master's thesis for three years because of his abuse of the alcohol, (107), and how on another occasion Tongai gives up on his attempt at sobriety after two weeks. Tongai problem with alcohol abuse is exacerbated by the ubiquity of clubs and spaces that sell alcoholic beverages, increasing his chances of failing to reconstruct a stable masculinity.

Tongai is what Dahinden (2016:53) calls a 'transnational mobile' individual and this thwarts his efforts of constructing a stable masculinity. Dahinden observes that a 'transnational mobile' is a migrant characterised by circulatory movement where the migrant is always on a constant move. Tongai constantly moves places between his mother's flat, Kgotso's place and finally settling in with Manga for a while until Manga's break down which forces him to move again. This constant movement prevents Tongai's from finding stability in Cape Town. Tongai is challenged by the internal motion that characterises Cape Town's underbelly when trying to renegotiate his way between different spaces that he inhabits.

In addition, Tongai follows an Americanised way of life to try and ground his life. His choice of dress, the American radio stations he listens to and his language, all capture Tongai's inclination to the American way of life. His vision of an American type of life is met by a harsh reality of a competitive environment that is characteristic of Cape Town's job market hence he is unable to reconcile his dream to his reality. This causes him problems in his quest to develop a stable masculinity. Tongai borrows money from Manga on a number of occasions showing that he is caught up in a life where he lives beyond his means and tries to supplement by cross-borrowing

from his friends. Tongai's realises that he lives a precarious life of spending cash when he is a just a struggling student and intern. This position leaves him exposed to falling into the cyclic trap of borrowing money and stealing.

Mahlangu's novel is also set at a time when Cape Town and the whole of South Africa is in the euphoria of preparing for the 2010 FIFA Soccer World Cup, the first ever such event to be held on the African continent. In negotiating his life within this Soccer World Cup charged environment, Tongai is armed with the false hope and bravado as he seeks to develop a stable masculinity. Tongai does this by attending events such as the 'Standard Bank National Youth Jazz Festival' (107) and Book Fairs where he listens to scholars he views as accomplished like Achille Mbembe. However, Tongai's reality shows that the atmosphere created by the city's embrace of the World Cup is misleading as indicated by his dislocation and failure to live up to his mental expectation. According to Manga, Tongai listens to a depressing American program called 'This American Life' (108) which chronicles the bland life of Americans working in dead end jobs. Again, Tongai uses the constant visits to his mother's house to tap from his mother's love after binge drinking on weekends to try and grapple with the realisation that his mental perception of himself living in Cape Town and his lived reality of struggle are vastly different.

Furthermore, Tongai's experience displays what Jensen (2013:5) calls a 'socio-spatio-temporal process' where 'mobile lifescapes *from above*' intersect with mobile engagements and interactions *from below*' in that the falsity of his perceived achievements in attending the events such as 'petty-bourgeois shit' (108: own emphasis). What he aspires to be does not match his lived experience of failed attempts to quit drinking and his failure to complete his master's thesis on time. Jensen believes that 'lifescapes' are the experiences of an individual where elements that a character has no control over are intersected with those elements that are in the

individual's control as he negotiates his life in a given space. Thus Tongai experiences a gap between his perceptions of Cape Town and the reality that he lives in Cape Town. The trinary dimension of Tongai's experience in the socio-spatio-temporal process debilitates his lived experience and more so his attempt at recreating himself under the conditions of the Soccer World Cup fever in an already fast paced Cape Town environment. In this regard, Mahlangu's text reveals a trinary challenge between spaces, society; diasporic in Tongai's case and temporal in the negotiation of a migrant's life in a super charged environment.

Tongai tries to deal with his confused sense of masculinity in a number of ways that seem to undermine his efforts the more he engages in these practices. For instance, Tongai solicits the services of a life coach who tries to help him stabilise his life. Tongai asks Mangaliso to vacate their apartment for an hour so as to engage with the life coach to gain insights onto his life, (137). Tongai seems to solicit the services of a life coach to address issues of financial growth rather than life itself. At one point he chants a mantra while in the shower: 'No one likes an unsuccessful person, even the unsuccessful' (138) and spends the whole afternoon walking barefoot while waiting to consult with his life coach. His need for financial assistance is misplaced as the life lessons he is gaining from the barefooted 'life coach' are clearly spiritual whereas he seeks financial success and not spiritual guidance from his life coach. The dreadlocked barefooted Zimbabwean woman tries to assist Tongai with life advice but Tongai later abandons the practice as he feels it does not help him and he subsequently tries using fasting and religious practices instead (167).

Similarly, Tongai uses fasting as a way of trying to stabilise his masculinity and to cope against the precarity and fast pace of his life in Cape Town. Mangaliso observes a 'big sheet of paper with 'fast for restoration' written on it' in Tongai's room (166). Tongai and Mangaliso both use

fasting to try and make sense of the injustices suffered by humanity. They fast for the victims of xenophobia, (166) and for the children who die in a road accident (167). Tongai's position as a black foreigner instills a sense of fear and he uses religion to try and remedy the fear against the unpredictable space of Cape Town.

Tongai is also caught between, on the one hand, his Shona culture that promotes financial stability in a man dictating that such a man be able to take care of himself, marry a respectable woman and take care of his extended family as seen in the character of Ntaba (158) whom he juxtaposes with himself, and on the other hand, the new Bohemian culture he is exposed to in Cape Town. Tongai fails to reconcile the man that he is expected to be, as detected by his Shona culture epitomised by his grandmother's disappointment in him, and the man he actually is while in Cape Town; an uncontrollable drunkard and dreamer. This leaves him with a conflicted idea of what is expected of him as "a man" in what McGregor and Pasura (2014:1) call a 'conflict diaspora', a place within which they purport migrants face a unique experience when trying to form new identities. Tongai is psychologically unprepared to deal with the psychological implications of a space laden with alcoholic beverages, so he recreates his masculinity around alcohol, a decision that thwarts any effort of stability in his masculinity.

Mahlangu's novel ridicules Mangaliso's sense of entitlement as opposed to Tongai's migrant existence which is bereft of the privileges that Manga enjoys. For example, Manga and Tongai are both tied up in dead end jobs. Tongai sticks it out as an intern, working on the weekends sometimes, while Manga chooses to quit his job for no reason embarking on a self-destructing journey of drugs (136). Mangaliso's wish to be employed by BEE entrepreneurs does not come to fruition as one of the partners points out the fact that Mangaliso needs to cultivate patience by sticking it out as a 'skivvy', (77) at Trilce. Mahlangu makes a mockery of this situation as

Tongai chooses to deal with a similar predicament by what Mangaliso describes as ‘cursing like a sailor’ and then going back to work at the advertising agency he works for. In this sense, Mahlangu satirizes Manga’s sense of entitlement by showing that his reasons for quitting his job are absurd.

Both are plagued and tormented by the absence of their fathers in their lives as captured by poems they compose about their fathers. Manga composes ‘Paternal Transmission’ while Tongai composes ‘Papa was never a preacher man’ (112) both highlighting the void left by the absence of fathers in their lives. Both Manga and Tongai abuse substance in an apparent attempt to fill the void of being raised by their single mothers. However, Tongai’s position is not privileged like Manga’s position, as he only has his mother as a sole anchor. Tongai has to find his own way in the city, rather than connect with any family members.

Mahlangu also uses characters from other spaces, such as Ntaba and Ndlela who live in Johannesburg, in a way that valorises comparisons that encourage or discourage stability in the creation of masculinities by young men who live either in Cape Town or Johannesburg. Ndlela and Ntaba live in Johannesburg and Ndlela hails from King William’s Town while Ntaba is a Zimbabwean who studies in Cape Town and later moves to Johannesburg. Ndlela is depicted as an authority figure that Manga looks up to yet they are the same age. This is because Ndlela demonstrates more stability in how he handles himself. This may be attributed to the fact that Ndlela is resident in Johannesburg where progress and stability for young seem to prevail as compared to the space of Cape Town. On one occasion, Manga asks for Ndlela’s financial help when he breaks a window at his flat and is required by the body corporate to fix it, (123) pointing to the fact that Ndlela is more financially stable than him.

Ndlela's depiction as an authoritative voice over Mangaliso suggests that Johannesburg is a more enabling environment for the development of stable masculinities by black young people than Cape Town. When Ndlela visits Cape Town, his presence uplifts and challenges Mangaliso who exhibits positive behaviour throughout Ndlela's visit. Manga becomes Ndlela's tourist guide and patron when he shows him different places like Mzoli's place (131) and Observatory's clubs (129). Ndlela does not seem keen however on the night scene as he drinks only two beers per outing. This responsible behaviour is in sharp contrast with that exhibited by Manga who seem to always regret his bingeing sessions. Ndlela even chides Manga for not being able to save a bit and not showing progress in his life. Ndlela notes: 'There is no reason for you not to have a small car, or to be able to save a bit every month' (132). In this instance, Ndlela's character shows the disparities between Mangaliso and himself. Ndlela even mentions the 'kids' who show 'practical progress' (132) in the way they live in Johannesburg, owning decent cars and living in nice apartments.

Ntaba is also depicted as an authority figure over Tongai as Tongai tries to emulate his friend's lifestyle despite the fact that they are the same age. Despite the fact that Ntaba is a Zimbabwean minister's son, he exhibits a level headedness that surpasses that of Tongai who struggles with alcohol addiction. Mahlangu uses similar phrases to describe Ndlela and Ntaba's characters. Manga observes: 'Ntaba seemed to be some authority in Tongai's life' (158), a similar statement to that which he earlier uses to describe Ndlela's authority over himself. In this manner, Mahlangu's narrative makes a social comparison between the spaces of Johannesburg and that of Cape Town in the creation of stable masculinities; Johannesburg having a positive influence in the construction of stable black masculinities than Cape Town. Ntaba's character provides a

sobering reality to Tongai who find himself mired in Cape Town's seedy dealings and underworld shenanigans despite his potential of becoming economically and socially successful.

Tongai seems to covet Ntaba over his stable relationship with his girlfriend, having been together since their studies at UCT, the fact that Ntaba 'would only have two drinks on a night out', (159) and also how Ntaba took him to fancy expensive places. Tongai realises his personal shortcomings in Ntaba's character but is trapped in what is depicted as Cape Town's disabling environment. This 'psychological dislocation' as observed by Farber (2016:1), demonstrates that Johannesburg as inferred to through Ntaba's behavioural exhibitions is a stable for the development of productive masculinities.

4.5 (Mis) Education and Entitlement

Penumbra can also be seen as a commentary on the existing unchanged apartheid educational structures that still promote what Le Grange (2016:1) observes to be a hegemony that paralyses black graduate students in contemporary Cape Town corporate world. Young black 'Model C' School and university educated graduates find themselves bottlenecked by a system that does not offer much flexibility after university studies. Thus Mahlangu's narrative engages with (mis)education as the institutions that are meant to intellectually empower young men destabilises them instead, through the use of old curriculum in the contemporary South African space. Mahlangu's depiction of the struggling university graduates juxtaposes their experiences to those of 'self-employed' young men who do not have a tertiary education, a notion that challenges the view that university education is enough to secure a comfortable life for young black graduates living and working in Cape Town.

Le Grange (2016:2) comments on the de-capacitating aspect of the existing pedagogy in South African institutions of higher education that was inherited from the apartheid era as the cause of mass movements such as the #Feesmustfall in that this type of education still undermines black students in South Africa's current context. Manga's fails to secure a job that he is qualified for in the field of Business Science, so he settles for a graduate program and a clerical position at Trilce Health where he experiences humiliation because he is exposed to gapping instances where he is not assigned any meaningful tasks and duties. Mangaliso states how people at the office saw how he did not have anything to do (68). He observes: '[T]he days pile up at the office, still with no projects for me', (74) and also that 'in my plentiful idle time at the office, I apply for vacancies I see on the internet' (76). When Manga is given work, it is menial routine duties that do not require university education. The lack of brain stimulation that Manga experiences at Trilce dampens any ambition on his part to pursue professional and challenging tasks that he is trained for as the graduate program does not accommodate students with his competences. In this sense, Mahlangu's text engages with the challenges that young professionals face as a result of being miseducated at South African universities.

In another instance, Mangaliso's interview with the two head hunting BEE accountant partners shows the inadequacies of South Africa's equity policies as they fail to accommodate young black professional graduates. Manga is encouraged to send his curriculum vitae to a BEE owned company precisely because he believes that such a company would accommodate a candidate like himself, a young black graduate and also because the internship on offer is in line with the degree he studied for. However, Manga is rejected on the basis of his lack of enthusiasm at Trilce and his failure to complete his post-graduate degree in Accounting. This rejection further dislocates Manga intellectually in the sense that the rejection is on the basis of his lack of

intellectual stimulation at Trilce and not based on his competences communicated through his curriculum vitae, CV.

Le Grange (2016) further observes that the South African educational policy is an unchanged colonial curriculum which fails to address key crippling factors in as far as vocation is concerned on the black graduate in the new dispensation. Manga feels trapped at Trilce because his appointment there is through an ambiguous graduate program that is general and hence his unspecified position suggests part of the reasons why Manga finds himself floating from one department to another (84). Tongai's efforts to bridge the gaps between his ideal passion and his experiences by taking up an internship shows the need to 'Africanise' the tertiary curriculum in Le Grange's (2016:1287) words so as to use pedagogy in a progressive manner. Le Grange's discussion takes into consideration how 'Africanisation' of the curriculum, respects South African experiences without necessarily defeating the objectives of the curriculum, thereby producing rounded graduates who are relevant to the prevailing contemporary South African space. Thus *Penumbra* attacks the usage of an inadequate curriculum system as a tool to equip young intellectuals who are relevant to prevailing conditions and contexts advocating for an all-inclusive 'Africanised' (Le Grange 2016:2), curricula in addressing such gaps.

Similarly, Nhlakanipho, like his two friends, pursues a retail job that is divorced from his area he studied for. His aspirations of becoming a president, (126) and his current unspecified retail job, (74), suggest his lived realities of consequences of an abstract curriculum that Le Grange alludes to. Nhlakanipho's passion for politics, his graduate qualification and pursuit of a job in retail, points to a restrictive fixed curriculum that does not offer many options to young black graduates in terms of remunerative prospects in the job sector. Nhlakanipho graduates from high school with distinctions but does not pursue his passion in politics. However, deductions from Manga's

reason for studying Business Science; that is, because of ‘high salaries in the papers’, (65); suggests that Nhlakanipho may have had similar forces influencing his decisions of taking that career path and not his passion in politics. The gap between Nhlakanipho’s passion in politics and his pursuit of a Business degree program for high remunerative value reveals factors drawing young black intellectuals in the fields of study that have a high remuneration prospect.

In addition to the suggested institutionalised disempowerment of young black minds through the use of old apartheid curriculum system, Mahlangu’s narrative points an even larger gap in the Model C’ education attained by all his young men in high school education. Manga, Nhlakanipho, his brother Mpumelelo and their friend Mfundo are all former students of ‘Model C’ schools. The outdated pedagogy used in these formerly white high schools instil feelings of inadequacy of the young men in the work space. While Manga, Nhlakanipho and Mpumelelo get a university education, Mfundo becomes a criminal in an attempt to get rich quickly. Mahlangu sums up the repercussions of miseducation through Manga’s explanation about his ‘stream of consciousness’ when he says:

I looked at the world around me and how people measured success. To me it felt empty, the dry notion of getting a job and almost worshipping money. I was also fascinated by Mfundo: how someone could make a living out of crime; once money was in his hand it did not matter how it got there. (36)

This points out disparities between university educated young men and those who did not pursue such education but use illegal self-empowering alternatives. This questions both high school and university education in preparing young men for contemporary challenges in the work space. Mahlangu’s attitude towards education which fails to empower young people is summed up in

Mfundo's assertion: '[T]hese degrees don't mean anything because his (younger brother) is working for someone else' (60).

Finally, Mahlangu's depiction of young men in Cape Town suggests a multiplicity of masculinities that are not necessarily model masculinity. Hegemony in masculine practices take on a violent characteristic and this becomes the model type that Mahlangu's characters emulate. The narrative further depicts how the spatially young men use and abuse alcoholic and illegal drugs to cope with the harsh reality presented by Cape Town's insurgence. Mangaliso, Nhlakanipho and Tongai find that their single mother bred background does not equip them from Cape Town's consumerist environment in their quest to construct stable and productive masculinities, thus resorting to destructive and violent ways to performing their masculinities. Cape Town, as the three discover, is not a city of beauty as they assumed but is a city plagued by problems of inequality fostered by unchanged class, racial, social and economic environment. The high cost of living in Cape Town further instigates instances of alienation and hence all Mahlangu's young men fail to make meaningful connections to the city. Personal childhood experiences also account for the young men's failure to locate themselves in the harsh environment characterised by social and economic disparities.

5. Chapter Five

5.1 Complexities and Intersectionality in Masculinity Construction in *A Man who is not a Man* and *Un-importance*

5.1.1 Introduction

As has been clear in the preceding chapters, the novels in this study are concerned with the examination of the performance of masculinity as a social construct and how this impacts on the constructions of masculinities. This chapter closely follows the preceding chapter through the examination of Mgqolozana's depiction of masculinity construction in young men. Mgqolozana's novels engage with complexities of what Christensen and Jensen (2014:61) theorise as 'internal and external power relations between men and other men, and between men and women' in structures that position young boys as benefactors of or pariahs of patriarchy in dealing with social constructions of power in their own masculinity construction. With similarities and differences in how Mgqolozana handles complexities of internal and external hegemony in *A Man who is not a Man* and *Un-importance*, his novels are also best understood through Morrell et al's (2013:3) expression of Connell's notion of hegemonic masculinity in the South African context, as their application of the concept broadens the meaning of hegemonic masculinity in the South African context through engagement with the notion of intersectionality within the power reigns of Xhosa traditional practice of ulwaluko in *A Man who is not a Man* and through both internal and external power in university politics, in *Un-importance* arguing that newer and broader definitions of masculinity are imperative for the continued sustenance of traditional practices like ulwaluko and for formal educational facilities. Both Mgqolozana's

novels are meditations on how to adopt newer ways of doing old things which is imperative for the sustenance of old traditions, or at least the good aspects of old traditions.

A Man who is not a Man is a cathartic memoir of the older protagonist Lumkile's vulnerability after his botched circumcision at the age of eighteen. The novel depicts how Lumkile, through the Xhosa traditional social norms fails to become a man because of complications at the mountain where he undergoes traditional rituals of becoming a man leading to his ostracisation by community of Ngojini. According to the traditional rites of passage, Lumkile fails the whole initiation process and therefore his and other failed initiates' stories are silenced. Therefore, an older and wiser Lumkile narrates his story in hindsight in a triumphal tone that not only heals his psychological wounds and to exonerate other silenced men of the psychological harm that is inflicted on them by the malpractices of circumcision.

Lumkile narrates that to cope with issues of abandonment and neglect, from his alcoholic and abusive father, Lumkile becomes a small time car thief together with his two friends, Voice and Killer in order to survive the harsh conditions of Gugulethu, where the novel is set in part. At the age of seventeen, the trio is well-known for their shenanigans in the community of Gugulethu, though they operate in predominantly white suburbs. Also the boys are extremely good at soccer, earning themselves a name for that in the community as well. Ta-Diski, the local coach suggests ukwaluswa, (16) the traditional rite of passage into manhood, for the boys' increasing wayward behaviour as a measure to curb the criminal lifestyle adopted by the three. A year after Lumkile moves to the Eastern Cape, he is informed of his friends' unfortunate fate. Killer is imprisoned for killing another small time thief, and Voice is abducted, circumcised and left for dead in front of his father's shack. Though not immediately, Lumkile's life is positively influenced by the

pastoral life in the rural Eastern Cape setting that offers him fresh opportunities to develop a positive masculinity.

His plans about his personal life seem to fall into place until he almost becomes a man, the Xhosa way, but falls short because of his wise decision to seek medical attention for his septic penis. Lumkile's botched circumcision becomes a source of embarrassment for his family. While younger, Lumkile is filled with anger at his experience in the mountains, however the older and more mature Lumkile turns himself into a survivor by becoming the voice of a failing traditional system of ulwaluko. Lumkile vows to give voice to the voiceless men who suffer from sins of an increasingly dying but still strong tradition.

On the other hand Mgqolozana's *Un-importance* focuses on Mazizi's manipulation of the weakened structures of the University of the Western Cape (UWC). Born in and raised in the 'homeland', (*Un-Importance* 6), Zizi; as he is affectionately known by those around him; is the first born son of Mamako and Papako who still reside in the homeland with his two younger sisters. At the age of fourteen, Zizi is sexually abused by his youngest aunt Ruth who later gets married and starts a family of her own. The homeland upbringing contributes to his masculinity of being level-headed and calculative when he takes office. These are attributes that propel him to be the president elect and are also the attributes that become his downfall ultimately. Zizi has a complex relationship with his father who is an ex-soldier who endures Mamako's habitual degrading comments. On the other hand, Zizi enjoys a respectful relationship with his mother, his younger sisters and his mother's extended family. At UWC, Zizi's life is intertwined to that of nineteen year old outspoken girlfriend, Pamodi who has a middle class upbringing. After violently handling Pamodi out of suspicions of infidelity, Zizi begins to question both his public and private integrity which results in an unconventional presidential manifesto speech he battles

to write after an argument with her. While Pamodi pushes Zizi's boundaries resulting in a violent altercation, he admits to his personal weakness to the public in the end exposing the privilege he enjoys as president elect, and as a man.

5.2 Father Absenteeism and Present Violent Fathers in Masculinity

Construction

Various connections linking the foundations of masculinity constructions have been established in the previous chapters to explain the impact this has on masculinity construction and positioning of young men as powerful or powerless in the hegemonic continuum. Total father absence, the presence of a violent father figure or the presence of a father living in another space, have all accounted for the masculinity traits examined in the preceding chapters. Both Mqolozana's novels play a pivotal role in exposing the internal and external hegemonic powers, as Christensen and Jensen (2014:61) conclude that a male writer speaks against, thus taking an antagonising stance towards the dictates of structured masculine powers. At the same time, Mqolozana's novels, like other novels in this study either give voice to women's roles in contributing to the constructions of masculinity perpetuating or denouncing, in the process female stereotypes in the contribution to constructing hegemonic masculinity.

Mqolozana's use of the father figure in both his novels is a clear indicator that the author challenges the idea that the development of a healthy, level headed young man is pinned to the presence of a male figure in the family unit. In *A Man who is not a Man*, Mqolozana shows the useless presence of Lumkile's uncle and grandfather's as both fail to impart useful masculine advice to assist his cross-over to adulthood, since the only accepted way of becoming a man in Ngqini is through circumcision. The presence of both men in Lumkile's life is overshadowed by that of his mother and grandmother, who, through music and singing praises, both encourage

Lumkile's efforts on the days leading to his going-in ceremony. Thus, Mgqolozana's undermining the supposed guardians of ulwaluko expresses the deteriorating nature of the still revered cultural practice.

To add, Mgqolozana's novel challenges the violence young Lumkile is subjected to by both his uncle in his early development years, and later his father. The uselessness of the presence of both these men in Lumkile's life, as depicted by Mgqolozana stands to question the presence of a male figure in the construction of an honourable masculinity as Lumkile grows to be a responsible man, in his failure to be a man as seen by the community of Ngojini. Mgqolozana stands to question if masculinity should be attached to a biological make up or if it should be attached to other performances of a man, seen also in Wanner's characterisation of Mzilikazi's sexuality. Masculinity, thus may be subject to change in meaning, other than be attached to the biological make up of a man, as demonstrated by Lumkile, who is a man, despite a deformed penis.

Lumkile's misplaced bravery and energy towards stealing, under the supervision of his father, questions the notion that attaches stable masculinity to the presence of a father figure. In fact, the realisation of maternal love changes Lumkile's view of himself, leading to a resilient man who challenges his own cultural traditions in speaking out about the injustices suffered by those described as men who are not men. Through this exposition, Mgqolozana's novel challenges the idea that young men who are exposed to violence turn into perpetrators of violence themselves, as seen through Lumkile's complete character transformation under his mother's supervision as compared to his father's supervision. Mgqolozana thus redeems the view of women in their role in the construction of masculinity as Lumkile is able to stand up against injustice as opposed to

the light under which he depicts all the men in Lumkile's life, who seem to be more concerned about upholding on to empty traditional rites, that puts lives at risk.

To add, Mgqolozana's novel castigates the double role given to single mothers by irresponsible men in bringing up young boys into men thus creating spaces to query the traditional way of doing things in Ngojini. Lumkile's mother, though a teacher in an extremely remote school outside Ngojini, affords the boy a decent life. While Mgqolozana depicts Lumkile's mother as over compensating for her absence in Lumkile's teenage years with money, he does show her in a positive light exonerating her in the reader's eye because her plight resonates with single parent headed households. Her depiction as offering warmth and advice to Lumkile goes beyond her duties as a mother. However, because she is a woman, the mother's influence is limited and therefore excluded from the processes of her son's circumcision, and by extension his failure to become a man. With no say in her son's circumcision, Lumkile's mother is silenced together with her son after the botched circumcision, showing subordination because of her gender. Traditional African family set up is seen in this light as stereotyping women based on their sex. Lumkile's mother is more responsible than her brother or her father who abandons his duty as Lumkile's attendant, as she holds a job and at the same time takes care of the entire family.

In contrast to Lumkile's mother, his uncle is a violent, negligent and suicidal mad man who appears to have been negatively affected by his own experiences of ulwaluko. This is suggested by his attempt to commit suicide at the local graveyard giant pine tree, (26) silenced as the community is barred from discussing openly about suicide. Interestingly, silencing conditions surrounding circumcision manifest through suicide after the victims suffer from exclusion, (2). Lumkile's uncle's disregard for the traditional processes and lack of connection demonstrated by other men is suggestive of deep seated mal performance that is silenced by other men. As

suggested by the older narrator's explanation of what being a 'survivor' (2), the reader infers from the lack of attachment to the practices of ulwaluko that bind the men of Ngojini exhibited by Lumkile's uncle points out that he himself may be a failed man, just like Lumkile

On the other hand, Mgqolozana's depiction of Zizi in *Un-importance* contrasts that of Lumkile in that Zizi's violence towards Pamodi does not signal that he is brought up in a household that has both a mother and father figure present denouncing the idea that young boys who grow up under the care of a father figure become model men. Mgqolozana's novel feminises Papako's masculinity to show how women's roles are changing since Mamako is abusive towards him. Despite his military background, Papako desists from using physical violence towards his family and instead opts to instill psychological fear in Zizi and his younger sisters. Papako's calculative abuse manifests itself later as Zizi expresses himself violently towards Pamodi, showing the deep-seated effects of psychological abuse. Thus, Zizi occupies paradox positions deliberately signaling the dangers of a present father figure who is emotionally absent.

A Man who is not a Man is an attempt also to redress age-old stereotypes of single mother households seen to contribute to producing unbalanced men. Lumkile's drunken father fails to offer and provide a secure home for his son, a major contributing factor that leads Lumkile into criminal activities to sustain himself. On the other hand, when the mother's assumes responsibility of the young man, her maternal outreach and appeal to Lumkile addresses the void that he identifies as the major cause of his attention seeking petty thieving episode. Thus, Mgqolozana's novel speaks to the bravery of assuming masculine positions of fathering sons that single women often have to take, to fill the void of the absent father figures. This is also clearly captured in *Penumbra* where women assume fatherhood positions responsible for the constructions of young boy's identities in the absence of the father figure, showing an increase in

female headed households. Mgqolozana's depiction of this phenomenon, unlike Mahlangu's portrayal of single female headed households is that of a positive nature in comparison.

Un-importance demystifies the idea that women do not abuse young children and offer nurturing comfort zones for developing boys thus challenges a partial view on rape in terms of gender. Ruth's cunning act exposes Zizi to his first sexual encounter, a site he uses later to attempt to use as a justifying tool for his lack of integrity. Zizi's confession about his rape appears to be laden with underpinnings of a manipulative attitude, similar to that he experiences from his father, thus his anger and ambivalent relationship with women emanates from a combination of both the physical abuse from the women in his life and from the psychological trauma of seeing his father's abuse by his mother and also from the father's own mental abuse towards him. Mgqolozana henceforth exposes the dangers of suppressed emotions that men are encouraged to exercise in order to be categorized as masculine.

5.3 Hegemony, Privilege and Vulnerability

Mgqolozana's narratives frame hegemony in masculinity, as social hierarchically expected practices, that privilege or disempower men resulting in over-confident men on the one hand and socially ostracised men, on the other. Mgqolozana's main characters fall on either extremes of this spectrum by adhering to or flouting the model practices set by their immediate Xhosa social structures. Lumkile in *A Man who is Not a Man* and Zizi in *Un-importance* both negotiate their masculinities according to what their immediate society expects of them. While the younger Lumkile fights ostracisation by his Ngojini community through declaring himself a survivor of botched circumcision, later as an adult, Zizi uses his political power and influence as the president elect to manipulate and negotiate through the university structures and power systems of the institution to gain political momentum. The gap between these two positions of

masculinities in hegemony appears to be created by what Connell and Messerschmidt (2005:832) call ‘patterns of practices (i.e., things done, not just a set of role expectations or an identity)’ where the performance of masculinity depends on systematised socially and politically correct practices rather than the young men’s roles.

A Man who is Not a Man depicts Lumkile as adhering to and fulfilling the most fundamental “patterns of practices” like the endurance task of axing trees alone in the mountain and carrying them to the village for his coming-out ceremony and also managing not to ‘chicken out’ (69) like the cowardly boys alluded to in the song ‘Somagwaza’. These practices qualify him as a man in the eyes of Ngojini but in the end he suffers ostracisation because of seeking medical attention for his sceptic penis that is equated to treason by others. Mgqolozana’s depiction of Lumkile’s victimisation exposes the absurdity of the social ostracisation since what happens to Lumkile is not his fault. Lumkile is abandoned by his attendant uncle and grandfather, men who have themselves undergone the cut and have been esteemed as men, through the processes of circumcision but these traditionally upright men neglect their duties of guiding Lumkile into manhood. Thus Mgqolozana questions the circumcised men’s own masculinity as their collective actions fail Lumkile’s quest of becoming a man, as elaborated by a character called Mc-squared who observes that being a man is more than the absence of the foreskin but “an orderly procession that one carries from the minute of declaration till death, (*A Man who is Not a Man* 65).

The song Somagwaza, mentioned earlier alludes to a legend whose bravery for what Lumkile calls ‘stone-cising’, (69) is held in high esteem in Ngojini. The song sung for the initiates is one that offers psychological preparatory tools that inspire and encourage the soon-to-be men as they prepare for the process of becoming men. The story mentally challenges the initiates as

Somagwaza, whose name literally means father of the stab, is hailed as the circumcision god for having circumcised himself. The song highlights the pain and endurance of circumcision that Lumkile goes through and even worse as he almost has an amputation. The language of reverence that Mgqolozana uses to describe the legend of Somagwaza suggests his reverence of the age old traditional circumcision rite of passage, thus in this light, Mgqolozana seems to advocate its continuation, albeit, through safer ways. Many scholars like Behrens (2014:16), Sibiya (2014:4), Banwari (2015:286), Shadung (2012:29) have argued to this effect despite the fact that there exists a debate between traditional practitioners and health practitioners deviating from what Kepe (2010:730) considers as the real issue; “the injuries and deaths that occur during ritual circumcision”.

Contrasting fragile masculinity in *A Man who is Not a Man* is Mgqolozana’s depiction of male privilege of male political leaders. Male politicians are usually complicit to hegemonic hierarchical social structures which are also patriarchy complicit in nature, resulting in what Erasmus (2015) calls ‘black privilege’. Erasmus discusses the double standards created by the South African constitution that appears to perpetrate black male privilege that heightens oppression of other races and more so women. This is exemplified in *Un-importance* by the twins who form New Tendency, an organisation that contradicts the mother body that seeks to exploit subordinate men and women (70). The constitutionalised oppression that ensures personal gain undermines the human rights enshrined in the South African Bill of rights as demonstrated by Erasmus in the article. In essence, Mgqolozana’s *Un-importance* addresses the debilitating privileging systems within the constitution set forth by policies and statutes that empower politicians on the one hand, and subordinate other men and women.

In addition, Mgqolozana uses Zizi's own expository manifesto to flout all protocol of his predecessors in preparation for the campaign speech of UWC presidential hopefuls. Among other things, Zizi shows just how privileged the male politicians are. Zizi exposes how the "Branch" has power in the university structures through his presidency as he manipulates Professor Seun Damkot, the Dean of Sciences who is a Deputy Vice Chancellor hopeful, dependent on the SRC's vote to help him to attain power. However, Zizi does all this to prove his masculine prowess to his girlfriend Pamodi and her friends. The novel suggests that the entire student politics system favours men. Zizi is depicted as witty and level-headedness as opposed to his female deputy, who is portrayed as naïve. Zizi tells the reader: 'I am chosen to lead because of my levelheadedness' (108).

Zizi's idea that he is chosen because of his levelheadedness arises from social attitudes that are shaped by the view that people have of him, determining his attitudes towards being levelheaded whereas in fact his violent behaviour towards Pamodi and his sinister but smart move to remain as the party's leader point to an ordinary young man capable of expressing his fear through abuse of women. Jewkes et al (2011:2) contend that 'the way that men understand themselves is affected by their life circumstances', and that 'there is a dialogic relationship between their subject positions and social circumstances which are reflected in their actions'. Jewkes et al's (2011) position explain the social pressures that young men succumb to, either as victims or as privileged individuals because of social pressure that is enforced through policies.

Similarly, Banwari (2015:285-286) explains the pressure that young Xhosa men face in the community by noting that graduating into manhood is a communal achievement for the initiates who are accorded power and authority over women. In both his novels, Mgqolozana shows how the community has impact on the construction of individual masculinity. Zizi is esteemed by the

university community in *Un-importance* while Lumkile is ostracised by the community of Ngojini because he fails to become a man the Xhosa prescribed way.

Lumkile is expected to ‘observe’ (77) what happens to him, while there is no one who tells him step by step what it is that he has to observe and follow. Mgqolozana’s narrative suggests that anxieties are created by the expectation of the initiate to ‘observe’ and hence, no real value is taken from the experience and practice that denotes masculinity. Lumkile misses almost all the ‘observations’ he is called to pay attention to and he feels no connection to Geca, the traditional surgeon who performs the circumcision. This impersonal relationship is caused by Geca who hurts Lumkile by unnecessarily tightening the leather strip around Lumkile’s limb leaving the initiate feeling numb. Lumkile notes that Geca jumps and runs ‘as if celebrating the damage’ (78) he has just caused him. This denotes that Geca’s cut and initial wrap may be the cause for Lumkile’s deformed penis. As his name suggests which denotes a violent cutting down, Geca seems to carelessly ‘cut off’ Lumkile’s foreskin and is quickly off without saying a word.

Mgqolozana’s *A Man who is Not a Man* articulates Lumkile’s vulnerability as he faces social ostracisation because he does not complete the Xhosa traditional rites of passage the traditional way and as such he considered a failed man. Clowes (2013:12) observes that ‘it seems extraordinarily difficult for most people to recognise how gender creates masculine vulnerabilities’. This captures Ngojiini’s unreasonable expectations for Lumkile to become a man through completing eight days and eight nights in the mountain while his wound has become sceptic. Lumkile’s decision to seek medical attention attracts criticism not only from his immediate community but from some of the hospital staff as well, especially the aptly named hospital butler Mr. Ugly, who verbally abuses the young initiate. The community fails to

separate his deformed penis from the practices they purport make him a man, resulting in the nurse and Mr. Ugly at the hospital blaming him for what is not his fault.

Mgqolozana's attitude towards Lumkile's experience is sympathetic as he uses it as a tool to address hidden dangers of circumcision as it potentially compromises the health and lives of initiates if the rules of engagement are not properly followed. Mgqolozana's narrative seems to register his concern about 'secrets surrounding the practice' (Shadung 2012:29) of traditional circumcision. For example, Lumkile does not get clear instructions about the circumcision process from his predecessors. The secrecy to the masculine code of conduct is only revealed to him by his friend M-squared. Still, on the day of his circumcision, Lumkile is surprised that the process he dreaded is over as soon as it begins. Lumkile is called to move on to the next stage of the initiation process, where the procedures require assistance of an attendant who has to aide him for the whole eight days and nights in the mountain of solitude. However, his uncle gets an urgent call to shear sheep in another village and Lumkile's fate of victimhood seems to be foreshadowed by his uncle's absenteeism. Mgqolozana seems to castigate the behaviour and neglect that is shown by Lumkile's uncle, suggesting that the blame of Lumkile's failed manhood lies squarely on the absent uncle rather than Lumkile himself.

As prescribed by the Xhosa tradition, it is the duty of Lumkile's grandfather to oversee the preparations and procession of the boy's safe passage into manhood in the mountain. Banwari (2015:286) contends that the presence of an older man in the circumcision of initiates serves a purpose of guiding and ensuring a safe passage and transferal of principles of manhood. Therefore, Lumkile's grandfather's absence foreshadows the impending disaster of his grandson's near death experience. Lumkile bitterly reflects: 'That was my grandfather's contribution to my circumcision-his absence', (81). As a result of his grandfather's absence

Lumkile does not benefit from the advice: ‘observe, listen and act’ (77) given to the initiates. The grandfather’s absence challenges the notion that there is ‘only one *appropriate* manner of becoming a *true* Xhosa man’, in Dlamini’s words (2015:43, emphasis my own), Lumkile henceforth begins his journey of masculinity through the recovery of a botched circumcision into a different domain of a Xhosa man, one who according to the people of Ngojini is not a man.

Clowes (2013:13) discusses how South African men are increasingly using ‘harmful ways of self-styling’, yet ignore the fact that this puts them at risk because of attempts to live up to normative expectations of the societies they are a part of. In *A Man who is Not a Man*, Lumkile tries to live up to Ngojini’s expectations of him by going through the traditional circumcision ceremony. The reflective Lumkile’s confidence in himself is directly linked to his penis he refers to as ‘formidable lion’ (*A Man who is not a Man* 1) but once that falls away so do all his dreams. Banwari (2015:285) highlights the stigma that uninitiated men suffer among the Xhosa people. Banwari contends that ‘there is always pressure to get circumcised’ (285) resulting in some initiates running away from home to get circumcised. While getting circumcised the traditional way is not a bad practice *per se*, Mgqolozana sheds light on the fact that defining a man’s life is not only dependent on his penis but rather on other ways of becoming a man. Defining a man through the shape of his penis puts pressure on men, as seen in Lumkile’s delayed reaction to report his rotting penis. His need to please his grandfather and the society almost costs him his life.

Likewise, Zizi in *Un-importance* is subjected to self-harm albeit as a result of social pressures, to keep up with the university community’s perception of him. Mgqolozana uses male abuse over females as a platform to expose the presence of violence that young female students are subjected to at tertiary institutions and addresses the complexities that surround such violence as

this sometimes has its roots in the male's feelings of insignificance. Zizi tries to justify his behaviour towards Pamodi and paints an unpleasant picture in the reader's mind in relation to Pamodi's character. Zizi describes Pamodi's cunning nature and also what he considers to be her disrespectful behaviour towards him; that is; Pamodi's cheating on him. However, Zizi seems to admire similar attributes in Bonolo Mudau and Sthombe's assertiveness, while he despises the same assertiveness in his girlfriend, showing that it is not assertiveness that Zizi has a problem with but the fact that his girlfriend embodies that trait. His feelings of inadequacy, in this regard, propel him to physically abuse Pamodi. While he mentally notes that Pamodi deserves to be manhandled, he seems to be in doubt about his own integrity in the first place and so his abuse of Pamodi has nothing to do with an outward reaction to her accusations but it goes beyond interpersonal relations. It is a psychological warfare that Zizi fights within himself and Pamodi is the unfortunate outlet of the internal conflicts of Zizi's mind.

In addition, closely linked to Clowes' (2013) argument, is Ratele's (2013) theorisation of the importance of recognising emotional impact on young men and its connection to their vulnerability. Ratele's sentiments that young men 'have much to fear from society, starting with fearing state violence to fearing violence of other men', (2013:8) are captured in Mgqolozana's narratives giving expression to Zizi's fear of the police which paralyses him, soon after his abuse of Pamodi. Fear is indeed presented right at the outset of the narrative when Zizi observes the knockers at his door and this fear permeates the entire narrative. Zizi states that he does not like opening the door without knowing who might be at the door. This shows an already inherent internal fear of the unknown. The door that Zizi looks at for a while, before opening, symbolises Zizi's own personal disposition as a young men who fears the unknown. Zizi is afraid of the humiliation that comes with the stigma of being a woman abuser. In this regard, Ratele (2013:8)

observes that young men have much to fear despite the general belief that men communicate ‘fearlessness’.

Similarly, in *A Man who is Not a Man* Mgqolozana captures emotional vulnerability in Lumkile when the young initiate converses with Rain, one of the village men who come up the mountain to visit him against his grandfather’s orders. Although Lumkile has nothing to fear, he nonetheless fears seeing Rain as he is a representative of a higher authority as he is a circumcised man. Lumkile lets the reader know that ‘a visit from a village man is considered to be a dreadful thing by some initiates, for men have power to do anything’ (105). This demonstrates the double vulnerability while still going through the process of becoming a man. The first vulnerability is posed by the weather elements, the insufficient food and the general conditions associated with being a ‘baboon’ (103) for initiates. Lumkile’s conversation with Rain demonstrates the fear of being victimised for showing signs of weakness when Rain asks him what he plans to do with his “cooked” (107) penis. However, Rain seems to understand Lumkile’s unfortunate circumstances as he does not point to any wrong doing on the part of Lumkile. Lumkile’s vulnerability turns to internalised anger when he narrates to Rain how his grandfather refuses to attend to him and accuses him of being ‘fragile’ (106).

This is similar to Clowes (2013:12) observation that women tend to use a ‘discourse of disempowerment that precludes seeing ways in which they are powerful’, pointing to the fact that women treat themselves as victims to express physical weakness while ignoring emotional strength they possess as opposed to men. Ratele’s (2015) examination of young black men’s subordination, traced back to the apartheid era, echoes Clowes’ argument that black men’s vulnerability is manifest through acts of violence to themselves and other people around them. Black men are forced to live in a reactionary rather than a proactive mode because of gendered

misconceptions that are associated to the colour of their skin in direct contrast to their white counterparts and women. For instance, quite a number of Mgqolozana's young black male characters are portrayed as hiding behind facades of fearlessness to protect their emotional weaknesses so as to appear as exhibit 'current mostly honoured way of being a man' Connell and Messerschmidt (2005:832). Thus, Mgqolozana's representation of Zizi and Lumkile's captures the subjugation of young black men who are burdened by socio-political and geo-cultural hegemonic structures despite their positioning within a hegemonic spectrum of masculinities.

5.4 Complexities of Constructing of Private Masculinity in Public Spheres

Mgqolozana's novels both engage with Cassegard's (2014:694) contention that 'public space is seen as a space for manifesting dissent' in their depiction of the attempt that Zizi and Lumkile are faced with in negotiating their constructions of stable identities in the private space *vis a vis* the public space. This concept is demonstrated clearly as Mgqolozana's main male characters' private and public personalities that are built and performed around the notion of public opinion. Mgqolozana's novels meditate on the complexities of private individual performances clashing with public opinion, first within the family unit extending into the immediate and remote community.

Both Zizi and Lumkile fail to make clear distinctions between their private identities and those attained and lived in the public spaces. They have multiple personalities split between the private and the public spaces as they fail to balance between the private self and the public self, resulting in complex masculinities. For example, Zizi flouts the Branch's protocol of writing his manifesto speech in the presence of his executive members opting to write in his room. His room becomes

a private space where he documents his private life to address the public through writing about his personal life occurrences. While Zizi's self-preservation becomes more important than the Branch's cause, his party subordinates rightfully reprimand him for abandoning his party responsibilities. The same political party that sings Zizi's praise in the beginning, reel from the split of his personality, when he challenges age old party protocols during the manifesto speech delivery. Zizi is cautioned by some of his party members from seeing himself 'as above the collective' (24) that made him. Zizi's strategy of a public confession empowers him in the process of discovering his personal identity.

Similarly, Mgqolozana uses public spaces such as the hospital and the forums held in Lumkile's honour, as social orders that contest adverse socially endorsed consequences for the failed initiate that ultimately form his self-perception and masculinity. Jewkes et al (2015:113) point out that hegemonic masculinity not only suggests men's behavioural attitudes towards themselves but also propagate particular behaviours in society. This suggests that Mgqolozana's narrative challenges the improper alienation of Lumkile by the community of Ngojini as he excels in all the processes that are required when going through the traditional rite of passage. Oom Dan, Ta-Yongs and Rain, well-respected men in Ngojini, concur at different times that Lumkile handles himself as a man while dressing his wound and so he can be endorsed as a man. However, Lumkile is relegated to the confines of failed men because he almost loses his penis. This presents a highly narrow social space for men who are perceived as less than man, sometimes leading to cases of suicide according to Banwari (2015:285).

Mgqolozana's use of a public space to address Zizi's personal issues pertaining to his private integrity, questions the social order that shapes him. Zizi questions his father's masculinity and praises his mother's femininity. This manifests itself when he tries to balance his masculinity

between being the incumbent SRC president and being Pamodi's boyfriend. Zizi plans to sexually dominate Pamodi because he feels inadequate to make her obey him as a public acclaimed politician. Zizi makes a mental note that he had to make Pamodi 'recognise' him in bed if she could not do so in person (11). Such sexist thoughts may be traced back to how his mother treats his father with contempt. Zizi witnesses his mother's contemptuous gestures towards his father and notes that his father's achievement was found in marrying his mother which by contrast was the mother's 'utmost failure' (84). However, Zizi does this at a subconscious level and not calculatingly, like he does with his political manifesto speech. His fear of becoming like his father haunts his position as Pamodi's boyfriend as he seeks to dominate and humiliate her. This shows therefore that the background that forms Zizi's core values has adverse consequences on the man he becomes.

Likewise, the little hut that Lumkile occupies for the duration of his circumcision casts a sorrowful figure and foreshadows the recurrent motif alienation from his community for being a failed man. Oom Dan who at his old age climbs the mountain to fetch the herbs that Lumkile needs to nurse what he refers to as his 'limb', monitors the initiate's progress on handling his wound by himself, only leaving after Lumkile's satisfactory demonstration that is now capable of dressing the wound himself. Like Oom Dan, Lumkile casts a lone figure, not only in the social spaces but also psychologically, hence, Lumkile's need to adopt the stoical approach towards the narrow mindedness to masculinity of the Ngojini community. Lumkile observes that young men like him "have been wrongly blamed for what happened to them" (4). Mgqolozana appears to promote the ideas that are summed up by Oom Dan's words to Lumkile that 'times are changing grandson' (114). This suggests that there is room for improving the traditional rite of passage to accommodate every type of man despite his passage into manhood.

The lines between the private and public spaces are blurred, where the private becomes a space to perform public practices and the public becomes a privatised space leading to a crisis in differentiating roles from practices of masculinity. According to Ratele (2013:9), emotions like ‘fear and fearlessness’ must be considered when trying to understand young men’s construction of their masculinities, especially when they locate themselves in the social order of their societies. Dahlberg (2004:7-10) outlines what he calls ‘public sphere conditions’ of communication, with one condition being that there must be ‘sincerity’ (2004:9). He quotes extensively from Habermas’ (2001) who stipulates that for communication to happen in the public sphere, ‘the participants [must] mean what they say and make a sincere effort to make known all relevant information’. This notion of sincere communication is absent in both Mqolozana’s novels as the young male characters’ masculinities are built around fear of authority and social orders.

There is no sincerity in Zizi’s execution of public masculine practices as the president elect of the UWC student representative because he acts in accordance to what is expected of him as a president elect and he exhibits a ‘false *bravado façade*’ alluded to by Ratele (2013:8) causing him to falter from the crisis within himself. A manifestation of Zizi’s internal conflict is clear when he hits his girlfriend. He also confesses to his friend Bomi that he is tired of the life that student politics has thrust him into, a life of challenging corrupt elements within his party while he himself has gradually turned equally corrupt. Zizi’s ‘importance’ (125) comes as an endorsement from what he calls ‘the movement’, (124) and not from him. Hence, he fears making mistakes that contradict the movement’s cause. However, he is conscious and aware that he has to live according to UWC societal expectations.

Furthermore, according to Tvinnereim (undated: 3), ‘leaders elected or not, have more information about how the government works and can exploit their position of power’. Mgqolozana seems to subscribe to this ideology as he presents Zizi as a force that uses his knowledge to advance both his public credentials and his private life. Zizi’s knowledge that the Dean of Sciences relies on the Student body’s seven votes drives him to manipulate the older man. This manipulation aids corruption within the institution and undermines the democracy that Zizi claims to stand for. While Zizi successfully demonstrates his prowess by manipulating the Dean into readmitting a student who does not qualify, the instance reflects on his personal corruption that stands against the principles he purports to stand for. Hence, Mgqolozana’s depiction, while showing Zizi’s success on using the gaps in the varsity’s constitution, also validates Clowes’ (2013:12) argument that ‘performances of masculinity deeply compromises’ men’s lives as Zizi’s success in the public sphere negatively affects his execution of private masculine practices, like respecting the boundaries between Pamodi and himself.

In contrast to how Zizi lacks sincerity, Mgqolozana’s other character, Lumkile in *A Man who is Not a Man* uses sincerity to empower himself and address the alienation that follows his botched circumcision and he hopes in the process, to be a voice of silenced and victimised men. Lumkile asserts,

I think there are many like me, survivors of septic circumcision, who have been wrongly blamed for what happened to them. They have been made to feel like *invalid men* (own emphasis) and forced to carry the shame for the rest of their lives. (4)

He uses the sincerity rapport alluded to in Habermas’ statutes of public sphere of communication, to position himself as a survivor and a voice for men’s undeserved social

alienation. This position seems to answer to the silencing of vulnerable men. According to Ashcroft, Spivak's question of whether the subaltern can speak, is centred on 'epistemic violence' that produces 'precarious Subjectivities' and 'Othering' (1995:24-25) and this finds expression in the older Lumkile's heroic polemic stance challenging socially induced victimisation of 'invalid men who are silenced by social ordering and structures in the public sphere of Xhosa cultural expression. Thus, Mgqolozana's narrative indicates that men can also be victims or 'othered' subjects and can positively gain from gender equity policies as seen by Clowes (2015:12).

While Mgqolozana's *Un-importance* shows the privilege enjoyed by males occupying public office, he draws attention to the complication that exists between masculinities and assertive women which exist in the public space. Ratele (2013:8) discusses how young men do not have a language to articulate their emotional states but instead use 'bodily expressions of fearlessness' to express themselves leading to vulnerability and possibilities of early death. Through Pamodi's story of abuse by her ex-boyfriend, Likhaya, Mgqolozana interrogates men's expressions of fear through the use of violence towards women. Likhaya intends to use Pamodi's body for sexual gratification and on her refusal, he ties her up and attempts to rape her, a deed he fails to carry out as a result of his drunkenness. His impotence prompts him to drag Pamodi into a public space to humiliate her. Pamodi's account represents what Ndlovu (2013:87) refers to as attempts at 'silencing ... female figures'. Granted, Pamodi is seemingly an assertive and cunning young woman but her account of Likhaya's abuse towards her 'reinforces rather than challenges patriarchy' (2013:92) in Ndlovu's words. In this light, Mgqolozana's account of a private conflict is acted out on a public platform, as seen in Likhaya's dragging of Pamodi on the streets. While not condoning abuse of women, *Unimportance* demonstrates that abuse of women is rife.

Mgqolozana also seems to ridicule the governance system used in the university as men in positions of power manipulate each other to gain personal gratification through using women. This opens spaces for what Ratele (2013:8) says is the male on male violence using the ‘female body as a commodity’ as Nkeala’s observes elsewhere, Nkeala (2008:7). For instance, Zizi makes a mental note of how men like Sindane and the ‘ex-comrade twins who found it impossible to outgrow campus life’ (70) manipulate the systems of governance for personal gain and he positions himself to counter all these men who, according to him, stand as elements of denigration of the university’s governance system. Later, Zizi himself realises his own error of trying to prove his masculinity to his girlfriend when he double-crosses the Dean of Sciences taking advantage of the Dean’s little knowledge about African tradition of becoming a Sangoma to argue Sqojiji’s case. While he is successful in getting Sqojiji re-admitted into the university system in a resounding success publicly, the act undermines his individual values that he stands for when opposing the likes of Sindane and the twins.

Mgqolozana’s novels depict both spectrums of the hegemony in masculinity that demonstrates black men’s privilege and victimisation. While patriarchal complicit social structures still maintain hegemonies, Mgqolozana’s narratives demonstrate how young men, both privileged and victimised, formulate their masculinities to assimilate into the public sphere with devastating private consequences that negatively affect them while living behind the fearlessness façade. Furthermore, Mgqolozana’s narratives, while not condoning abolition of some traditional practices of becoming a man, suggests newer ways of accommodating a larger pool of diverse masculinities.

6. Chapter Six

6.1 Conclusion

This study focused on black masculinity construction from both male and female vantage points. Firstly, the aim was to look at the convergent and divergent ways in which male and female authors depict hegemony in masculinities. Secondly, the study aimed at reviewing works authored by young black South African authors who have not received much attention in the academic world, owing to the novels authored post 2000 that show what Frenkel and MacKenzie (2010) describe as showing an unfettered characteristic towards struggle literature. With environment as an active force in the constructions of masculinities, the study largely focused on novels that are set in Johannesburg and/or Cape Town metropolitan spaces or both, arguing that the creation of masculinities is largely influenced by space and time. Added to this dynamic is the fact that gender in authorship is also an important aspect in the depictions of masculinities, as men's and women's views of masculinities differ significantly, producing various issues in masculinity constructions that may be seen as taking intersectionality in the hegemonic masculinity continuum.

Chapter Two focused on how Wanner's *Men of the South* engages with portrayals of the so-called revolutionary post-apartheid masculinities, the 'Kwame Nkrumas' of feminine men as captured by Mfundo. Unlike the conventional chic lit used by Jele and Makholwa, Wanner writes from a male perspective in order to highlight men's issues to intimately engage with the masculinities she constructs and in the process she deconstructs some misconceptions about

masculinity and gender role ideology, while confirming some stereotypes propelled by women. Her novel challenges traditional views of gender sex roles in the suburban spaces of Johannesburg, at the same time confronting some female perspectives of men through the use of some of her female characters. Her men of the South all appear to be in different crises because of their choosing to live unconventional lives but these characters are shown to be using these experiences to strategically position themselves as dominating women. Mfundo dares to live unconventionally by becoming a stay-at-home husband in a society of so-called emancipated women who fail to grasp his behavior. Mzilikazi decides to give up social expectations of a heterosexual married man who is a father, to pursue a gay lifestyle in Cape Town. On the other hand, Tinaye chooses his security and stability over his love for Slindile in a love triangle to secure and establish himself legally in South Africa, thereby retaining his various dominant positions as he is a member of various communities. Mfundo, Mzilikazi and Tinaye all represent masculinities that use the challenges of adapting with new spaces and new roles to dominate on their female counterparts.

Wanner's novel demonstrates the importance of women's contribution to the South African literary canon, as her female perspectives of men's experiences highlights the complexities of urban masculinities. Wanner's novel foregrounds the plight of three unconventional urban men, Mfundo, Mzilikazi and Tinaye whose choices seem to antagonise their communities and those associated with them. Through these men, Wanner challenges misconceptions about urban masculinities in the affluent suburbs by applying her humorous and witty approach to serious problems in masculinity constructions. Through Mfundo, she bemoans the well-intended TRC process which failed to prosecute individuals who had perpetrated atrocities in black communities during the apartheid regime. Thus Mfundo's inclination towards women's roles

may be a result of having been largely brought by a single mother after the abduction of his father by black apartheid operatives. The irony is that the seemingly progressive urban community of Edenvale, fails to accept Mfundo's position as a stay-at-home-dad. Mfundo's attempt to be a stay-at-home father fails dismally when his partner and the community in general turn against him accusing of not being a man. Mfundo takes advantage of community's disgruntlement to abuse his position as a kept man. However, in the end, Wanner's novel confirms him as using violence to dominate over his partner, showing presence of domination of women through violence, a trait also witnessed in Makholwa's framing of some of her male characters in *Black Widow Society*.

Similarly, due to the fear of social exclusion, Wanner's character, Mzilikazi who is a gay pretends to be the embodiment of hegemonic masculinities that are extolled by his society, in order to advance his image as a model man in his society. Marrying and fathering two children, Mzilikazi proves that he is a man according to his Zulu culture by providing for his immediate and extended families. The exploration of Mzilikazi's challenges highlighted how traditional views of masculinity are still entrenched in the modern urban South African societies. This is similar to other Zulu characters such as Bheki and Mzwakhe, whose marriages are either accepted or ridiculed by their Zulu communities. While Bheki and Mzilikazi seek acceptance by marrying Zulu women, Mzwakhe confounds his tradition by marrying a white woman. His attempt at attaining hegemony in the community of Centurion is a source of infringement back in his mother's home, in Durban.

Finally, Wanner's novel depicts Tinaye's as using his plight as a legal economic migrant in South Africa to dominate both his wife and the space of his home country. Tinaye's status as a typical cosmopolitan man does not work in his favour in the corrupt NGO world he works for.

His questioning of his four-year contract, one year short of permanent residence status' recognition reveals the disadvantageous policies set up by the system in an attempt to curb and control the number of migrants who finally get permanent residency status in South Africa. As a result of his challenges in obtaining a flexible work permit, Tinaye treacherously enters into a marriage of convenience with a South African woman in an attempt to acquire a resident status. This position perpetrates a view that migrants use South African citizens to acquire legal status, while at the same time doubly displaying a man who seeks dominance of other men and females through his grounding. Moreover, when Tinaye finds love in Slindile, his traditional obligations as a Shona man come into conflict with his love for Slindile, showing the power of tradition that still drives the constructions of masculinities and at the same time highlighting the complexities of Tinaye's migrant position.

Tinaye's depiction is similar to that of Leo depicted in Jele's *Happiness is a Four Letter Word*, where Leo's characterisation captures similar traits as that of Tinaye. Leo's character is depicted as taking advantage of Princess' love for him while enjoying the benefits of a South African citizen. Leo is portrayed as a thief and crook, only interested in robbing Princess of her possessions. While addressing the issues of a woman who is more powerful than a man financially, Jele's novel falls into the trap of stereotyping migrants as opportunist parasites seeking relationships with citizens to stabilise and establish themselves in South Africa.

Kwame upsets the view of migrants as opportunists as his character may be characterised as a financially and academically powerful man who seeks no opportunities but enjoys the full benefits as a sought after professional in his field.

Chapter Three makes various conclusions about the ways in which female authors depict masculinity showing how conditions in the different spaces of urban cities privilege or

disadvantage men, pointing to a continuum of masculinities in the hegemonic framework and the power shift between men and women that. Jele in *Happiness is a Four Letter Word* and Makholwa in *The 30th Candle*, use the often emphatically dismissed notion of superfluity of chic lit to engage and expose ways in which masculine stereotypes are still entrenched and lived out in the seemingly progressive suburbs of the South African metropolitan space. By engaging in the seemingly trivial and petty issues of women's everyday lives, Jele and Makholwa depict traditional and modern types of masculinities alongside one another. Violent and abusive masculinities are still prevalent in the modern South African metropolitan environment alongside powerful but gentle masculinities that are taken for granted by emancipated women, a trait that potentially triggers deep seated prejudices against women, challenging the notion that the suburb is a space void of gender violence.

Women are depicted by both Jele and Makholwa as having become more financially emancipated as compared to some men and hence in their control of the means of production, women abuse their positions in similar ways that men in positions of power do. Nandi, Zaza and Princess in Jele's novel and Nolwazi and Linda in *The 30th Candle* and all the widows in Makholwa's *BWS* are depicted as being extremely decadent, a trait that is frowned upon by most of men who have relations with these women. Zaza in *Happiness* and members of the Triumvirate in *BWS* demonstrate extreme calculated decadence. Bheki, Zaza's husband, calmly reprimands his wife for her infidelity, showing that older masculinities represent a more mature reaction as compared to Bongani, the young jilted lover who blindly declares undying love for Zaza. Similarly, Linda and Nolwazi, in *The 30th Candle* live out their sexual fantasies. Linda in particular is depicted as intentionally using sex as a tool to emancipate herself from an unwanted

lover. Tallulah, in *BWS*, epitomises decadence and she unapologetically abuses her position of power as she acts out her sexual fantasies on younger men she has power over.

However, some of the emancipated women use their positions to nurture their relationships with their partners with results that show continued perpetrations of masculine stereotypes. Nandi and Princess in *Happiness is a Four Letter Word* and Dikeledi in *The 30th Candle* learn from their experiences the devastating consequences of their actions to blindly love their partners, who use their masculinities in a patriarchal manner. Nandi's love for her ex-boyfriend Chris Phakathi compromises her engagement to Thomas, her present fiancé. Two masculine traits are exposed through Nandi's experience, that of Chris' negligence on the one hand, and that of Thomas' forgiving nature on the other hand. These two masculinities occupy different positions in the hegemonic framework of masculinities. Princess' ordeal exposes and promotes a stereotype about migrants, living illegally in South Africa. Leo is depicted as a low-life double-crossing artist who takes advantage of Princess' hospitality. Leo's ungrateful behaviour projected towards Princess is met by loving and forgiveness by Princess, dispelling some common misconceptions about reasons that some South African women engage in relationships with migrant men for material security.

Jele and Makholwa's novel, *Black Widow Society* engages with men who are depicted as failing to acknowledge women's increased financial power and the resultant gender role changes that take place which leave men subordinate to women. Makholwa's depiction of Mzwakhe, a criminal mastermind who kills other men in the name of ridding rich women of cheating husbands, demystifies many entrenched notions that women are nurturing home makers. Mzwakhe is used by the Black Widow Society to kill other men, showing the unconventional ways in which he attains his envied lifestyle as he owns an apartment in affluent Centurion,

drives different luxury cars and is whisked to any country by the Triumvirate. Mzwakhe is unable to negotiate his masculinity between the spaces he occupies thus leading to his violent outburst of killing some of the black widows in the end.

In *The 30th Candle* Makholwa uses Winston, and Jele in *Happiness* uses Tshepo as examples of men who although they are good family providers economically, they are however very abusive to their wives. This demonstrates that economically privileged men do not always display model masculinities. Jele and Makholwa's expositions on these masculinities engage with the violence that is rampant in the suburbs which debunks the popular view that suburbs are tranquil spaces.

Chapter Four shows that young men of university going age, like those of a younger age, subscribe to society's notions of masculinity. However, because such masculinities occupy more responsible positions in society, away from the family setup, *Penumbra* captures how conditions prevalent in Cape Town pose a threat in the construction of stable masculinities attempted by Mahlangu's male characters. Cape Town, a space of unforeseen precarity, poses negative new experiences for Manga and his young friends who are all not originally Capetonians, as people of Cape Town are affectionately known. Manga and his friends fail to negotiate stable and positive masculinities to sustain themselves in the consumerist environment of Cape Town, falling into traps of petty thieving to sustain themselves financially. Lack of connections in Cape Town also accounts for the displacements these young men suffer from while trying to establish stability in Cape Town. Interestingly, Wanner's depiction of Cape Town in *Men of the South*, indicates a different view of the space. According to Wanner's narrative, Cape Town is a welcoming space where Mzilikazi is able to express his gay sexuality. Cape Town for Mzi, allows Wanner to meditate on the space as a space that allows men of queer masculinity to find opportunities of sexual expression as opposed to other spaces such as Johannesburg and KwaZulu Natal. While

Mzi is not originally from Cape Town, he has networks in the NGO world that readily find him a position in an NGO, contrasting Mahlangu's characters who are educated in Cape Town and lack the element of strong networks in Cape Town.

Similarly, Wanner's depiction of Mfundo's character counters that of Mahlangu in that Mfundo's character is revived in Cape Town. While Mfundo's unemployment predicament can be used to ponder on the space of Johannesburg, the space of Cape Town opens up for his music talent, something he is not celebrated for in the space of Johannesburg. Like the artistic characters in Mahlangu's novel, Mfundo experiences growth through exposure in Cape Town. Manga and his friends, on the other hand, oscillate between trying to act as responsible young men living under difficult and impenetrable conditions in Cape Town and their spaces of comfort provided for by their mothers elsewhere. Interestingly Mgqolozana's character Lumkile who are natively Capetonian, as depicted in *A Man who is not a Man* as pariahs of the same space brings an interesting dynamic of a contrastive view to the other two authors' views of Cape Town because Lumkile fails to meet dictates of ulwaluko that define manhood by successful traditional circumcision, so he suffers ostracisation in Cape Town but his character flourishes elsewhere.

The lack of father figures of all Mahlangu's characters speaks to the importance of male figures in the lives of boys, as those young men like Ntaba and Ndlela who both have father figures in their family units, seem to construct stable masculinities. This view trivialises the efforts of single female households and inadvertently pushes patriarchal complicit agendas. Related to this view is the depictions of female characters in Makholwa and Jele's novels that attach women's worth to the presence of a man in their lives, as seen in Zaza and Tumi's choices to preserve their marriages, and also seen in the depictions of the single and emancipated women, like Nandi and Linda who ultimately seek out relationships with their partners for security reasons. This is a

challenging view on female empowerment as both the male and female authored novels give an impunitive view of men's domination of women further subordinates women.

Furthermore, Mgqolozana's novels reiterate the importance of a father figure in the construction of balanced masculinity. Tongai's masculinity construction is doubly and negatively affected by Cape Town, as he is of foreign descent and this is a similar depiction to that of Leo in *Happiness*. While Tongai's Zimbabwean background exposes him to exclusion which negatively affects his attempt at constructing a stable masculinity. Due to the fact that he is a member of multiple communities, Tongai's main challenge is to find a suitable masculine figure to model his masculinity against, as his father is a hopeless drunkard. Tongai's construction of his own masculinity is haunted by fears of becoming like his father. However, the unfavourable conditions prevalent in Cape Town are conducive for a reckless lifestyle and Tongai falls into the trap of heavy alcohol abuse, a trait he despises. Shunning all manner of reason, represented by his grandmother's admonishes and leaning towards his mother's equally unstable femininity as the only source of family, Tongai attempts to forge a stable masculinity with negative results. Moreover, Cape Town environment seems not to readily accept migrants, whether from outside of Cape Town or outside South Africa.

Mahlangu's characterisation of Tongai is similar to that of Jele's characterisation of Leo who is depicted as taking advantage of Princess' hospitality towards him. Leo, unlike Tongai however, is depicted as coming from a rich background from the stories he narrates to Princess. Jele's depiction of Leo stereotypes migrant men as criminals who prey on South African women, although the novelist balances out this stereotyping by deliberately portraying Princess as an emancipated woman who is able to take charge of her life. Thus, Leo's characterisation shows Leo's preying nature that is not void of Princess' full consent. Princess' overprotective nature

towards Leo enables him to take advantage of her, unlike Tongai's characterisation that shows that Tongai is a product of an unstable family, in an unstable environment hence his failure to construct a stable masculinity in relation to possessing material wealth. Tongai occupies a perpetual student position with a determination to become more stable, as opposed to Leo who is an established and talented artist who squanders his chances to become a stable masculinity by taking advantage of Princess.

Penumbra also addresses disadvantageous educational policies inherited from the apartheid systems that are not relevant to contemporary social and economic conditions of the South African. These conditions disempower young black university educated men, whose expectations are to either be absorbed into the working system or affirmative action such as the BEE program. However, such programs are not all encompassing, leaving Manga and his friends in a desolate position as this prevents any semblance of a decent life towards which they aspire. With criminal activities like bank card frauds that seem to be lucrative and well paying, Manga and his friends turn to crime to get extra cash. Consequently, Manga and his friends' lives are catapulted into a cycle of poverty, stagnation and become dislocated from their present spaces. Using religion, alcohol and sex as a form of escape, the young men are trapped in vicious cycles of self-destructive ways.

Chapter Five centres on Mgqolozana's novels exposing misconceptions of masculinity constructions and expectations of men's roles that exposed men to vulnerabilities. Grounding its explorations on the fact that men are exposed victimisation by patriarchal systems of traditional institutions of masculinity on the one hand, and how the same patriarchal systems privilege some men in the university microcosm that represent the whole of South Africa. Two young men experience privilege and/or victimisation from their communities. Zizi, who represents a

privileged masculinity in the university system, writes an exposition on the corrupt nature of the University of the Western Cape (UWC), confessing to the subversive ways that the university operates, via his position as a president elect of the SRC. Zizi, in his confessional manifesto speech, addresses the ways in which the university and particularly the political party he is a president elect of, put him in a position of power and unprecedented privileged position.

Referring extensively to his formative years, Zizi's confession foregrounds his background and the social expectations emanating from his background and how it shapes him into the man that he becomes. He attempts to negotiate his masculinity from a point that promotes integrity that he learns from his parents. However, Zizi misconstrues his father's calm disposition as weakness, especially because of his domineering mother. As a result, Zizi's character is conflicted as he comes into contact with other young men from other spaces that seem to challenge what he refers to as his "homeland" upbringing. Since people from the so called "homelands" are discriminated against, Zizi makes it his mandate to prove himself. What worsens his confusion is the fact that he is sexually abused by his aunt at a young age and believes that he lacks integrity because he was unable to report this incident. Zizi uses this traumatic childhood event to try and construct a more stable and respectable masculinity in his quest to gain power as a student politician.

Mgqolozana's depiction of Lumkile in *A Man who is not a Man* shows a different side to a privileged masculinity that he captures in *Un-importance*. Lumkile is a Gugulethu born teenager who suffers from ostracisation by the community of Ngojini because of a botched circumcision. Lumkile's memoir is a cathartic process for a young man who sees himself as a survivor of botched circumcision and ridiculing from his community. While the younger Lumkile suffers from emotional trauma because of his community's judgements toward him, the older narrator tells the story from a vantage position in order to empower other ostracised young men. This

speaks of courage as Lumkile contends with socially entrenched misconceptions about “men who are not men”. He fights for the cause of those men who are treated with contempt when their circumcision goes wrong. This challenges the views of traditional ways of circumcision, which traditionalists still support causing friction between traditional practitioners of male circumcision and hospital centred circumcision.

Mgqolozana’s novel captures how young men’s private lives are negatively impacted by public opinion and views of either privilege or victimhood. These private masculinities are lived out in public spaces as either victim or victor but in private, Mgqolozana’s public hero Zizi suffers from low self-esteem compared to Lumkile who is called a “failed man”. Seen in this way, Mgqolozana’s depiction of young masculinities shows a continuation of social factors impacting on masculinity building from the family institution and other spaces. This impacts the young men’s perceptions of themselves, resulting in either strong private masculinity or weak public personas or vice versa.

The study has shown the similarities and differences in the way that male and female authors engage with the subject of largely urban South African masculinities. Most of the female authors view masculinities from a feminine point of view, using the family unit, the domestic space and female friendships to engage the subject of masculinity. Male authors view masculinities ranging from the family unit to relations in the work place. There are more similarities than differences in how authors, both female and male, depict the theme of masculinity.

Hegemonic masculinities are depicted through performances of traditional roles attributed to men. Roles such as providing for the family still define men. Moreover, men who fit this hegemonic view of masculinity are seen as superior to those men who do not fulfil their expected roles. A number of characters in the selected narratives were depicted as exhibiting hegemonic

traditional masculinities of being economic providers for their families. However, all these men, while depicted as fulfilling the role of providing for their families, they fail their spouses by being emotionally abusive through their promiscuous behaviour. Interestingly, their women equally provide for the family unit as well, challenging the notion of hegemony through being a provider.

Tshepo, in *Happiness is a Four Letter Word*, attempts to maintain his position as an African man by having an extra-marital affair with one of his employees. Bheki, in the same novel, while being financially astute, starves his wife attention resulting in her seeking affection from outside their marital bonds. Bheki's response to his wife's infidelity is depicted as uncommon since he does not react violently to his suspicion that she is having an affair. The calm and mature manner in which Bheki goes about solving his marital problems seem to be the kind of urban masculinity that Wanner admires.

Similarly, Zizi, in Mgqolozana's novel is depicted as displaying a masculinity that should be admired because he fights against the destructive hegemonic masculinities acquired during his formative years. In the same manner, what happens to Lumkile in *A Man who is not a Man*, is social and cultural critic of some traditional practices that are harmful to the construction of stable and productive masculinities. By publicising the adversities that are secretly hidden in the traditional rites of passage, Lumkile gains some cultural capital despite the fact that his community views him as a failed man. This shows that hegemonic traditional practices are dependent on the reactions and responses of the men to their social circumstances.

Another aspect affecting social views of masculine hegemony is the issue of nationality as migration is an epicenter in all the selected novels. Immigrant masculinities are placed as vulnerable and less of model masculinities in the South African metropolis. Having to work extra

hard just to be able to provide for themselves and their loved ones, migrant men are depicted as suffering from exclusion from development policies that economically advance South African black people. Migrant men are also exposed to different forms of subtle xenophobic at their work places and from exclusionary policies enacted by the South African government.

Finally, women's economic emancipation effects men's construction of productive and positive masculinities. Those men who are economically dependent on women tend to exploit the situation to their advantage by being openly lazy and completely relying on their partners for sustenance. Other men who are economically self-sufficient and also have women who can provide for themselves tend to be emotionally and physically abusive. Ironically, women themselves are depicted as still caught up in traditional views of gender roles in relationships. Some of these women subscribe to the notion that they have to be taken care of by their male partners even though they earn good salaries of their own. Hence, these depictions suggests that even the seemingly progressive South African urban space still has a long way in letting go traditional and hegemonic but harmful gender role expectations.

7. References

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