A comparative study of the representations of womanhood in local and foreign television soap operas in Kenya

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DECLARATION

I declare that this dissertation is my original work and that it has not been submitted to any other college or university for academic credit.

_____   _____

Joy Mueni   Date

This dissertation has been submitted to the University of Nairobi with our approval as Supervisors.

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Prof. Peter Kareithi

_____   _____

Dr. Muiru Ngugi

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To Jan Zillan (Ms Awesome), you are too young to understand all, but you are a benefactor of this work and I pray that you will be an empowered lady helping portray your gender positively.

DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to:

Janet Nzilani Mulwa, a woman who has charted her path in the turbulent seas of a world that is still struggling to accept that women and men are closer in nature, in spirit, in intellect than many would have us believe. You, mum, are my joy and source of inspiration in the attainment of excellence.

Jan Zillan: that you will grow to be a woman who is confident in her own right; unafraid, unfettered and undeterred.

And to the many women to whom 'empowerment' is still a foreign concept - be the heroine of your life, not the victim

ABSTRACT

This study sought to explore the representations of womanhood in soap operas. It is a comparative study and hence looked at three soap operas purposively selected for their geographical orientation. The soaps are: *Mali, Generations* and *Triunfo del Amor* which form the scope of the study. It is argued that the mass media has been involved in the creation of ideology and by its role, sets the public agenda. For this reason the study aimed to analyse how soaps represent women and to make a comparison between locally produced soaps and foreign soaps broadcasted in Kenya. Further the study sought to explore whether the soaps broadcast in Kenya help to resist or reinforce traditional African gender roles and values. Backed by an extensive literature review on social and cultural expectations of women in Africa, representation and soap opera as a television genre, the researcher lays a foundation for the theoretical framework. Feminist media theory is the theory that was used for this study. In explaining the feminist media theory, the study traces the history of the women's movement and hinges its growing popularity on ideological and power issues which give way for the feminist media criticism. Visual texts were used as the data collection method, while critical discourse analysis and interpretative textual analysis are the data analysis methods used for this study. In analyzing the texts, the researcher used four themes: objectification of the female gender, leadership, public versus private life and self-reliance versus victimization. The study found that based on the four themes, women were represented as objects for fulfilling male desires and that few women were in leadership positions. It also found that many women were represented as thriving in the private sphere as opposed to the public sphere and that while the heroines were represented as self reliant, many other women were portrayed as victims of ill circumstances and men's desires. The findings in each of these themes were compared and contrasted among the three soaps and conclusions drawn. The study concluded that female characters are traditionally represented, more so in the local soaps, and hence reinforce traditional gender roles. The study also concluded that soaps can play an important role in development of gender identities and pushing for gender parity but not in their current form. Therefore, script writers and producers need to be empowered to understand the role their works can play in the attainment of gender parity.

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Definition of Key Terms

Gender parity   Gender parity will refer to the differences between the two genders in

accessing various services like education, health care, labour

market   participation, political power, media access and

representation and in   how they are represented.

Jubilee Government   This is a coalition of various political parties that came together to

field Uhuru Kenyatta as the presidential flag bearer and

William Ruto   as his running mate in the 2013 Kenya general

elections. The coalition   won in the elections and formed what is

referred to as the Jubilee   government as the president and

his deputy were both just about 50   years of age and the election was

run during the year that Kenya was   celebrating its golden jubilee

after independence.

Mpango wa kando   This is a Kiswahili phrase commonly used in Kenya. It refers to

a clandestine affair between a married or single man and

woman.

Representation`   This is the process of constructing and depicting something, someone

or an idea. It is also concerned with how identities are

represented or constructed	constructed in a specific medium and also how they are and received by others during the process of production.
Soap opera	A soap opera shall be understood to mean a programme that is aired at least twice a week and that centres on open ended stories on personal relationships, the daily lives of these groups of people and that is heavy on dialogue. A major feature of soap operas is their seriality. In layman's terms the most common trait of a soap opera is that each episode ends with a promise for more drama the following day, rather than a neat tie-up of that episode's story, as you'd find with sitcoms or other dramas. The term 'soap opera' shall be synonymous with the term 'soap' and shall include *telenovelas.*

List of Abbreviations

ABC   American Broadcasting Company

AMWIK   Association of Media Women in Kenya

AWSA   American Woman Suffrage Association

BWOA   Black Women Organized for Action

CAK   Communications Authority of Kenya

CBS   Columbia Broadcasting System

CCK   Communications Commission of Kenya

CDA   Critical Discourse Analysis

CEDAW   Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against
Women

DSTv   Digital Satellite Television

FAWE   Forum for African Women Educationalists

FGM   Female Genital Mutilation

FIDA   Federation of women lawyers, Kenya

GII   Gender Inequality Index

IWPR	Institute for War and Peace Reporting
KBC	Kenya Broadcasting Corporation
KDHS	Kenya Demographic and Health Survey
KEWOP	Kenya Women Parliamentary Association
KTN	Kenya Television Network
MDG	Millennium Development Goals
MILF	Mother I'd Like to Fuck
MYWO	Mandeleo ya Wanawake Organisation
NASWA	National American Woman Suffrage Association
NBC	National Broadcasting Company
NBFO	National Black Feminist Organization
NCL	National Consumers' League
NGO	Non Governmental Organization
NOW	National Organization for Women
NTV	Nation Television
NWA	National Women's Party
NWSA	National Women Suffrage Association
SABC	South African Broadcasting Corporation
TV	Television
UN	United Nations
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organisation
USAID	United States Agency for International Development

WCTU Woman's Christian Temperance Union's

WTUL Women's Trade Union League

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.0   Background Information

With 2.4 million television sets in Kenya (census, 2009), television is a major source of information and entertainment in the Kenyan society today. Viewership numbers have been on a steady increase in the last few years. A research on Kenyan television viewership done in the first quarter of 2011 by Ipsos Synovate Kenya, found that viewership numbers had grown from 68 per cent of the total Kenyan population in 2007 to 71 per cent in 2011. Between 6pm and 11pm on weekday evenings, most Kenyan free-to-air television channels air both local and foreign produced soap operas. In the same research by Synovate Kenya, the time allocated by media stations to soap operas was 6 per cent of 24 hours while the time spent by audiences viewing soap operas was 19 per cent of 24 hours, translating to five hours daily. The time allocated to news was 37 per cent of 24 hours while that spent on viewing news was 33 per cent of 24 hours. Further, the time allocated by the media for music was 15 per cent while the time spent on actual viewing of music was 7 per cent. Of the three genres reported here, soap operas show the highest discrepancy at 13 per cent meaning that the soap opera genre is the second highest, next to news, in terms of actual time spent viewing despite its low time allocation. This demonstrates a keen interest in the soap opera genre.

Since their emergence on radio and subsequently television, soap operas (commonly referred to as 'soaps') have generated a lot of interest all over the world. The Kenyan screens have been filled with foreign soaps from far off countries like United States of America (USA), Australia, Mexico, Philippines, Nigeria, among others. *Dallas* and *The Bold and the*

Beautiful were some of the first soaps to be broadcast in Kenya in the early 90's by the state broadcaster Kenya Broadcasting Corporation (KBC). Tobin (2002) in studying *The Bold and the Beautiful* says it is the most watched television program in the world with over 300 million viewers in 110 countries daily while Blakley (2001) notes that there are over 500 million viewers in over 98 countries daily. *The Young and Restless* and *Days of our Lives* were other American soaps that found their way into Kenyan screens. *Escrava Isaura* and *Tu o Nadie* (*No One But You*) were among the first Latin American soaps to be aired on Kenyan screens, about the same time with the American and Australian soaps. Love, wealth, greed, betrayal and forgiveness are some of the themes in these soaps (Alma Latina, 2002). On 6th April, 1992, *Egoli: Place of gold* premiered in South Africa on M-Net, a cable television network, making it the first soap to largely feature African talent and producers in South and East Africa. It took a few years for the same to premier in Kenya. *Egoli,* as it was simply known, revolved around the "daily ups, downs, trials and tribulations of a handful of families in and around Johannesburg" (TVSA, 2012). *Tushauriane, Usiniharakishe, Tausi,* and *Lea Mwana* are examples of Kiswahili soap operas produced in Kenya in the 80's and 90's.

It was only a matter of time before the extended exposure to these foreign soaps, generated a desire for locally produced soaps. This desire was met on 12[th]October 2011 through a soap titled '*Mali – united by blood: divided by greed'* which was launched on Nation Television (NTV) a local television channel. *Lies that Bind* was launched soon thereafter on 24th November, 2011 on Kenya Television Network (KTN) becoming the second local soap opera in Kenya. *Mali* was the first Kenyan soap to be produced in English. Raam (2009) rightly points out that people are assailed with images, information, entertainment and "infotainment" coming from our radios and our TV sets, yet a large number of people fail to recognize the importance of what they're being shown and the

manner in which certain people/events are being depicted. In cultural studies, this depiction is referred to as representation.

According to Hall (1997) "representation is the production of the meaning of the concepts in our minds through language" (p. 17). As stated earlier, for the past 30 years or so, the Kenyan audience has been exposed to foreign soaps; They have grown accustomed to the themes; they have watched how people live 'out there' and with these, they have identified with some characters, questioned some themes, disagreed with some sentiments but they still watched. Buckingham (2003) argues that "the notion of 'representation' is one of the founding principles of media education.

The media do not offer us a transparent 'window' on the world, but a mediated version of the world. They don't just present reality, they re-present it" (p. 57). In light of this, it can be argued that through these soaps new histories are being created, existing identities are being negotiated and renegotiated and new ones constructed. This creation and re-creation of identities might have been inspired by the content of local popular visual culture, since TV operates solely in the public sphere like free-to-air TV channels. The objective of this study is to look at the representation of women in both foreign and locally produced soap operas and whether they reinforce or resist existing gender roles.

TV channels in Kenya have allocated 52 per cent, 39 per cent and 9 per cent of their time to local, international and African content respectively (Synovate - AudienceScape Kenya Survey Research, 2012). Although soaps do not constitute a large percentage of locally produced programming in Kenya, as stated earlier, they attract vast numbers of viewers. AudienceScape Kenya Survey Research, 2010 found that 39 per cent of TV audiences, have access to between one and six TV channels in their homes while two per cent have access to between seven and 13 channels and only one per cent have access to over 14 channels. The

four channels that a majority of the interviewed have access to are the free-to-air channels which are, in order of popularity; Citizen, KBC, KTN and NTV (Synovate - AudienceScape Kenya Survey Research, 2012). These TV channels air soap operas from as early as 6pm to as late as 11pm on most evenings, with news and short dramas being the only interruption. In essence, if you want to watch television on any evening and you tune in to any of these channels, you will be watching at least two soaps every evening. The Synovate 2012 study that was looking into audience numbers, found that 34 per cent of the respondents consider the news and information provided by television to be somewhat trustworthy and 60 per cent considered it to be very trustworthy. Further, a study done in Kenya by Steadman Research in 2008 and reported by Drablier (2008) indicated "that 80 per cent of Kenyans trust the media, a higher percentage than those who trust their president, prime minister or parliament". The same is replicated in another study done by Institute of Development Studies, University of Nairobi. Known as Afro-Barometer Round 5 Kenya Survey, Orengo (2012), the findings indicated that at 77 per cent the media was still the most trusted institution in Kenya; indeed more trusted than religion and the judiciary. This prominence and pervasiveness merits the analyses of these audio-visual texts with reference to the identities perpetuated, negotiated and constructed there.

Nations have always viewed broadcasting as a powerful mechanism of political and cultural control and have consequently developed extensive policy frameworks to regulate both its internal as well its external flow (Schudson, 1994). The Communications Commission of Kenya (CCK) now Communications Authority of Kenya (CAK) in response to a growing demand for locally produced media content ordered that every media house should have at least 40 per cent local content in all their products. The current Jubilee government has stated its intention to increase this percentage to 60. "Promote indigenous Kenyan creative and production talent by establishing a Kenya Film School and increasing

domestic Kenyan content on our television channels to 60% - half of which should be independently produced" reads their manifesto (Jubilee Manifesto). During the Groove music awards ceremony held in June, 2013, President Uhuru Kenyatta, in his speech as the chief guest, repeated the pledge (Kenyatta, 2013).

In a society where what is produced and disseminated by the media is what is considered important, it is important to look at the social construction of identities promoted by media content in Kenya. Brooks and Hebert (2006) share the notion that "how individuals construct their social identities, how they come to understand what it means to be male, female, black, … - even rural or urban – is shaped by commodified texts produced by media for audiences that are increasingly segmented by the social constructions of race and gender" (p. 297). Although this is relevant to race, class, disability, and gender identities, (Price & Nicholas, 1998; Downing & Husband, 2005; Dines & Humez, 2010) the focus of this study is on gender representation.

Gender has been consistently described as the social construction of the sexes and which varies from one social setting to another. Gender has become an issue in social, economic and political development, without which many critics and declarations say no meaningful development can be achieved (Beijing declaration; Millennium development goals; hooks, 1989; Abbott, 1992, Mills, 1995). Unger (1979) urges social scientists to use the term gender only when discussing the social, cultural, and psychological aspects that pertain to the traits, norms, stereotypes, and roles of women and men. The gender components; gender roles, gender role identities, gender role stereotypes, and gender norms vary between femininity and masculinity (Freimuth & Hornstein, 1982).

Mass media are an important part of our modern lives with increasing consumptions and different representations portrayed there in. It has been noted that "with the media

containing so many images of women and men, and messages about men, women and sexuality today, it is highly unlikely that these ideas would have no impact on our own sense of identity" (Gauntlett, 2008, p.1). This study aims to look at how the female gender is communicated and how it communicates itself via soap operas that are produced in Kenya.

Gender is a social construct. Abbott (1992) observes that in all cultures, being a woman or a man is not limited to one's biological sex. Scholars have observed that there is a distinction between sex and gender. Barker (1999) notes that "sex represents the biology of the body and gender the cultural assumptions and practices which govern the social construction of women, men and their social relations." (p. 87). Another scholar comments that 'sex-roles' and 'gender-roles' are often used interchangeably and he seeks to differentiate them noting that "the term 'sex-roles' has come to mean behaviours determined by biological sex, such as menstruation, conception, erection and seminal ejaculation. The term "'gender-role' has come to mean entirely socially created expectations of masculine and feminine behaviour" (Abbott, 1992, p. 4). Other scholars rightly survey that one is not born a woman but rather becomes a woman (Squires & Kemp, 1997 and Moi, 1999). With this distinction, the debate on gender equality begins. More often than not, one gender is seen as superior to the other - usually the male superior to the female gender. The same scholars have attributed this differentiation to how the two are socialized and represented in media products among other ways of socialization.

According to UNESCO's 2002 report, "28 countries, accounting for more than 26 per cent of the world's population may not achieve gender equality by 2015, the deadline set up by the organization to achieve universal equality" (Okonji, 2003). Delivering The UNESCO MDGs report 2010, ShaZukang the under secretary general for economic and social affairs noted that "gender equality and the empowerment of women are at the heart of the MDGs and are preconditions for overcoming poverty, hunger and disease. But progress has been

sluggish on all fronts—from education to access to political decision-making" (UN - MDG Report, 2010, p.4).

The Gender Inequality Index (GII) is an index for measurement of gender disparity and is used by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). In its 2011 report, the GII listed the top ten countries with gender parity as Sweden, Netherlands, Denmark, Switzerland, Finland, Norway, Germany, Singapore, Iceland and France. The bottom-ten are Yemen, Chad, Niger, Mali, Congo, Afghanistan, Papua New Guinea, Liberia, Central African Republic and Sierra Leone. In the top ten there is no African country while in the bottom ten all but three are from Africa. To arrive at the GII, UNDP uses three key dimensions: reproductive health, empowerment and labour market participation. According to the UNDP, none of the measures in the dimensions pertain to the country's level of development and therefore a less-developed country can perform well if gender inequality is low. The UNDP considers the dimensions complementary in that inequality in one dimension tends to affect inequality in another. Therefore, the GII captures association across dimensions, making the index association-sensitive, and ensuring that high achievement in one dimension does not compensate for low achievement in another dimension. This is the same argument that the researcher wishes to put across – that unless there is gender parity, development in all spheres is not assured. Whereas media is not mentioned as one of the dimensions, it is understood that the media, by its role, sets the public agenda which touches on the GII dimensions of reproductive health, empowerment and labour market participation.

1.1   Soap Opera

The soap opera has its origin in the 1930s in the USA daytime radio serials. Radio was the most common form of mass media and according to Hobson (2003), manufacturers embraced it as an opportunity to expand their markets. In the 1940s the genre was introduced

to television. As history would have it, the genre spread from USA, to Britain and Australia and eventually found its way to Africa and subsequently Kenya. Allen (1985) notes that the term 'soap opera' came from its connection to soap adverts that were aired during these programs. He also states that occasionally soap operas were referred to as "washboard weepers". Marx (2007) explains that "these programmes were intended to attract the attention of female listeners or housewives who were at home during the day, creating an opportunity for these companies to advertise and sell their products" (p. 43). In agreement, Doherty (2008) posits that "despite evidence that soap audiences are both male and female, the soap opera is still generally regarded as a women's genre". 'Genre' as far as television lingo is concerned, refers to the "systems of orientations, expectations, and conventions that circulate between industry, text and the subject" (Neale, 1980. p. 2) .

In essence a soap opera can be defined as "a continuing fictional dramatic television program, presented in multiple serial instalments each week, through a narrative composed of interlocking storylines that focus on the relationships within a specific community of characters" (Mumford, 1995, p. 8). Scholars like Hobson (1982), Ang (1985), Buckingham (1987) and Geraghty (1991) also define soap operas as long running, episodic TV programs with fictional stories of romance, family and relationships that primarily cater to female audiences. Unlike soap operas, telenovelas run for between three months to two years (Estill, 1998). Scholars like Graf (2008), define telenovelas as Spanish-speaking soap operas. Elsewhere, there will be a deeper illustration of what similarities and differences exist between soap opera and telenovelas. This study aims to look at the two.

Betty and Bob was the first soap opera to be produced in America by Frank Hummert and his wife Anne Ashenhurst in October 1932 (Syed, 2011). Hobson (1982) notes that *Betty and Bob's* love created drama all around them including family problems, loss of money, murder, death of the young Bob jr., and bouts of amnesia and insanity. Poor Bob was sent to

a mental institution on more than one episode. Modern themes such as romantic love, jealousy, divorce, among others were already present in this soap. In the United Kingdom, *Mrs. Dale's Diary* was the first soap airing between January 1948 and April 1969. It depicted the lives of middle-class characters (Hobson, 2003).

Syed (2011) explains that in the 1950s and 1960s because of the cultural awareness in society, there was a visible shift to working class characters that emphasized domestic realism. These were nick-named 'kitchen-sink' dramas and they depicted the activities of the working class. *Neighbours,* an Australian soap opera that first aired in 1985 and is still running, was among the first to reveal the different attitudes and values of the culture it represented (Hobson, 2003). According to its website (http://www.neighbours.com/), the show's storylines concern the domestic and professional lives of the people who live and work in Erinsborough, a fictional suburb of Melbourne, Victoria. The series primarily centres on the residents of Ramsay Street, a short cul-de-sac, and its neighbouring areas, the Lassiters complex, which includes a bar, hotel, cafe, news office and park. *Neighbours* began with three families created by Watson – the Ramsays, the Robinsons and the Clarkes. With 6,435 episodes to its name, *Neighbours* is the longest running soap to date.

A major characteristic of soap operas as a television genre is that they are largely targeted at women. Primary content in soaps include romantic love, family issues and neighbourly relations which are societal issues that are specifically of interest to women (Bowles, 2002). Syed (2011) attributes these feminine themes as a "gender norm acquired through cultural conditioning" (p. 22). From a sociological perspective soaps offer us a valuable insight into the way values are formed within popular culture and, in particular, the ways in which gender roles are constructed. In support of this notion is Modleski's (1979) argument that soaps characteristically construct a maternal position for their viewers.

Other than the thematic content, soaps have a narrative that is told from a female-centric perspective. Often, for example, the soap may tell the story of a business family. As opposed to the story concentrating on the successes and failures of the business, it will evolve around inter-personal relations of the business owners, their families and associates' relationships in glamorous settings of opulence and wealth. *The Bold and the Beautiful* is set in Los Angeles, California and centres on the wealthy Forrester family and their fashion house business. Their mansion is huge with all the trimmings of opulence. Jets, top of the range cars and gadgets, swimming pools, high fashion are all part of the sets. In fact *The bold and the beautiful* has won several awards for outstanding achievements in art direction/set decoration/scenic design for a drama series. In agreement Rapping (2002) observes that the private sphere is privileged and valorised on soaps and the things that women do in that sphere are seen as central to the maintenance and proper functioning of human life. According to Geraghty (1991) melodrama on soaps is presented through "the close-ups of faces, of important objects, the deliberate movement of a character across a room, the lingering of the camera on a face at the end of a scene" (p. 30) all reminiscence of the sentimental novels for women readers in the 19th Century.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

"Gender roles and relationships vary across time and from society to society, but gender inequality has usually been closely related, and men typically claim more property, prestige, and power" (Healey, 2003 p. 21). According to Vendemoortele (2000), "the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), which express key dimensions in human development and poverty reduction, mentions gender equality as paramount to eradication of poverty". This being the case, then it is important that gender equality is achieved, as it is "not just a prerequisite for the existence of society, but also as a future determinant of that society" (Okonji, 2002). Gender equality seeks an equal representation of men and women in all

spheres of life. In spite of all the work Kenyan and African feminist organisations such as Federation of Women Lawyers (FIDA) and Forum for African Women Educationalists (FAWE, have done in creation of ideology, media is key and hence cannot be absolved from the projection and reflection of gender. Barker (1999) in a study done in USA, notes that "television plays a significant part in the regulation of gender" (p. 71) and with 2.4 million Kenyans having access to television, "television has become a leading resource for the construction of identity" (p. 3). In a study done in the USA, Meehan (1983) found that women were portrayed as the imp, the good wife, the bitch, the victim, the decoy among other portrayals. Adding to this, Ingham (2007), notes that the ultimate life achievement of a woman is supposed to be getting married and giving birth to children because women are experts in the private setting. Researching on soap operas, Russell et al. (2005) just like Barker (1997) found that the soap opera script depicts a stereotypically traditional world in which women are restricted to "the private world of interpersonal relationships but excluded from more assertive roles in the public domain" (p. 620).This portrayal has been credited to the un-accessed voice of women in the media (Mills, 1995; Okonji, 2003 and Ingham, 2007). Wood (1994) also attributes the portrayal to three reasons namely, under representation, stereotypical representation and "depictions between men and women emphasize traditional roles and normalize violence against women". "This under representation and negative depictions in media have broad societal effects" notes (Yi & Dearfield, 2012). In yet another study in the USA, it was found out that gender is misrepresented where women are shown as only 37 per cent of television characters, yet women make up more than half of the population (51 per cent). When films and television do depict female characters, they often reflect gender stereotypes (Yi & Dearfield, 2012). Male characters dominate television shows (63 per cent) while being less than half the population (49 per cent) (Folkerts et al. 1998). In addition, men in the media are represented speaking in their public or professional roles while

the women are represented speaking in their private, personal roles. Often women are seen as mother, daughter and/or wife.

The Constitution of Kenya, 2010, article 27(3) states that "women and men have the right to equal treatment, including the right to equal opportunities in political, economic, cultural and social spheres". Vision 2030, Kenya's economic, political and social blueprint, states that "women are disadvantaged" and hence it is the government's aim to "mainstream gender equity in all aspects of society". It continues to note:

> …given that women play a critical role in the socio-economic development of any nation, there is an urgent need to remove all obstacles that hinder their contribution to national development. Under this Vision, specific policy measures will be taken to correct the glaring gender gaps in access to and control of resources, economic opportunities, and in power and political voice (Chapter 4.7).

One of the major social institutions, the media - through its work of representation - is key in determining whether gender equity will be attained or not.

There are many studies (Geraghty, 1991; Hermes, 2007 and Syed, 2011) that have focused on soap operas and gender studies in their different dimensions and perspectives. However, none of these studies have been done in Kenya and hence this provides a gap for study. The closest that any researcher has come geographically are studies done in South Africa (Dentlinger, 1999; Marx, 2007a; Marx, 2007b) which all concentrate on the representation of 'South Africanness' an issue of race. This study aims to look at the representation of Kenyan women in soap operas and how this representation contributes to the national agenda of gender equity.

1.3   Research Objectives

The objectives of this study are:

1. To determine how women are represented in foreign and locally produced soaps broadcast in Kenya.

2. To compare and contrast the representations of women in foreign and local soaps broadcast in Kenya.

3. To establish whether these representations of women by these foreign and local soaps reinforce or resist traditional gender roles in Kenya.

4. To ascertain the role played by these soaps towards achieving or undermining gender parity in Kenya.

1.4 Research Questions

This study seeks to answer the following questions:

1. How are women represented in foreign and locally produced soaps broadcast in Kenya?

2. Do foreign and Kenyan soaps broadcast in Kenya differ in their representation of women?

3. How do these representations of women by these foreign and locally produced soaps reinforce or resist traditional gender roles in Kenya?

4. Do these representations contribute to the attainment or undermining of gender parity in Kenya?

1.5 Justification of the Study

This study will be looking at the representations of the female gender in soap operas and the role that these representations play in the public agenda and in the attainment of gender parity in Kenya. There have been studies done in the gender field but most of them

have concentrated on development issues like female genital mutilation (FGM), domestic violence and the role that women play in economic and political issues. In other studies, the media have been overlooked and even where some studies have been done, they concentrate on the print media, a few on advertising and little on electronic media. In television there have been studies on the drama genre with *Siri* a Kenyan drama, being studied most. Gitimu (2014), looks at the mise-en-Scene technique in *Siri.* DeBlock (2013) looks at the role children's soap opera plays in Kenya. In south Africa, where the soap genre has been in existence for a longer duration, most studies look at different aspects of the soaps. For instance, Hannelie Marx (2007) looked at the "Narrative and soap opera" where she sought to follow the construction of identities in a "new South Africa" as the study was done post-apartheid. Motsaathebe (2009) looks at "Gendered roles, images and behaviour in the soap opera *Generations"* where he evaluates gender stereotyping. It is for this reason that the researcher sought to study the soap opera genre and compare the Kenyan productions with foreign soaps.

1.6   Significance of the Study

In any study, an important significance lies in theory or perspective development or modification. This study is no exception and it shall dwell on modifying or developing a new perspective on feminist media criticism specifically for Kenya.

As demonstrated elsewhere, gender parity is an important factor in the attainment of the Kenyan vision 2030, MDGs and the implementation of the constitution. This study will play a role in this as its findings may be used in creating and/or amending social and media policies.

There have been numerous studies on different aspects of the gender issue. Kabira and Kimani (2012) look at the historical journey of Women's leadership in Kenya while Wainaina

(2011) delves into the gendered challenges and opportunities of University education in Kenya. This study will add to the body of knowledge on the gender issue from a different perspective – that of gender representation in media platforms. Organisations dealing with gender parity may use the knowledge in this study to inform the women they represent and also to inform their decision making policies regarding the media.

The media industry at large will also be a direct beneficiary. Any added insight to the industry is a plus as it is an industry that is rarely documented. Important knowledge will be gained in the process of this study that will determine whether the industry lacks critical awareness of its impact in society or that it does what it does consciously backed by knowledge or it broadcasts out of ignorance. Communications Authority of Kenya may use the findings and recommendations to formulate policy on local programming and its impact on society.

This work can be used as a tool for teaching any of these topics as well as a tool for media literacy.

This study will contribute to a little-studied but critical aspect of Kenyan society and an increasingly important part of the country's cultural processes.

1.7   Scope of the Study

This study aims to look at the representations of women in local and foreign soap operas broadcast in Kenya. To achieve the objectives of the study, the researcher will use various themes found in the soaps to analyse the collected data and to draw comparisons and contrasts between locally produced soaps and foreign produced soaps. The researcher will use critical discourse analysis and interpretative textual analysis to aid in analysis. The following soap operas were purposively chosen for this study.

1.7.1 *Mali.*

Mali debuted on 12th October 2011 on NTV and it airs thrice a week for half an hour. According to the production company's website (http://www.alisonproduction.com), its storyline "revolves around the lives of an affluent family, rich to the bone but like every family they are faced with issues. The patriarch, Mali, is a chauvinist who runs his two homes like a military camp. The drama unfolds when the patriarch collapses and dies without a will. The family gets embroiled in a journey of greed, deceit, division and discovery of horrifying secrets that would best stay hidden. This is a story of obsession to do what is right but also get what is owed". Its tagline reads: 'United by blood, divided by greed'.

1.7.2 *Triunfo del Amor (Triumph of Love).*

Triumph of Love is a Mexican telenovela centred around Maximiliano a young hard working man conflicted by his sense of honour, duty to family and his personal desires and Maria Desemparada, a young woman raised in an orphanage who dreams of becoming a high-fashion model. The two must overcome many challenges to see their love thrive and triumph.

1.7.3 *Generations.*

Generations is a South African soap opera which first aired on South African Broadcasting Corporation (SABC) 1 in 1994. It was created and produced by Mfundi Vundla. The backdrop of *Generations* is the advertising industry, with a storyline that celebrates dreams and aspirations of the wealthy and poor, urban and rural, folk. Rivalry, treachery and blackmail between siblings and friends and foes alike make *Generations* one of the most

forceful dramas South Africa has ever produced. Suspense, intrigue and tension are weaved in the soap as the plot unfolds and romance influences relationships between warring parties.

1.8   Study Limitations

One limitation of this study is that there are only two locally produced soap operas using English as the main language, and one is under study. It would have been good to have a wider selection pool but this is not possible. However, the one soap under study will be representative as it constitutes 50 per cent of the entire population of local soaps.

Unlike Mexico and South Africa where they have had the soap opera genre for over two decades, the Kenyan industry is only two years old. None the less, the value of this study, being a qualitative study, lies in unearthing the ideologies, meanings and values of the texts under study.

Data acquisition posed a great challenge as broadcasters flatly refused to part with recorded episodes despite the fact that the episodes requested for had already aired. With great difficulty and exorbitant charges, the researcher managed to acquire the episodes now under review.

There are other productions that many consider to be soaps but according to the definition of soaps, are not. Some local productions that are often confused to be soaps include: *Siri* and *Makutano Junction*. *Siri* is produced by Al Is On production company and in their website they rightfully state that *Siri* is "an edutainment drama series targeting peri-urban/rural audiences. The show uses drama to highlight issues of reproductive health - HIV/AIDS to spur behavioural change" (www.allisonproduction.com). According to their website, the producers of *Makutano Junction* Mediae state that "*Makutano Junction* is a weekly drama series set in a typical peri-urban East African town. The drama follows the

lives, loves, frustrations and successes of a small African community living in a context and a manner familiar to tens of millions of people on the continent" (www.mediae.org).

1.9   Chapter Summary and Organisational Structure of the Dissertation

The first chapter of this study has made a case for the topic under study and stated the questions and objectives of this study. It has also laid a background to the study of soap operas and their relation to gender. Above all, it has presented the statement of the problem and operational definition of terms.

The second chapter, Literature Review, shall examine different pieces of literature touching on the key elements of this study. It will look at feminist media theory as the anchoring theory for the study. In laying a foundation of gender studies, this chapter also aims at tracing the evolution of the gender movement in Kenya and expounding on its impact on representation. Soap operas as a genre of television production will be expounded on and the insight gained used to lay the case for representations of women in soap operas.

Research methodology and setting the context forms the third chapter of this study. The chapter will delve into the research methods that were used to collect and analyse data. Key among them are visual texts which include a number of episodes from three soap operas. This section will also explain how the texts used in this study were chosen. Critical discourse analysis and interpretative textual analysis are the methods of analysis that the researcher used and they will be explored in this chapter. The chapter will finally set the context of the chosen soaps by providing plots and synopsis, opening montages and signature tunes.

Chapter four and five will dwell on the chosen themes of analysis which include objectification of women, self reliance versus victimization and an exploration of leadership and the public versus private life of women.

The last chapter of this study will provide comparisons and/or contrasts of the locally and foreign produced soaps making room for conclusions to be drawn and finally, recommendations will be offered.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0   Introduction

This chapter reviewed literature that was relevant to this study. It started off by looking at existing literature on social and cultural attitudes towards women in Kenya and the long struggle by Kenyan women to resist these attitudes. It then looked at representation and how this was practised in soap operas. After which, this chapter sought to decipher the wider picture of television representations and their role in influencing perception of gender. Feminist media theory formed the theoretical framework for this study.

2.1   Social and Cultural Attitudes Towards Women in Kenya

Culture may be defined as the total sum of a people's way of life. It includes the norms and values of a particular society. Tylor (1958) sees "culture ... as that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, law, custom, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of that society" (p.1). Edward Said (1994) identifies two meanings of culture. First, it refers to the many practices like the arts, communication, and representation which have relative autonomy from the economic, social, and political domains. These human expressions have an aesthetic dimension embedded in art and seek to cause pleasure and entertainment. Second, culture includes a community's reservoir of what defines them as a people which in most cases represents the best that has been known and thought. Through culture we are able to see society in its strengths and weaknesses and to see

ourselves. In agreement, Geertz (1973) adds that culture is "a set of control mechanisms – plans, recipes, rules, instruments (what computer engineers call "programs") – for governing of behaviour." According to him, this view of culture "begins with the assumption that human thought is basically both social and public – that its natural habitat is the house yard, the market place, and the town square" (44-5). Njogu (2007) explains that Geertz's interpretation of culture has the requisite implications of power and control mechanisms embedded in culture, which allow for the exploration of gender inequality and inequity.

Gender is a social and cultural construct. Every culture assigns specific roles to specific genders and as (Kottak, 2005) puts it "gender roles are the tasks and activities a culture assigns to the sexes" (p. 185). The traditional feminine gender role is a social orientation that emphasizes closeness and solidarity, whereas the traditional masculine gender role is a social orientation that emphasizes power and status (Tannen, 1987, 1990). Traditional gender roles were legitimized and institutionalized by cultures in order to perpetuate a structure of male dominance and female subordination (Ickes, 1993). At least 45 African countries have ratified the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW). There are several regional and international agreements guaranteeing the human rights, equality and integrity of women and girls throughout the life cycle. However African women still face discrimination in all spheres of life, in public and private. Violence against women is still a major problem, religious and cultural fundamentalisms are on the increase, discriminatory laws still serve to control women's lives and bodies, and harmful traditional practices still persist. Negative stereotypes and attitudes prevent many women from realising their full potential and making the contributions towards their communities that they would really wish to. Women in many parts of the continent are suffering from a backlash and a rollback of gains already made.

Kenya is a patriarchal society, and in the African traditional society, women were considered inferior to men. Bwakali (2001) notes that gender equality was not practiced in the African traditional society. Women were considered as a form of property, and their rights were consequently subordinated to the interests of men. Kareithi (2013) notes that before colonialism took root in Kenya, other than the control of land and livestock, "women were economically empowered as they sold their farm produce, pots, calabashes, ornaments and other crafts in the market place". Quoting Warris, (2007) Kareithi (2013) explains that "The Native Hut Tax and the Poll Tax, both introduced in 1901 were designed to force them [men] to earn the money to pay the taxes by working on white plantations" and this is what led to men having economic dominance over women.

In the African context, traditional beliefs and cultural attitudes towards women are still dominant and many women find it difficult to disassociate from these attitudes lest they be ostracized. Despite women's education and entry into the job market and the political arena, the woman's role is typically that of a homemaker. The man on the other hand is the bread winner, head of the house and has a right to public life (Sadie, 2005). "In addition to bearing and rearing children, it was considered women's duty to cook and clean for their families and, in that context, to be responsible for all chores associated with these duties" Kareithi (2013). Sadie asserts that cultural attitudes are hostile to women involvement in decision making positions. Despite cultural attitude some women are able to transcend and rise to positions of leadership but more often than not, it means having to juggle cultural expectations with their leadership roles.

Under customary laws, women were not entitled to inherit land, or to own land upon dissolution of a marriage. Under customary law, women tend to have user rights to land that is achieved through marriage, and not owner rights. In many communities therefore, women

are free to grow crops and even make permanent improvements to land, but not to own it (Kenya Women's Manifesto). Sadly, only five per cent of land in Kenya is owned by women.

Women in African traditions were subject to forced marriages, which could be negotiated and finalized without their consent when they were as young as nine years old, without regard to their youth and educational needs. They were - and still are - subject to female genital cutting or mutilation, again, quite often without their consent. The practice is universal in North Eastern Province of Kenya (99%) and least in Western Province (5%) (KDHS 2003). It is also related to education and is more prevalent among the uneducated. In Kenya, genital cutting is highest among the Somali, Kisii, and Maasai and lowest among the Luhya and Luo. In 2013, president Uhuru Kenyatta appointed Jebii Kilimo to head the Anti-Female Genital Mutilation board stating that FGM was a problem in some communities in Kenya.

Women, in some ethnic groups, are still subject to barbaric cultural practices such as widow inheritance, dowry-related violence, honour killings and trafficking. Women could be 'chastised' by men for indiscipline, which led to societal tolerance of very abusive marital relationships which have, in the last few years, risen in alarming rates and led to several fatalities. Generally, it is viewed as "unnatural and disrespectful for a married woman to assert her rights as against her husband". This leads to "cases of spousal abuse and property confiscated are [is] rarely reported" (Omamo, 2002). The United Nations Declaration on the Elimination of Violence Against Women defines violence against women as "any act of gender -based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or mental harm or suffering to women ... whether occurring in public or private life." A study done by FIDA-K between 1998 and 1999, found that over 60 women were killed by their spouses in domestic violence and the media reported some 50 deaths and 69 injuries from domestic violence in 2000. According to the Kenya Women's Manifesto, "in 1997, the number of

reported cases of rape stood at 1,050. This figure rose to 2,308 in 2003. Cases of assault and battery also moved upwards from 10,268 in 1997 to 13,401 cases in 2003" (p.34). Kareithi (2013) notes that:

> In the 2003 Kenya Demographic and Health Survey, conducted by Kenya Bureau of Statistics in partnership with Ministry of Health and the Kenya National Council for Population and Development, women and men were asked whether they thought a husband would be justified in hitting or beating his wife in each of the following five situations: If she burns the food; if she argues with him; if she goes out without telling him; if she neglects the children; and if she refuses to have sexual relations with him. More than 63 per cent of men and 67 per cent of women interviewed agreed that a husband is justified in beating his wife for at least one of those five reasons. Neglecting the children and arguing with the husbands were the two most commonly justified reasons for wife beating, according to women.

In the African traditional society, Kelly (1972) remarks that the Boran women were in charge of the care and upkeep of the settlement area and their children while among the Taveta, once a baby girl was born, she was immediately engaged to a certain man. This bound her to marry that man later in life and her primary role was to take care of the children. Ndeti (1972) observes that among the Kamba community, women were taught at an early age to be subordinates of men while among the Luo, the woman had limited freedom over her life because the man controlled her.

In the traditional African oral literature, women were also depicted as home makers, prostitutes, troublemakers and other negative roles. In fact, it has been noted that "simply being a woman in Kenya often means being a victim to prejudices found in oral literature such as proverbs, stories, songs and myths" ('INC gender profile, 2004). A common saying in Africa is that "women should be seen, not heard". Janet Nzilani Mulwa, (J. N. Mulwa, personal communication, August, 24 2014) explaining on the dowry negotiations ceremony (*ngasya*) among the Kamba notes that in such occasions, few women are invited to attend but they are not allowed to speak. This is in spite of the fact that the dowry being negotiated is for the bride to be. Many of the various ethnic groups' traditional wisdom portrays women

negatively. In their clearly defied roles, "women are depicted as possession of males and of a society as a whole in which they are expected to be subordinates. Girls are not considered as important as boys" (INC gender profile, 2004). In his research 'the construction of gender through the narrative process of the African folktale: a case study of the Maragoli folktale, Kabaji (2005) found that the ogre, a constant character in African folklore, was always cast "as a masculine hegemonic figure inspires fear in the female characters. The ogre casts a dark shadow on the movement of girls and women characters and they limit their sphere of operation to the domestic domain. The ogres represent masculine hegemony that is often contested and subverted through creation of sub-texts in the folktale performance".

In poems from East Africa (1971), for example, a poem depicts a young lady, Atieno, who is enslaved by her uncle who employs her as a house girl but neither pays her nor looks after her. When she gives birth, she is not taken care of and she bleeds to death (*A freedom song*, Oludhe Marjorie). In yet another poem, (*The unlucky lover*, Namungalu Magemeso) the persona who is a young girl, was forced to marry a man she did not love. The girl talks to a boy who she thinks loves her and suggests that they elope. She points out that "I can't sexually starve".

It is only in recent publications that there is a good portrayal of the female gender. In the novel, *The River and the Source* (Ogola, 1994) the main character, Akoko, is brought up and married among the Luo. When her husband dies, the family seeks to 'give' her to her brother in-law (the practice of wife inheritance) but she refuses. The women in this novel, are depicted as dominant and strong willed and can make their own decisions without the fear of being ex-communicated by society. One female character (Wandia) even proposes marriage to her boyfriend! (An event that was unheard-of in the traditional African society).

2.2   Women's Movements

Women's movement started in the 19th century and run until the early 20th century. Before this, women were not entirely content with their position in life. Butterfield (1975) writes of a letter that Abigail Adams wrote to her husband who was attending the Continental Congress in 1776. In the letter she asks women's power to be increased because "all men would be tyrants if they could" and it made no sense to be "bound by Laws in which we (women) have no voice or representation". Her demands where not heard until much later. In 1848, a woman's right convention, organized by Elizabeth Cady Stanton, was held in Seneca Falls (O'Connor & McGlen, 1998, p. 1). At that meeting which was attended by about 300 women, "a series of resolutions calling for the abolition of legal, economic, and social discrimination against women was passed" (ibid). According to Wellman (1991) at the end of the two day meeting 100 people (68 women and 32 men) had signed the Declaration of Sentiments which stated "that all men and women are created equal; that they are endowed by their Creator with certain inalienable rights; that among them are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness…" (p. 9).

A larger meeting which was presided over by a woman was held twelve days later in Rochester, New York and a more revolutionary set of resolutions were drafted ('Seneca', 2005). The main issues that arose dealt with moral codes, divorce and criminal laws, and the limited opportunities for women to obtain education, participate in the church and enter careers in medicine, law and politics (Ryan, 1975). Since 1848, the pursuit of women's right has been thriving. To follow these activities, the women's movement has been divided into three phases: The first-wave, the second-wave and the third-wave.

2.2.1 First-wave Feminism

In 1851 Cady Stanton met Susan B. Anthony who was an activist in the temperance movement and these energized the movement (Gordon, 1991). It was during the religious

revivalism that actual activities of the Woman's Movement begun in the USA (O'Connor & McGlen, 1998). The women's movement evolved out of social reform groups such as the Abolition of Slavery, the Social Party and Temperance Movements (World book, 2005). During this time, men and women were encouraged to work for themselves and the less fortunate than themselves. The Temperance and Abolition Movements both developed by followers of revivalism, attracted large numbers of supporters. In the liberal branch of the Antislavery Movement, women took active vocal roles (Abbott, 1992). O'Connor (1998), reports that at this time there was a leading abolitionist newspaper, *The Liberator* whose editor was William Lloyd Garrison. Garrison allowed women to write believing that men and women were created equal. One of the first women to speak out publicly, Maria W. Stewart was a writer of this paper and she gave a series of four public addresses in Boston. Her speeches were even more notable because she was African-American. Participation in the Antislavery Movement helped to spark women's recognition that they, as a class, were subjected to discrimination. In spite of all this work, it was not until the late 1860's that independent women's right organizations were formed. Suffrage quickly became the chief goal of the women's rights movement. Leaders of the movement believed that if women had the vote, they could use it to gain other rights. In 1869, after a disagreement over endorsement of the Fifteenth Amendment occurred, two rival organizations, the National Woman Suffrage Association (NWSA) led by Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony and the American Woman Suffrage Association (AWSA), led by Lucy Stone and her husband Henry Blackwell, were founded ('women's movement', 2004). Through the 1870s these groups lobbied for the fruition of the Seneca Falls resolutions. Unfortunately, their views were seen as too radical and were met with little success (Kaplan, 1975). In 1872, Anthony and a group of women voted in the presidential election in Rochester, N.Y. She was arrested and fined for voting illegally. At her trial, which attracted nationwide attention, she made a stirring speech

that ended with the slogan 'Resistance to Tyranny Is Obedience to God'" (History of Women Suffrage).

In 1890, NWSA and AWSA were merged to form the National American Woman Suffrage Association (NAWSA) (Abbott, 1992). Their main agenda was to attain women suffrage. Krolokke (2005) notes that during World War I "members of the National Women's Party (NWA) protested outside the White House with confrontational banners accusing the government of undemocratic practices. By this time, Germany had already granted women suffrage". New Zealand and South Australia, both Britain colonies, had also granted women the right to vote in 1893 and 1895 respectively (Australian suffragettes, 2002). In Britain, the Representation of the People Act was passed in 1918 and hence granted women over the age of 30 the right to vote (Phillips, 2004).

The Woman's Christian Temperance Union's (WCTU) agenda was the abolition of liquor. In the North and West the National Consumers' League (NCL) and Women's Trade Union League (WTUL) were founded (O'Connor, 1998). In spite of their different agendas, the women leaders realized that women suffrage would enable them to attain their goals (Abbott, 1992). Initially some women had seen motherhood and marriage as incidental roles for women with respect to any claim for rights. However, their leaders Alice Paul and Lucy Burn spearheaded a non violent protest for women's suffrage and they viewed motherhood and marriage as an important basis for the right to vote" (Wood, 2007, p. 62). They were not granted suffrage immediately but it laid the groundwork for the same. Black Women abolitionists such as Maria Stewart, Sojourner Truth and Frances Harper agitated for the rights of women of colour. "Initially, there were strong links between abolitionist efforts and women's rights... the links dissolved as many abolitionists became convinced that the movement for black men's voting rights had to precede women's suffrage" (ibid). Thus, although women of colour continued to participate and representatives such as Ida B. Wells

and Mary Church Terrell also strove to show how the linkage of sexism and racism functioned as the main means of White male dominance, the first wave of feminism consisted largely of White, middle-class, well-educated women (Campbell, 1989). With this clarified, all women's group begun to support women suffrage and indeed by 1920, the alliance was able to secure passage of the Nineteenth Amendment, which gave women the right to vote (ibid). However, "it was not until 1928 that all women - not just those over 30 and of the right property qualifications- could legally vote" ('women's movement', 2005). Property qualifications here referred to with massive wealth.

The importance of this wave of feminist is that suffragists confronted stereotypes of women. Krolokke (2005) explains that the first stereotype they confronted was that they engaged in public persuasion which was considered most 'unwomanly'. Campbell (1989) states it this way: "No 'true woman' could be a public persuader' (pp. 9 -10). Second, they challenged the 'cult of domesticity' - "in those days it dictated that a true woman's place was in the home, meeting the needs of husband and children" (p. 5). This argument was enshrined in the view that men and women were seen as different with women being seen with a greater maternal and domesticity disposition. The counter-argument to this was that at least in legal terms, men and women are equal in all respects; and therefore to deny women the vote was to deny them full citizenship (Campbell, 1989, p. 14). Around this time in Europe, there was rhetoric of gender equity based on the Western political framework of enlightenment and liberalism and some of the American feminists lurched on the notion of equity. Krolokke (2005) posits that "politically, this view led to the claim that women and men should be treated as equals and that women should not only be given access to the same resources and positions as men but also be acknowledged for their contributions and competencies". This concept is often referred to as 'equity feminism' and it basically sees men and women as equal and it led to the liberal first-wave feminism.

"Liberal feminism identifies and challenges institutional practices, policies, and laws that exclude women from positions of influence in public and professional life" (Brownmiller, 2000; Rosen 2001 in Wood, 2007). Three distinct works by various authors were instrumental in the liberal feminism. Mary Wollstonecraft's *A vindication of the Rights of Woman* (1792), Virginia Woolf's *A Room of One's Own* (1929) and Simone de Beauvoir's *The Second Sex* (1949). A famous quote by Mary states "the woman who strengthens her body and exercises her mind will, by managing her family and practicing various virtues, become the friend and not the humble dependent of her husband". The latter two laid a foundation for the radical feminism. Woolf introduced the notion of female bisexuality and a unique woman's voice and writing while Beauvoir brought forth the notion of women's radical otherness or, rather, the cognitive and social process of 'othering' women as the second sex in patriarchal societies.

2.2.2   Second-wave Feminism

After achieving suffrage, women still wanted more. The term 'second-wave feminism' refers to the period between 1960 and early 1980s women's liberation movement and is concerned with equality issues in all spheres of life. Whereas first-wave feminism focussed mainly on suffrage and overturning legal obstacles to gender equality, second-wave feminism broadened the debate to a wide range of issues: sexuality, family, the workplace, reproductive rights, de facto inequalities, and official legal inequalities (Duggan & Hunter, 1995). Wood (1994) notes that second-wave feminism is not one, but made up of many branches and "the question may not be whether you are a feminist, but which kind of feminist you are" (p. 106). They include liberal, radical, eco, standpoint and identity feminism.

"Liberal feminism's complaint that women were confined to a main 'job' of wife, mother, with anything else they did having to take a back seat to child care and housework,

was the theme of Betty Friedan's best-selling book *The Feminine Mystique"* (1963) (Sindle, 1995). hooks, (1984) acknowledges that "its publication marked the beginning of the contemporary Women's Movement". The common thought that liberal feminists hold is that gender differences are not based in biology and hence they should be treated the same as their male counterparts. In 1966, Betty Friedan and others formed the National Organization for Women (NOW) to "take action to bring women into full participation in the mainstream of American society now, exercising all privileges and responsibilities thereof in truly equal partnership with men" (Fudge, 2005). According to Sindle (1995) the contributions made by the liberal feminist in the women's rights movement include a) making formal and informal gender discrimination visible and countering its effects, b) working with civil rights organizations to frame affirmative action guidelines c) getting more women elected and appointed in government positions and d) getting abortion legalized and reproductive rights recognized as human rights. It is to be noted that this is not true for all countries but rather a majority of developing countries are still struggling with this.

The protest associated with the Miss America Pageants in 1968 and 1969 are credited to the liberal feminists. However, some scholars (Echol, 1993; Dow, 2003) attribute it to the radical feminists. The protest was to show how women in pageant competitions were paraded like cattle, highlighting the underlying assumption that the way women look is more important than what they do, what they think, or even whether they think at all (Freeman, 1975). Susan Brownmiller (in Dial, 1991) writes that "the boardwalk hijinks and civil disobedience of the Miss America protest had global ripples as both national and foreign journalists seized on the story," and historian Flora Davis (1991) calls the protest the moment that "feminism suddenly burst into the headlines."

The radical second-wave feminists "claimed that patriarchy is inherent to bourgeois society and that sexual difference is more fundamental than class and race differences"

(Krolokke, 2005). They further made a claim for sisterhood and solidarity, despite differences among women. Their agitations were characterized by slogans such as 'Woman's struggle is class struggle' and the most famous 'The personal is political', directing the feminist agenda to attempt to combine social, sexual, and personal struggles and to see them as inextricably linked. Feminist and writer Carol Hanisch, is often credited with the origin of the slogan 'the personal is political due to her essay titled "*the Personal is Political*" (1970). However in the introduction of the republication of the essay in 2006, she said that she was not the one who coined the phrase (Tobias, 1997). The anthology *Sisterhood is Powerful* (1970), edited by Robin Morgan, helped fan the radical feminist movement.

In 1974, Francoise d'Eaubonne published *La feminisme ou la Mort* (loosely translated to Feminism or Death) and has been used as the 'guide book' of eco feminism. Eco feminists argue that the desire to dominate anything that does not resist will bring destruction. They see domination as being rooted to cultural values that esteem oppression. They speak out against values and practices that encourage domination, exploitation, and aggression and illuminate on how these oppress women, men, animals and even the planet itself (Gaard & Murphy, 1999; Mellor, 1998; Warren, 2000).

Another branch of the second wave of feminism is standpoint feminism. Standpoint feminism articulated a specifically feminist theory and practice that expanded the criticism of capitalism and patriarchy with a more complex analysis of post-war welfare societies and their consequences for women on different levels and in different situations. Publications such as '*The Reproduction of Mothering* (Chodorow, 1978) and *In a Different Voice* (Gilligan, 1982) looked into women's productive capacities in respect to motherhood and nurturing. Unlike the radical feminism that ignored these aspects, standpoint feminists took these and generated a whole wealth of knowledge that was used to understand and re-evaluate feminism.

Identity second-wave feminism was marked by a growing criticism from Black, working-class, and lesbian feminists, outlined by, among others, bell hooks in *Ain't I A Woman? Black Woman and Feminism* (1981) and Trinh T. Minh-ha in *Woman, Native, Other: Writing Postcoloniality and Feminism* (1989). These women questioned the feminist agenda that was articulated by White, middle-class and heterosexual women. This brought about "'gyno-criticism' a method first developed by Elaine Showalter" as Krolokke, (2005) notes. Barry (2009) explains that gyno-criticism "is the study of feminist literature written by female writers inclusive of the interrogation of female authorship, images, the feminine experience and ideology, and the history and development of the female literary tradition". Another branch that formed was 'Womanism' which was coined by Black women. In the United States, Black feminists voiced their concerns in organizations such as Black Women Organized for Action (BWOA) and the National Black Feminist Organization (NBFO), which both worked to bring gender and race into the national consciousness and addressed issues of poverty, health, and welfare. Women of colour and women from third-world countries could now speak for themselves as *'other Others'* as Trinh Ming-ha referred to herself. Gayatri Spivak's *In Other Worlds: Essays in Cultural Politics* (1987) further criticized Western feminism for speaking naively on behalf of third-world women. She elaborated on the notion of "strategic essentialism" and raised the question of the difficulty associated with translation between different groups of women, their vocabulary, and voice.

Helene Cixous, Luce Irigaray and Julia Kristeva were hard at work in the European context through their publication *l'ecriture feminine* which was later translated to English as *French Feminists* (1981). Krolokke (2005) posits that "French feminists explored Western universalism and its paradoxical articulation through dualisms such as mind/body, man/woman, and White/Black and their hierarchical ordering, in which one element is not only different from but also less than the other. Developing a thesis of the 'phallogocentrism'

of Western thinking, they argued that it constitutes the very foundation of (Western) language(s) through a binary logic that makes the phallus the master sign and the father the origin of symbolic law". Notably in Irigayay's dissertation (1974) was her thinking that the feminist movement cannot be able to identify with difference. "With Irigaray, we can claim that difference feminism perpetuates the dilemmas of Western universalism and its paradoxical attributions to 'particularism' in terms of the implied other, which guarantees the 'one and only'" (Dial, 1999). The difference argument has also tended to oscillate between positive difference as inherent in women (be it biological or sociological) and negative difference as relative (be it biological or sociological) to subordination. This line of the argument criss-crosses the sex-gender distinction and is obviously neither intellectually nor politically valid. According to Krolokee (2005), Irigaray helps us open a door to a different kind of thought and action, in which a continued process of diversification and multiplication takes over from the frozen pairing of equity (sameness) and difference making space for the third wave feminists.

2.2.3   Third-wave feminism.

The third-wave feminist movement started in the early 1990's as a response to the perceived failures of the second-wave feminists. The first-wave of feminism lasted over 150 years while the second-wave lasted just about 25 years before being declared 'over' by American mainstream media. On December 4, 1989, *Times, (*a weekly news magazine published in New York City and has a readership of 25 million) published a cover story 'Women Face the '90s- in the '80s they tried to have it all. Now they've just plain had it. Is there a future for feminism?'. Needless to say, Patricia Ireland, the then president of NOW was infuriated and declared "a third wave is coming" as quoted in Fudge (2005). And one thing that they had was the civil and human rights that the first and second-wave feminist had fought for. They see themselves as strong and assertive feminists. In fact "the Third Wave is

buoyed by the confidence of having more opportunities and less sexism" (Baumgardner & Richards, 2000, p. 83). "Young feminists now reclaim the term 'girl' in a bid to attract another generation, while engaging in a new, more self-assertive—even aggressive—but also more playful and less pompous kind of feminism" (Krolokke, 2005). McNaughton (1997) notes: "And yes that's G.r.r.l.s which is, in our case, cyber-lingo for Great-Girls. Grrl is also a young at heart thing and not limited to the under 18s." From its first utterance, the notion of a third wave has generated controversy and concern that both the media and young women were (and are), in their own ways, flattening the powerful complexities and nuances of second-wave feminism into a man-hating, anti-lipstick stereotype, and setting up a generational antagonism (Fudge, 2005).

The goal of third-wave feminist is to develop feminist theory and engage in politics that honour contradictory experiences. Walker (1995) describes the challenges that younger feminists experience when they are forced to divide people into 'Us' and 'Them'. She further adds that the younger feminists "embrace ambiguity rather than certainty, engage in multiple positions, and practice a strategy of inclusion and exploration (p. xxxiii). Additionally, and most importantly is that third-wave feminism is inspired and exists in a new world order which is characterized by globalization and power distribution.

Krolokke (2005) states that "this new 'new' feminism is characterized by local, national, and transnational activism, in areas such as violence against women, trafficking, body surgery, self-mutilation, and the overall "pornofication" of the media" (p. 17). They are defined by the use of performance and subversion as rhetorical strategies. As a matter of fact, they have taken terms that were initially derogatory such as 'slut' and 'bitch' and turned them into common terms. Judith Butler, a reknown feminist, in her books *Gender Trouble* (1990) and *Bodies That Matter* (1993) talked about new movements such as queer and transgender politics. This ushered in performance third-wave feminism as a theoretical framework of the

politics of transgression. Koyama (2003) summarized some of the concerns of queers and transgenders in '*The Transfeminist Manifesto*'. Here, the primary principles of transfeminism are defined as the right (a) to define one's own identity and to expect society to respect it and (b) to make decisions regarding one's own body (Koyama, 2003, p. 245–247). Central to this perspective is the understanding of gender as a discursive practice that is both a hegemonic, social matrix and a 'performative gesture' with the power to disturb the chain of social repetition and open up new realities (Butler, 1990).

It is a fact that the third-wave feminists are still facing a multiplicity of challenges. Yuval-Davis in her 1997 book *Gender and Nation* coins a term 'transversal politics' which she uses as a concept based on the likelihood of dialogue between women across national, ethnic, and religious limitations. In this, women are encouraged to position themselves as women with particular national, ethnic, or religious roots, while also shifting to other ways of thinking, being, and practicing in order to realize the partiality of their own positions and to identify possible common stands and interests. During the MTV Video Music Awards held in August 2014, Beyonce Knowles, managed to stir the debate on this kind of feminism during her 16 minutes performance. Beyonce in the midst of a 15 minute medley performed her song *Flawless* in front of a giant screen blazoned with the word "FEMINIST". In the background she sampled author Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's speech on feminism and expectations for girls which she gave during a TED talk. The quote read:

> ... We teach girls to shrink themselves; to make themselves smaller; we say to girls, "you can have ambition, but not too much. You should aim to be successful, but not too successful otherwise you will threaten the man." Because I am female, I am expected to aspire to marriage. I am expected to make my life choices always keeping in mind that marriage is the most important. Now marriage can be a source of joy and love and mutual support . But why do we teach girls to aspire to marriage and we don't teach boys the same? We raise girls to see each other as competitors. Not for jobs or for accomplishments, which I think can be a good thing; but for the attention of men. We teach girls that they cannot be sexual beings in the way that boys are. Feminist: the person who believes in the social, political and economic equality of the sexes.

The quote highlights the role expectations of the genders and Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie succinctly juxtaposes the real situation on the ground against the ideal situation. Internationally, four world conferences on women's issues have been organised by the United Nations (UN). In 1972 during the 25th anniversary of the Commission on the status of Women, the UN designated 1975 as an International Women's Year. This was very significant as "in the same year the General Assembly set out three goals that would see women advancement and inform intergovernmental discussions from 1975 to 1995" (Strachan, 2009). The three goals were: equity, development and peace. The first of the conferences took place in Mexico City in 1975. There was a world assembly of women in Copenhagen in 1980 and another at Nairobi in 1985, where nearly 17,000 women from 159 countries attended (Friedan, 1985). The fourth conference was held in Beijing, China in 1995. According to Strachan (2009), the Nairobi conference would also bring a new and expanded analysis of women's issues, broadening the framing of women's concerns and providing the first world consensus on a Plan for Action known as the Forward-Looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women (NFLS).

2.2.4   Women's Movement in Kenya

The Women's rights movement in Kenya has grown considerably in the last few years, and studies done in the 1990s suggested that it was the fastest growing sector within civil society in terms of numbers and activities (Ngunyi & Gachukia, 1998). Achieng (2004) remarks that the former Kenyan constitution did not guarantee women's right and that women continued being violated as a result of poor laws. In 1998, during the 16 days of activism against gender violence, women "particularly pushed for the repeal of sections of marriage, inheritance and ownership of property laws that discriminate on the basis of sex" (Achieng, 2004). Ngugi (2005) rightly notes that "the law is the core of protection. It is the tool that women can use for their advancement. Unless a right is written into the law, it is

impossible for women to claim it" (p. 12)". Back in 2005 a cabinet minister was accused of being disrespectful to women. He was commenting on the withdrawal of aid by donors to Kenya equating the situation to a man raping a woman who is already too willing ('Apologise over slur', 2005).

The current constitution of Kenya that came into operation in 2010 is very friendly to the female gender. According to FIDA-K there are several clauses that expressly promote gender equity and avail rights to the Kenyan women. The first is Article 14 (1) which ensures that women will be able to pass on citizenship to their children regardless of whether or not they are married to Kenyans. Article 27 (3) ensures that women and men will have the right to equal treatment and opportunities in political, economic, cultural and social spheres without discrimination. In line with the MDGs Article 43 (1) (a) accords the right to health including reproductive health to all. Article 45 (3) provides that, parties to a marriage will be entitled to equal rights at the time of marriage, during the marriage and at its dissolution. Article 53 (1) (e) assures that parental responsibility shall be shared between parents regardless of marital status, a shift from the past as the burden was almost always shouldered by the mother. Article 60 (1) (f) eliminates gender discrimination in relation to land and property and gives everyone including women the right to inheritance and unbiased access to land. Additionally, article 68 (c) (iii) provides for the enactment of legislation for the protection of matrimonial property with special interest on the matrimonial home during, and upon the termination of the marriage. Article 81 (b) of the constitution maintains a one-third requirement for either gender in elective bodies giving women of Kenya at least 1/3 minimum in elective public bodies. Article 91 (f): ensures that gender equality is maintained in political parties providing a basic requirement for political parties as amongst others to respect and promote gender equality. Article 100: provides that Parliament shall formulate laws to promote the representation of women, persons of disabilities, ethnic and other

minorities and marginalized communities in Parliament. Lastly, article 232 (i): affords adequate and equal opportunities for appointment, training and advancement for women and men at all levels within the Public Service Commission.

Launched in 1952, *Maendeleo Ya Wanawake (w*omen's development) organisation (MYWO) is the oldest women's organization and has the greatest countrywide representation with over 4,000 individual members and 25,000 group affiliates. Explaining on its origin Wipper (1975) states that "it was organised by a small group of European women in the early 1950s under the auspices of the colonial government's Department of Community Development and Rehabilitation, to promote 'the advancement of African women' and to raise African living standards" (p. 99). Despite this, its impact on governance issues has been minimal. For most of its over 60-years' history, the organization has confined itself to dealing with women's needs as mothers and wives. Most of its work has involved community based reproductive health projects. Its vision is "a society in which all women have equal opportunities, and are empowered to make choices in matters that directly affect them socially, economically and politically".

Forum for African Women Educationalists (FAWE) is a regional organization with a presence in 32 pan-African countries. It was registered in Kenya in 1993 and it is working to empower girls and women through gender-responsive education. According to their website (http://www.fawe.org/), FAWE's vision reads "a world in which all African girls have access to education, perform well and complete their studies, and gender disparities in education are eliminated". By working closely with the government, and other NGOs (Non-Governmental Organizations), donors and the civil society, FAWE has had considerable success in this area. FAWE sees this success as attributable to the area its concerned with -education- which is non-controversial but has far reaching implications for the political, social and economic empowerment of women. With 51 per cent of the population consisting of women, the

campaign for the education of the girl child has helped society a lot and will hopefully continue to do so.

Association of Media Women in Kenya (AMWIK) was started over 25 years ago when the few women who held senior management positions in print and electronic media decided to come together to advocate for the cause of women journalists in Kenya. This led to the registration of AMWIK in 1982. In response to why women; AMWIK says they recognize that "… gender inequality and inequity undermines the effectiveness of development yet women are consistently excluded from top economic and political decision-making positions while their voices are drastically underrepresented in the media" (AMWIK). They further add that the media is a powerful tool for social change and agenda setting and supporting the voice of women in the media will lead to the overall well-being and development of the country.

Besides these notable organisations it is to be noted that the third United Nations conference on women was held in Nairobi in 1985 and this strengthened the movement in Kenya. It marked the beginning of rights centred activism and though it has taken long, one of the ways in which women have made progress, is in politics. In the 2007 general elections, 269 women contested for parliamentary seats as compared to 44 aspirants in the 2002 general elections. This number has continued to grow with each passing election. The 2007 general elections, saw just 22 women sitting in parliament against 200 men in the same house.

Kenya's 2010 constitution stipulates that one-third of the seats in each county assembly and in both houses of parliament taken together must be filled by women. Notably is the fact that of the 47 governors, none is a woman. At national level, 86 of the 416 seats in the Senate and the National Assembly are now held by women – at 21 per cent, well below the one-third quota. The numbers are as follows: 16 Members elected from single Member

constituencies, 47 County Women Members of Parliament, 5 Nominated Members of the National Assembly from political parties; and 18 nominated senators including 2 representatives of the youth and persons with disabilities respectively

However, it was not smooth sailing for any of the aspirants. "A nagging problem for women seeking electoral posts is the realization that it is extremely expensive to run an election campaign" observes Okello and Atemi (2007). Bii (2013) writing for Institute for War and Peace Reporting (IWPR) noted that most women candidates had to withdraw from seeking elective positions because of physical and psychological violence meted against them, resulting in less representation at the county and national assembly level. A sentiment shared by Linah Jebii Kilimo, who chaired the Kenya Women Parliamentary Association (KEWOP) and now heads the Anti FGM Board.

2.3   Representation

How and why do we view things the way we do? How do we construct meaning and understanding of the things around us, the people we interact with on a daily basis and what they communicate? This is what the theory of representation addresses. Hall (1997) says that representation is an important part of the process of producing and exchanging meaning amongst members of a culture. According to the Oxford Dictionary representation is defined as 'the action of speaking or acting on behalf of someone'. It is also defined as portraying something or someone in a certain manner. The third meaning revolves around depiction of someone or something in works of arts for example a picture. It is interesting that one of the meanings discussed is representation being 'a mental state or concept regarded as corresponding to a thing perceived'.

Elias and Tronconi (2011) explain representation as dealing with how aspects of reality 'such as people, places, objects, events, cultural identities and other abstract concepts'

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are constructed in any medium. This can be done in speech, writing or through images. The same paper adds that in representation, you are looking at both the process and the product; so that in the case of Class, Age, Gender and Ethnicity (CAGE), representation not only deals with the how identities are represented/constructed in the medium but also how they are constructed and received by others during the process of production. Creber (2010) proposes that gender is one of the basic classifications that is used to classify not only human beings but also things. Often our identities and those that we think other people to have originated from our ideas on gender and hence Creber (2010) proposes that gender is an important factor in studying representation.

Elias and Tronconi (2011) outline some of the tenets of the thinking on representation. They say that reality is always represented and what we consider as a first hand/direct experience is always a mediated one as it involves perceptual codes for us to experience it. Thus, in representation, there is the construction of reality. In addition, they add that the constant and repeated usage of certain representations leads to a situation where these representations come to be accepted as natural and unmediated. They however add that representation always requires interpretation and by its very nature, representation is selective foregrounding certain things and backgrounding others. Stuart (1997) in talking about representation highlights language as one of the main ways that we use to represent meaning. He adds that in a sense we give meaning to things by how we represent them; the words we use to talk about them, the emotions we attach to them, the stories we tell about them and the images we use to depict them (p. 3).

It is clear that representation occurs in numerous situations in daily occurrence from how we speak to how it is understood. When it comes to the media, representation is taken to a whole new level given the nature of the medium. Mass media plays a key role in shaping public perceptions on various important issues by the information that is dispensed and the

interpretations allocated to this information. It also contributes heavily to the shaping of modern culture by choosing to select and portray a certain set of beliefs, values and tradition as reality. That is, "by portraying a certain interpretation of reality, they shape reality to be more in line with that interpretation". The influence of the media and its ability to shape perceptions is undeniable. Estill (1998) says that mass media offers communities new and quite often exciting ways to re-imagine themselves. Many and varied studies into the use of media and its effect on society have been conducted and as Slader (2007) notes, communication through media is mediated communication which bears influence on socialization and the development and maintenance of subcultures in politics, religion and lifestyles in contemporary societies (p. 283).

Blakely (2001) in discussing entertainment via the media says there are obvious economic and cultural impacts and it is often accused of corrupting morals, promoting violence, undermining communities whilst still bringing pleasure to billions. The study of parasocial interaction with the media is key to representation. Parasocial interaction is where by viewers of television begin to identify with television characters and start identifying them as friends and significant sources of information and consequently begin to model their behaviour and to make decisions based on what the characters do (Russell, Norman, & Heckler (2004). Parasocial attachment in a way showcases the ultimate representation in which individuals, who are exposed to mediated messages which are already represented, interpret the messages and represent the messages to themselves to the extent that they begin to see the characters differently and attach reality to these characters.

Hamburger (2001) explores this parasocial attachment and representation in studying Brazilian soap operas. She had interesting findings in especially studying *The Cattle King* one of the soap operas shown in Brazil. In *The Cattle King* the *telenovela* heroine, who generally moves from a rags to riches trajectory, did not, on achieving the riches live the life of a rich

woman as compared to the stereotypical *telenovela* heroine. This led to her becoming quite unpopular with female viewers who felt she was not living to their aspirations and representing the reality they wanted. In trying to study how viewers interact with the stories presented Hamburger (2001) says it suggests "the ways in which *telenovelas* mediate social relations, providing a common language for public debate of private issues, such as the various sources of family conflict. In times of family instability, viewers praise what they call "understanding" models of relationship among family members" (p. 3).

Seeing as the media, of which television is one of the medium, not only mediates messages, but rather it mediates represented messages, then the study of gender representation in media is inevitable and important given the media's influence. The representation of women in media has been a matter of great debate. Smcmediastudies (2011) say that women have often been narrowly represented in the media often either in domestic situations as wives/mothers/housewives or as sex objects. This, they attribute, to the patriarchal nature of our society that influences how women are represented arguing that women are less likely than men to be featured in leading news, business or political stories. Mulvey (1975) argues that women are turned into sex objects by how they are filmed in media. She discusses the showing of only body parts of women as opposed to the whole body inclusive of the face describing it as fragmentation of the woman which leads to objectification, in this case, the woman being made an object for the pleasure of the male. Creber (2010) adds to this saying that despite feminism having been around for many years now, the representation of the women is limited. He argues that women are often represented in terms of the following categories: beauty, which is in itself limited within certain conventions, size/physique, with this again being limited to specific parameters, sexuality which is tied to beauty and physique, emotional as opposed to intelligent dealings and relationships instead of independence and freedom (p. 2).

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Stern, Russell and Russell (2005) concur with this in their discussion of vulnerable women in soap operas. They argue that soap operas notoriously persist in presenting vulnerable women who are dependent on men and the relationships in their lives for them to thrive. They add that women identity in soaps tends to be anchored in familial or sexual relationships which change depending on the women toeing or resisting the well outlined roles that they are required to play in the soap opera. Supporting this, Creber (2010) says that women tend to be portrayed often in television drama in the context of family, friends or colleagues and when it comes to work, they think as a team or as an object. In fact, he adds, their "passivity sometimes extends to victimhood" whilst the male characters are portrayed three times more than women with them taking lead roles (p. 3).

La Guardia (1986) talks about how the representation of women in soap operas as vulnerable leads to a case of vulnerable characters influencing vulnerable viewers who tend to be women. This is as a result of the viewers being subjected repeatedly to images of realism to the extent that they display "fierce acceptance of the reality of soaps (p. 6)." Smcmediastudies (2011) put forward that the media are dominated by men and that the people in positions of influence in the media are men. This being a patriarchal society, this plays an important role in how women are represented. They offer the following as the main stereotypes of women in media: the dumb blonde, the bitch, the whore/tart, the mother, the house wife, the femme fatale, the cougar, the MILF (Mother I'd Like to Fuck) and the female action hero/kick ass hero (pp. 21-22).

Estill (1998) in looking at Mexican *telenovelas* says that how women and sexuality are represented in the *telenovelas* needs to be understood simultaneously as "a necessity of producing and reproducing the nation" (p. 2). Geraghty (2005) in looking at soap operas and the public sphere argues soaps often have the role of representing groups or figures who are under-represented in other television genres; characters who, because of their political

attitudes, sexuality, age or ethnicity are distinct from the stereotypical hero. However, debate abounds about how this representation is done; producers of soaps say they are helping to move farther along the boundaries on the groups they represent but critics and the groups being represented dismiss this as attempts at 'tokenistic representation' (p. 20). The use of representation in media is therefore complex given that the medium itself is a complex media that calls for intricate message packaging and presentation and the impact or reception of the message can never be guaranteed to be what was packaged. As Stuart Hall (introduction) says, it is important to emphasize that there can never be a correct or wrong interpretation of a particular image or word as "there is no law that can guarantee that things will have one true meaning' or that meaning won't change over time" (p. 9).

In discussing women representation in media, Mulvey (1975) looks at how beauty is represented. She says that the media upholds an ideal sense of beauty that women are desperate to conform to. This emphasis, she argues make women feel that if they do not achieve this standard of beauty and sexiness they are not successful and are in fact useless. Creber (2010) supports this arguing that discussions on how women are represented in the media tend to centre on physical beauty with discussion on how other issues like the lack of powerful female role models and the extremely unreal depictions of women which do not in any way relate to the experiences of real women being non-existent.

It is clear that the media play a significant role in representation of various issues key among them being gender and in particular the female gender. Soap operas as a television format genre stand out in addressing representation issues given that from their origins, they were targeted at specific women and meant to reach these women in a certain manner for purposes of advertising companies to make revenue. Whilst the soap operas have gone through various changes, the tenets of the genre remain the same with women being majorly represented and the recipients again being largely women. Given the power of representation

in influencing reality and the fact that with sufficient exposure to representation it is accepted as reality, then the study of soap operas is critical to how women are perceived not only by others but by themselves as well. Let's now look at soap operas in detail as a television format and how they represent women and contribute to gender parity or the lack of it thereof.

2.3.1   Representations of women in soap operas

Soap operas are seen as synonymous with the female gender. From their origins, they were specifically designed and targeted not only at women, but a specific category of women – stay at home, doing domestic chores and married (Fletcher, 2006). With soaps such as *The bold and the beautiful* having over 500 million viewers in over 98 countries daily (Blakley, 2001) it is no wonder that the impact and effect of soap operas has come under scrutiny; and the critics are not happy with what they consider to be the representation of women and the effect that soap operas seem to be perpetuating. Signorielli (1989) talks about how soap operas create vulnerable women who are being presented as vulnerable in soap operas which Stern, et al. (2005) attribute to the popularity of genre formats in the television industry that have been in existence for nearly a century. The soap opera formula is one that is seen to stereotype women in their perceived traditional roles with them being limited to "the private world of interpersonal relationships but excluded from more assertive roles in the public domain" (Barker 1997, p. 620).

Geraghty (2005) explores how feminists and various researchers have interacted with the centrality of women in soap operas. She reviews how thinking has moved from Tania Modleski's (1979) critique in the 1970s of female viewers' pleasure in soaps with feminist film theory struggling with women as spectators to the thinking that soap operas were narratives targeting women with women characters being central. Brundson (1997) brought

an interesting and positive aspect to the debate of women in soap operas; "… far from being mindless, [soap operas] actually required feminine competences ... as was the notion that soap stories paid attention to the complexities of the private sphere which tended to be ignored in other genres. Soaps were valued for the way they made the work of emotional relationships visible in what could be seen as 'a woman's space'..." (p. 13). O'Donell (1999) who did an in depth study of the representation of women and men in European soaps remarks that the overall picture depicted in European soaps is where women seem more 'competent and dynamic' than men (p. 223) although this didn't necessary mean they had happier outcomes.

Geragthty (2005) also looks at how soap operas being declared women's programming helped establish the link between it and melodrama. The centrality of women, and in particular the predominance of stories about families, was an important element in work which sought to situate soap operas into the larger category of melodrama which brought with it advantages for the soap genre. Some of these included the fact that melodrama was viewed as a legitimate television genre and by soaps being put in that category they were seen as a broader television format rather than just a women's arena.

Fiske (1987) looks at the subordination of women depicted in soap operas with a woman's identity being based on her relationship to a man who should be able to provide her with a comfortable, luxurious and materially satisfying lifestyle. MacFarquhar (2002), Buerkel-Rothfuss and Meyes (1981) and Babrow (1989), discuss how soaps reinforce a rigid reward – punishment system whereby women who do not adhere to traditional femininity are punished. In this system, those women who are not lucky in love suffer various tribulations from mental illness, amnesia, kidnapping and a host of other troubles. And these characters seem to suffer endlessly from year to year. Stern, et al. (2005) pose that the way the genre of soap opera functions is having characters who lead exaggeratedly passionate lives that

revole on complex and complicated relationships and the dialogue dwells on these relationships. This is a deliberate effort to appeal to women's fantasies of having such lives that are materially and emotionally passionate. Lavin (1995) agrees saying that the superfluity of fantasy in soap operas provides the viewer an opportunity to shelve normal life and get into a world where each daily occurrence happens at a heightened and exhilarating level.

If that's how women are portrayed in soap operas, how the viewing woman interacts with the soap opera has been equally if not of more interest. Slade and Beckenham (2005) say that as much as *telenovelas* and soap opera genre has been ridiculed as "the late twentieth-century opiate of the masses" their impact and success cannot be argued and this is evidenced by the shift in approach to dealing with soaps by the academic field and television industry (p. 337). Churchill and Moschis (1979) talk about parasocial attachment which is defined as when viewers start to identify with characters in a program and view them as friends and allow them to influence their lives in terms of decisions, choices and socialization. Bandura (1976) in discussing social learning says that the more a viewer gets parasocially attached to a television character viewing them as real, the more likely they are to model their behaviour. Diener (1993) and Stern, et al. (2005) look at how the use of recognizable products such as alcohol affect the soap opera viewers, who often time, as research has shown, tend to be less educated and less affluent than the characters of the soap. These viewers tend to associate alcohol with success. The concern is that the viewer is vulnerable.

Russell, Norman, and Heckler (2004) cite a study that was done of 900 running soap operas which found that the one product that was most recalled in the consumption category was alcohol. This has negative implications for women who are the majority of soap opera viewers. Hamburger (2001) has done extensive research into perceptions of *telenovelas* among Brazilian women. She found that a lot of women identified with *telenovela* heroines

who overcame their struggle to become independent, rich and successful which gave the Brazilian women hope that they would overcome their circumstances to be like these heroines. In the *telenovelas* in which the character did not make the expected transformation, the character became unpopular even hated. "Similarity with one's own experience is thought of as a negative sign" as it depicted that the Brazilian women did not stand a chance to change their lives around (p. 10).

It seems just like in the uses and gratification theory of media consumption, women use soap operas for entertainment, escapism, aspiration and to meet a myriad of needs (Blumler and Katz, 1974). Couple this with parasocialism where these women start identifying with characters and modelling behaviour and it makes the soap opera genre a powerful influence tool. *The Bold and the beautiful* won a "Sentinel for Health Award for Daytime Drama" for a HIV story line in an episode that later provided hot line telephone numbers that people could call in Kennedy, O'Leary, Beck, Pollard and Simpson (2004). This was because the use of this story line was effective in getting people to seek more information and consider behaviour change therefore proving soaps have influence.

Given that from the literature above, soap operas were very deliberately designed to target one gender from their onset and even with their continued metamorphosis over the years they have continued to target the female gender, it is important, given their wide and undeniable influence, to see how they affect gender parity. With Kenyan soap operas now being made, it makes for interesting research to find out how women are represented vis a vis foreign soaps and the influence, if any, this has on gender parity in Kenya. It also makes for a good comparative study of foreign and African portrayals of women.

2.4   Theoretical Framework

This study is anchored on feminist theory. The next section will serve to explore this theory and to link it to this study. Thereafter, the section will offer criticism of the feminist theory.

2.4.1   Feminist Theory

Feminist theory is essential to understanding the gender representation of women in various spheres of life including the media. Women's movements worldwide have been central to the development of feminist theory and a key player in influencing how women are perceived be it in media, politics, economics, religion and other fields.

The terms 'female', 'feminine' and 'feminist' are often used interchangeably. The terms relate to the female gender but they have different meanings. Moi (1989) explains that being 'female' is a matter of biology; while 'femininity' is a set of culturally defined characteristics; what (Abbot, 1992; Unger, 1979) refer to as "a social and cultural construct" and 'feminism' as a political or ideological position. Femininity, which has been defined as a set of culturally defined characteristics has a great similarity to gender which has been defined as the cultural assumptions and practices which govern the social construction of women, men and their social relations (Barker, 1999). The researcher sought to use the term gender instead of femininity because gender covers a wider base which includes men and the social relations between men and women.

Purdom (2000) rightly posits that "feminism is marked by a pragmatic concern with the position of women, with rights and equality, and with representation" (p. 18). Minic (n.d) states that "the goal of feminism is a social change of unequal relations between men and women" (p. 282) and Nyokabi (2009) asserts that "feminism should be relevant to all

women". Many have abandoned the movement because they feel that it's a movement which has no space for married women, yet there are many women who have very positive and caring relationships with men. Prof. Wanjiku Kabira, a renowned Kenyan feminist as quoted by Kuria (2003) states that African women need to embrace feminism as it provides them with a platform to fight injustices against women, which many African men condone or simply ignore (ibid). Kim & Mccann (2002) quote Ware (1970) who asserts that "feminism is working for the eradication of domination and elitism in all human relationships" while hook (1984) states that the Feminism Movement aims to make women the social equals of men. Nevertheless, Berg (1979) argues that feminism is not simply having shared equality with men but rather trying to gain greater individual freedom.

2.4.2   Feminist Media Criticism

For the past 65 or so years that feminism has been in existence, it has had a considerable effect on the media. From Betty Frieden's *Feminine Mystique,* feminist scholars have claimed that women in various fields are portrayed stereotypically by the media. Dyer (1993) describes a stereotype as a form of social construct that is mainly used as a way of referring to or talking about people that one does not understand or know. Stereotypes are present in advertising, politics and other fields. Early feminist theory of the 1950s and 60s emphasized the commonalities of women's oppression, neglecting profound differences in respect to the CAGE (class, age, gender and ethnicity) (Gallagher, 2005). As this exclusion became more apparent, the collective 'we' of feminism was questioned. These inadequacies were questioned in Britain by black and Asian feminists (Amos and Parmar, 1984) and by lesbian feminists (Lont and Friedley, 1989). Additionally Black and Latino feminists also disparaged the representation of African American women in mainstream media (Moraga and Anzaldua, 1981; hooks, 1992; Lubiano, 1992; Bobo, 1995; McPhail, 1996; Hill Collins, 2000, 2004; Manatu, 2003; Perry, 2003).

Hudson (1998) and Collins (2000, 2004) both note that the media images of black women perpetuate white ideologies, something that is of course distressing to women of colour. hooks (1992) asserts that black female representation in the media "determines how blackness and people are seen and how other groups will respond to us based on their relation to these constructed images" (p. 5). In agreement with bell hook, Hudson (1998) argues that "these stereotypes simultaneously reflect and distort both the ways in which black women view themselves (individually and collectively) and the ways in which they are viewed by others" (p. 249). For instance, Larson (1994) mounted a study on black women on the soap *All My Children* and found that the soap consistently portrayed women as mothers. Orbe and Strother's (1996) semiotic analysis of the biracial title character in *Queen,* demonstrated how *Queen* fell in line with "traditional stereotyping of other bi-ethnic characters as beautiful, yet threatening, inherently problematic, and destined for insanity" (p. 117). In the film industry, the same is repeated. In *Monster's Ball* the movie where Halle Berry won an Oscar award, she "played an oversexed jezebel and tragic mulatto at the same time" asserts Brooks and Hebert (2004). Lupita Nyong'o won an Oscar award for best supporting actress for her role as Patsey in *12 Years a Slave.* She acts as a sex object for her master and bears the bane of her master's wife. In one scene, she is whipped butt naked for leaving her masters estate without permission. In her acceptance speech, she rightly points out that, "it doesn't escape me for a moment that so much joy in my life is thanks to so much pain in someone else's and so I want to salute the spirit of Patsey for her guidance. And to Solomon, thank you for telling her story and your own".

While doing a study on the role that gender stereotypes play in politics, Bligh, Casad, Schlehofer and Gaffney (2011) concluded that "women politicians may need to be more vigilant than men in monitoring and proactively counterbalancing how the media depicts them" (p. 29). Eagly and Johnson, (1990) and Eagly et al., 1995) also suggest that "the media

has particular influence on the public's judgments of women politicians' likability, which is likely because of their portrayal as congruent or incongruent with gender roles". Gallagher (2005) notes that when women join the political arena, they pose a problem for the media. She asserts that "as active, powerful women they defy easy categorization. Often the media attempt to contain the threats they pose by trying to situate them as "women" rather than as "politicians."(p. 28). Unfortunately, this is true even for developed countries that have a strong representation of women in politics; for example in Finland (Koski, 1940), Norway (Skjeie, 1994) and Sweden (Borjesson, 1995). Closer home in South Africa Nkosazana Zuma, a cabinet minister during Nelson Mandela's reign, was said to be the antithesis of the obedient woman. She was successful as a politician and hence was portrayed as aggressive and belligerent (Gallagher, 2005). Odongo (2013) tells the story of Peris Tobiko, the first Maasai woman to be elected as a member of parliament. He narrates that during the campaigning period, Maasai elders said it was against their tradition for women to eye leadership positions and threatened to put a curse on anyone who supported her bid. She soldiered on and got elected.

The script is the same in every genre of television. Wood (2007) explains that a primary way that the media distort reality is in under-representing women. "Whether it is prime-time television, in which there are three times as many white men as women (Basow, 1992, p. 159), or children's programming, in which males out number females by two to one, or newscasts, in which women make up 16 per cent of newscasters and in which stories about men are included 10 times more often than ones about women ("Study Reports Sex Bias," 1989), media misrepresent actual proportions of men and women in the population" (Wood, 2007). In 1995, women from 71 countries studied their news media for one day. Of the 15,500 stories analysed only 17 per cent of the world's news subjects were women (MediaWatch, 1995). Five years later a second global monitoring project was launched and

the results were amazingly similar with 18 per cent of news subjects being female (Spears et al., 2000). Decades later "defining and realizing a feminist approach to the study of media remains a sometimes painful venture for those who must 'teach against the text'" (Rakow, 2001; Valdivia, 2001 and Eaton, 2001).

The 2000 project revealed a striking absence of female voices in news items that concerned women in very specific ways. For instance,

> … stories that covered plans to establish a Family Court in Jamaica, the high abortion rate among teenagers in Scotland, women's rights to seek divorce in Egypt, maternity plans in Northern Ireland, the punishment of women for marital infidelity in Turkey – these were just some of the cases where the exclusion of any women's point of view seemed blatantly negligent. This tendency to ignore women or – at best – to speak about, rather than to or through women, demonstrates a very real and contemporary absence of women's voices in the media, and the profound lack of attention paid by the media to the telling of women's stories generally. (Gallagher, 2005, p. 25).

This under-representation has also been attributed to the scarcity of women working in the media. Litcher, Litcher and Rothman (1986), note that only about five per cent of television writers, executives and producers are women. Female film directors are even more rare. Ironically, while two-thirds of journalism graduates in the US are women, only seven per cent of those work in the media industry. Some media analysts (Mills, 1988) believe that if more women had positions of authority at executive levels, media would offer more positive portrayals of women. In Australia, North (2009) noted that as of 2006, 20 of the 21 major metropolitan newspapers were edited by men. Where there were women working, most of them were expected to cover the 'soft' or 'colour' stories. Australian television journalist Virginia Haussegger explains in her autography that she wanted 'in' on the 'hard' news and hence she made complaints to her senior editor. She explains:

> The men on the program were being assigned all the best stories – the overseas trips and the war jobs – while the women were stuck with the 'colour' stories. I was told

to shut up and pull my head in. So off I went on yet another soft story, only to return hours later to find a present in my office. It was a very large, long, thick black rubber penis, sitting upright on my desk. (2005, p. 49)

Cornered with such a situation, the question was how she was to deal with it. North (2009) narrates that, "she walked into her boss's office with the penis on her head and said, 'well, look at this, I've got one too! So now do I get the overseas assignment?' She got the overseas assignment – to Hawaii to cover the Supermodel of the World competition" (p. 745).

International Women's Media Foundation's Global Report on the Status of Women in the News Media (Byerly, 2011) concluded that in Kenya, women have been able to advance into both decision-making roles at the top and into some senior level position. The same report found that women hold about a third of the jobs in junior and senior management at 32.1 per cent and 34.6 per cent respectively. This is significant as these are important decision making positions. At nearly all other levels, women represent less than a fourth of the journalistic work force in the companies surveyed. Women's under-representation is especially pronounced in governance (20.8 per cent), middle management (17.1 per cent) and in production and design (12.5 per cent).

2.5   Chapter Summary

Having reviewed relevant literature, this chapter concludes that there is a knowledge gap in as far as the representation of women in local and foreign soap operas is concerned. While trying to understand why the field of representation is important, the chapter looked at various representations of women in the media from far and wide and noted that there is very little written on women representation in Kenyan media. Feminist theory informs this study and it has been extensively discussed and critiqued. The chapter also traced the origins of

feminism and followed it through the first, second and third waves of feminism and finally traced the history of feminism in Kenya.

CHAPTER THREE

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY AND SETTING THE CONTEXT

3.0   Introduction

Mugenda and Mugenda (2003) define research as a "diligent inquiry or a critical examination of a given phenomenon" (p. 1). Wimmer and Dominick (1991) classify research approaches into experimental research, survey research, qualitative research, content analysis and longitudinal research (p. 84). This study seeks to adopt the qualitative approach. Various scholars (Cooper, Potter & Dupagne, 1994 and Kamhawi & Weaver, 2003) have noted that most research in the mass communication field is more often than not qualitative in nature. Myers (2004) attributes this to the fact that in mass communication, what people are doing is talking and an analysis of this will need more talk than what quantitative techniques would provide. This study involved analysing talk among the different characters in the soaps, analysing the non verbal communication in the soaps, analysing inferences alluded to or exhibited in the soaps and doing a comparative analysis of the local and foreign soaps under study. In qualitative research, "scientists must gain an empathic understanding of societal phenomenon, and they must recognize both the historical dimension of human behaviour and the subjective aspects of the human experience" (Nachmias & Nachmias, 1996:380). In agreement with this authors, the researcher explored and analysed the historical dimension in the production and consumption of soap operas. This study aimed to compare the depiction of women in local and foreign soap operas. To successfully do this, the researcher chose the qualitative approach.

Singletary (1994) defines qualitative research as "any systematic investigation that attempts to understand the meanings that things have for individuals from their own perspectives" (p. 266). The main advantage of using the qualitative approach is that it allows

the use of mixed-methods. Wimmer and Dominick (2006), Singletary (1994) and Silverman (2000) posit that some of the methods that can be used include observation (both participatory and non-participatory), in-depth interviews, document analysis, focus groups, case studies and audio-visual reordered data.

This chapter details the research methodology and approach that was used to carry out the study. It also explains the sampling procedure and the data collection tools that were used and provides a description of the data analysis process. Additionally, this chapter will also lay the context of the sampled texts.

3.1   Population and Sampling Procedure

Three soap operas were analysed under this study. In choosing the soap operas for study, non-probability purposive sampling was used. Mugenda and Mugenda (2003) note that purposive sampling "allows the researcher to use cases that have the required information" (p. 50). Richards and Morse (2013) note that in qualitative studies, the scope of the sample can be purposively selected. They add that "this involves choosing the "best", most optimal example of the phenomenon and the setting in which you are most likely to see whatever it is you are interested in (p. 74). Further, in qualitative studies, small samples are accepted as the results will be achieved by in-depth analysis. Crouch (2006) states that "a small number of cases will facilitate the researcher's close association with the respondents, and enhance the validity of fine-grained, in-depth inquiry in naturalistic settings. Patton (2002) explains that qualitative inquiry is rife with ambiguities. "Nowhere is this ambiguity clearer than in the matter of sample size. There are no rules for sample size in qualitative inquiry. Sample size depends on what you want to know, the purpose of the inquiry, what's at stake, what will be useful, what will have credibility, and what can be done with available time and resources" (p. 242-243). In agreement, Potter and Wetherell (1987) say that "because one is interested

in language use rather than the people generating the language and because a large number of linguistic patterns are likely to emerge from a few people, small samples or a few interviews are generally quite adequate for investigating an interesting or practically important range of phenomena. For discourse analysts the success of a study is not in the least dependent on sample size. It is not the case that a larger sample necessarily indicates a more painstaking or worthwhile piece of research". It is for this reason that only three soaps were chosen.

There are only two local soap operas in Kenya; *Lies that Bind* and *Mali;* and the latter was chosen as a text for this study. Since this is a comparative study, two other soaps were chosen based on their geographical locations and the period that the soaps have been on air. *Triunfo del Amor (Triumph of Love)* was picked as the telenovela to represent the South American region. The South American region, represented by two large production companies; Globo in Brazil and Televisa in Mexico; has become the largest exporter of telenovelas world over. In Kenya, both production companies have had their programs aired. *Triumph of Love* was aired on Citizen TV in 2011 - 2012 and it recorded the largest viewership numbers to date. Lastly, a South African soap has been chosen to represent the rest of Africa. Though *Egoli: Place of Gold* was the first locally produced soap in Africa, it stopped filming and airing on Mach 31, 2010. It is for this reason that it was not chosen and in its place *Generations* was chosen. Though lovers of *Generations* who had access to DStv (Digital Satellite Television) a pay-per-view cable television provider, through MultiChoice Africa have already watched the soap, Citizen TV, a free-to-air TV channel in Kenya, started airing *Generations* in April 2013. The total population for this study is three soap operas.

The researcher acknowledges that the targeted soap operas have many male characters but purposively chose to target the female gender only. Additionally the researcher was well aware that in the Kenyan television sphere there are many genres and formats of programming including drama, action, comedy, documentaries, reality shows, magazine style

programmes, as afore mentioned. Soap operas were purposively chosen for the purposes of this study.

3.2   Data Collection Methods

3.2.1   Visual texts

For the three soaps selected, the researcher made arrangements with media monitoring organisations to provide the required episodes, a task that was accomplished albeit with many hindrances including hefty acquisition fees. For *Mali* and *Generations* ten and eight episodes respectively were acquired. Each episode had a run-time of between 18 and 21 minutes bringing the total number of minutes for each to between 180 to 210 minutes for *Mali* and 144 and 168 minutes for *Generations. Triumph of Love* had a run-time of between 42 and 45 minutes for each episode. Since eight episodes were reviewed, the total run-time was between 336 and 360 minutes. The cumulative run-time viewed was 660 and 738 minutes which translates to 11 hours on the lower side and 12.3 hours on the higher side.

To collect data, the researcher watched the episodes several times and came up with themes based on what was happening in the soaps. While viewing these episodes, four cross cutting themes were identified and chosen to be the parameters of study. The four themes are objectification of women, leadership, private versus public life and lastly self reliance versus victimization. These four were chosen as they represent the parameters that women have been measured against to gauge whether they are portrayed negatively or positively. The four themes also speak to gender roles and hence an exploration of them will provide answers to the set research questions. Existing literature on gender inequality cited in this study has identified the four areas as among those with strongest impact on gender inequalities in Kenya.

Objectification, the viewing of women as sexual objects is one of the leading causes for sexual violence against women and of sexual harassment of women in the workplace. Leadership was chosen because women are under-represented in the stewardship of the nation's political and economic affairs. One of the leading causes of gender inequality is women's dependence on men in many areas of social and personal lives and hence 'self-reliance' was chosen as one of the themes to be studied. Lastly, in the public versus private life of women, cultural attitudes tend to relegate women to the domestic sphere, routinely identifying them with their roles as wives, mothers, lovers, etc − even when they have responsibilities in the public sphere. This dilutes the contributions of women and denies society role models after whom other women seeking engagement in public life could fashion their lives.

3.3   Data Processing and Analysis

Data in their raw form do not speak for themselves and thus the need for data processing and analysis (Robson, 2002). Once all the data is collected, the researcher searches for patterns and general themes in the data. After a while, analytic categories will emerge and it is these categories that will provide a basis for interpretation (Wimmer & Dominick, 2006). This study looked into the text presented in the soaps and the researcher aimed to understand the 'why' and 'how' these texts represent women and how they were received by audiences. To explore themes set for the study, special emphasis is placed on verbal and non verbal cues and other literary devices. Critical discourse analysis (CDA) and interpretative textual analysis (ITA) were the two methods of analysis that were used to analyse the data.

3.3.1   Critical Discourse Analysis

One of the notable scholars in the field of critical discourse analysis, Teun Van Dijk defines CDA as "a type of discourse analytical research that primarily studies the way social power abuse, dominance, and inequality are enacted, reproduced, and resisted by text and talk in the social and political context" (2003). In essence CDA explores how these discursive sources are maintained and reproduced within historical, political and social settings. Another notable CDA scholar, Norman Fairclough defines CDA

> … as discourse analysis which aims to systematically explore often opaque relationships of causality and determination between (a) discursive practices, events and texts, and (b) wider social and cultural structures, relations and processes; to investigate how such practices, events and texts arise out of and are ideologically shaped by relations of power and struggles over power; and to explore how the opacity of these relationships between discourse and society is itself a factor securing power and hegemony (1992, p. 135).

Key to the concepts of CDA is power. CDA aims at explaining the processes of power from the outset: how power is legitimized, reproduced and enacted in the talk and texts of dominant groups or institutions (Philips & Hardy, 2002). Lukes (2005) sees power in three dimensions. One-dimensional; where A has power to the extent that he can get B to do something that B would otherwise not do. Lorenzi (2006) notes that this power is focused on behaviour, decision making, observable conflict regarding issues and various interests of A and B. Two-dimensional power critiques how those who benefit from the 'rules of the game' are placed in a preferred position to defend and promote their vested interests. The third view of power according to Lukes (ibid.) is power that assumes a hierarchical social system. Individuals, groups and institutions gain power from their social relations to others and their position in a hierarchical social system. Of interest to this study is how one gender has more power than the other - and how this power influences ideology and discursive practices. This means that this study looked into the three dimensions of power. Phillips and Jorgensen (2002) see discursive practices in mass communication as "how authors of texts draw on

already existing discourses and genres to create a text and on how receivers also apply available discourses and genres in the consumption and interpretation of the texts". Foucault (1990) states that "power is not an institution, and not a structure; neither is it a certain strength we are endowed with; it is the name that one attributes to a complex strategic situation in a particular society." Further the notion of power is expressed in what Hall (1997) calls representation; Gramsci (1971) hegemony, Althusser (1970) ideological state apparatuses and Marx and Engel (1970) as the ideas of the ruling class. As stated elsewhere, it is this power relation that this study aimed to explore and identify its impact on the production and consumption of soap operas.

CDA has its roots in the critical theory developed by the Frankfurt School. However, while critical theory concentrated on the linguistic element, Fairclough (1995b) noted that it did not adequately focus on what he called the "interpretative practices of audiences". The assumption was that audiences understood texts the same way as experts would. To counter this, he developed a three-dimensional model of CDA. The three dimensions are: The object of analysis - including verbal, visual or verbal and visual texts, the processes by means of which the object is produced and received - writing/ speaking/designing and reading/listening/viewing) by human subjects while the third is the socio-historical conditions which govern these processes. According to Fairclough (1995) each of these dimensions requires a different kind of analysis the first being text analysis (description), processing analysis (interpretation), and lastly social analysis (explanation).

CDA was therefore deemed to be the best method to use for this study as the three dimensions mentioned above were present and relevant to the objectives of the study. The object of analysis included both visual and verbal texts while the process included the production process of soap operas right from the conceptualization, to script writing, directing and acting and also the reception of the soaps which included but was not limited to

the channel the soaps airs in, the time, and the actual audience. The third dimension, the socio-historical conditions have been examined somewhat in chapter two of this study but shall also continue to be explored to the end of the study. While analysing the data, the researcher sought to describe the visual and verbal texts, interpret the production codes and cues and finally offer an explanation of the social context.

In addition to the three dimensions discussed above, Fairclough and Wodak (1997, p. 271-80) summarize the main tenets of CDA. These tenets formed the basis of the study and they are as follows:

CDA addresses social problems – the lack of gender equality is a contributor to many social ills like domestic violence, rape, FGM and at large these ills are perpetuated by the lack of gender-friendly policies. This study explored what led to the current situation and offer a way of unlocking the situation.

Power relations are discursive – in the study the researcher explored how power is 'given' or attained. The next chapter explores which gender has power and what objects depict power.

Discourse constitutes society and culture – the soap operas have been produced for a specific society and by large represent that society's culture.

Discourse does ideological work – ideology formation is not a one off event but rather takes time. With high viewership numbers, soaps are a great way of forming ideology as part of the work is done by default (by the simple act of viewing).

Discourse is historical – The text in the soaps is created to either support historical dialogues or not. Historically various groups of people have been represented in a specific way and this study will explore whether the soaps under study resist or conform to this

historical narratives. The following chapters will draw comparisons of the local and foreign soaps while the last chapter will offer a conclusion as to whether there is any modification or not, and the impact this has on the Kenyan society.

The link between text and society is mediated – The mediation here is through television and the purposeful and deliberate representation of various groups of people like women for instance.

Discourse analysis is interpretative and explanatory – The research aims to interpret the discourses in the studied soaps and explain the various representations in relation to the female gender.

Discourse is a form of social action – When people view these soaps, they inadvertently take some form of action based on the text. This action is communicated socially and that is why, for instance our language or dressing style will change to reflect the character we like on a specific soap.

While conducting the research, the researcher established that these eight tenets were seen in the soaps under study. The foregoing chapters will touch on these tenets.

3.3.2   Interpretative textual analysis

As a data analysing process, textual analysis is a way for researchers to gather and analyse information about how other human beings make sense of the world (McKee, 2003). The researcher using interpretative textual analysis sought to "understand the ways in which members of various cultures and subcultures make sense of who they are, and how they fit into the world in which they live" (ibid.). ITA includes semiotics, rhetorical analysis, ideological analysis, and psychoanalytic approaches, among others. These types of analysis seek to get beneath the surface (denotative) meanings and examine more implicit

(connotative) social meanings. This study dealt largely with semiotics as it has been pointed out that "no social practice exists outside the domain of the semiotic – the practices and production of meaning" (Hall, 1988: 51). Boyd-Barret (1991) notes that there are three traditions of textual analysis – the creative traditions, which concentrate on "media practice as vocational preparation", the social science tradition which focuses on context only and the interpretative tradition which concentrates on media texts (Ngugi, 2005). This study focused on the interpretative tradition as, in this tradition, it is noteworthy that what is said or performed is as important as what is not said or performed.

3. 4   Setting the Context

This section seeks to set the context for the discussion that will follow in the next chapters. The section will discuss the signature tunes as they set the mood and tone of the soap, the opening montages - for their quick insight into the characters of the soap and the synopsis and plots of the soap operas under study. The synopsis provides a short description of the entire soap while the plot gives a rather detailed story line for the entire soap. There are three soaps under study - *Mali, Triumph of Love* and *Generations.*

3.4.1   Mali

Mali is a Kenyan soap opera created by Alison Ngibuini and developed by Al Is On Production Limited (Kenya). English is the main language used though often Kiswahili is also used. Where that happens, English sub-titles are provided. The soap is shot in HD format in various locations within Kenya. It first aired on 12th October, 2012 on NTV – Kenya and has about 350 episodes. The soap has been syndicated in Uganda and is aired by NTV - Uganda.

3.4.1.1 Opening montage

The opening montage is 45 seconds long and is set with background music of an upbeat tempo and an escapism tone. In this montage, unlike traditional soap opera montages, the main cast members are credited and hence are identified by their own names. Of the seven cast members identified four are women. They include: Mary Gacheri, Mkamzee Mwatela, Brenda Wairimu and Mumbi Maina.

Mary Gacheri (Mabel) is represented as a conservative woman. In two images she is wearing the African *kitenge* attire complete with the head dress and in the other two images, she is wearing what looks like conventional suits. She has a weave on her head and very little jewellery comprising of a watch, conservative earrings and one strand of a neck chain. In one image, she seems to be warning someone off and she is very upset.

In the first image of Mkamzee Mwatela (Usha), she is storming into a room in a fit and throwing things all over the place. She first throws a bunch of keys followed by her clutch bag. She is dressed in a stylish black dress and in the next images we see her in a turquoise blue blouse and in another image, a red silk blouse. She has a fashionable weave and is wearing very little jewellery. What the viewer sees is a woman to reckon with in all things, from character to fashion.

Brenda Wairimu (Lulu) is dressed in two black dresses in the montage. She has accessorised her little black dresses with silver long or large earrings and she has a fashionable straight weave that has the illusion of long straight black hair. She is not smiling nor angry. She portrays a no-nonsense young beautiful lady.

The last woman in the montage is Mumbi Maina (Nandi) who is shown crying. In all the images, she is wearing shift dresses in various colours like yellow, lilac and black and she accessorises lightly. In the other images she seems confident in her stride.

3.4.1.2 Synopsis

Mali revolves around the lives of an affluent family that is very rich but like every family they are faced with challenges. The patriarch, Mali, is a chauvinist who runs his two homes like a military camp. The drama unfolds when the patriarch collapses and dies without a will. The family gets embroiled in a journey of greed, deceit, division and discovery of horrifying secrets that would best stay hidden. This is a story of obsession to do what is right but also get what is owed. Its tagline reads: 'United by blood, divided by greed'.

3.4.1.3 Plot

Mali is a Kenyan soap opera that revolves around one very affluent family that is headed by G Mali who is a polygamist. Mabel Mali, the first wife, has borne him two daughters - Nandi Mali and Lulu Mali. The second wife is the very outgoing, fashionista Usha Mali who has two sons - Richard Mali and Arthur Mali. G Mali, despite having two wives also has an affair with a colleague in his office - Bella. Unfortunately, the industrious family patriarch collapses while in his office at Mali Holdings and dies. The family soon realizes that he had left a will which is surrounded by controversy and mystery.

Usha is a very extravagant woman, loves to shop and is very outgoing as well as a drama queen. She is younger than Mabel Mali and is very ruthless in the manner she deals with those who cross her path. Mabel, on the other hand, is a staunch Christian, very reserved and conservative in her worldview. The children get along well and Arthur and Lulu are in fact, the best of friends and spend a lot of time together.

The wrangles start with Usha as she believes that since Mabel has only daughters, she is not entitled to anything as her sons should be the heirs to the media empire G left behind. Usha, decides to contest the will left behind by G Mali. The children are however, not interested with the drama behind the will, and it is only after things start getting out of hand that they are slowly dragged into the mess created by the contest. Richard, who is a lawyer gets right in the middle of the contest as his legal advice is sought on the matter. Nandi, is abroad for studies while all this is happening. Before she left, she had been involved in an extra-marital affair with the Chief Operations Officer, Tony, at Mali Holdings, her father's company. She is pregnant and her mother is struggling with this reality. Unfortunately she loses the baby.

Lulu and Arthur are the least interested in the squabble in the family. They adore their step mums. Lulu secretly wishes that Usha was her mother as they both have an interest in fashion and they both have a care free spirit. Arthur adores Mabel's quiet nature. The children are not without their equal share of drama. Nandi comes back from abroad and starts working at Mali Holdings with the same man that she had conceived a child with - Tony - who has now assumed the office her deceased father held - The Chief Executive Officer. The affair continues and eventually becomes common knowledge. Tony's wife drags him through an ugly divorce which he is still paying for. Nandi, on the other hand is also having a very rocky relationship with her mother as a result and soon, she starts getting closer to Usha. Arthur, is secretly having a relationship with their domestic worker Selena. Lulu is having a relationship with a waiter who works at her father's café (which has been handed over to his mistress - Bella) – Zollo. Her mother does not approve and she has once paid him to put a stop to the relationship. In a sad twist of events, the slum in which he lives in is torched in what is termed as an arson attack by the media. He unfortunately dies and Lulu is devastated. After his death, Usha starts poisoning Lulu against her mother by revealing to her that Mabel

once paid Zollo to stop the relationship. She is furious and decides to move out and go and live with her step mother Usha.

Finally, Usha succeeds to pit Mabel's two daughters against their mother. She and Nandi conspire to kill her so as to get a bigger share of the family wealth. Their plan, however, fails as Mabel is saved right before the medicines start taking effect. Mabel is undergoing serious depression because of all the drama that is unfolding in the family. After this failed attempt to kill Mabel, Nandi flees the country.

Usha is relentless in her quest to acquire the entire family wealth all to herself and she does not mind using dirty tricks to acquire it. She has even used her sons in her ambitions which are quickly turning into an obsession. In her ambitions, she comes across a young attractive Nigerian man, Ike, who seems quite affluent from the businesses he is carrying out in the country. Ike, spots on Usha and is out to spoil her with shopping sprees and treat her like a queen. Ike is younger than Usha, but that does not seem to be a factor. They soon become inseparable as Usha is very much in love with him. Mabel, who is now back on her feet, finds out and is disgusted by Usha's seemingly lack of shame in carrying out a relationship with a younger man. She plots her revenge on Usha and has Ike deported back to Nigeria as a result of his shady business dealings. Usha is seething with anger over Mabel's actions and is even more driven to destroy Mabel.

Mabel's faith in God and her family, is faltering and she is constantly seeking reassurance and advice from her church pastor who is very fond of her as she is one of the major contributors in the church. She is committed to improve the lives of the under privileged in society by funding and being involved in several charity campaigns. Mabel constantly brings in Mali Holdings, the media company the family runs in a bid to bring the family back together but all is in vain.

Mali holdings is run by Tony as the CEO and a very unscrupulous and greedy financial manager- Fadhili who is in cahoots with Usha in all the shady dealings that involve stealing money from the company. Bella, who was G's mistress also works for the company and is very instrumental in keeping the management in check. There is also a Strategic Planner (Hakim) who has been recommended by Usha. He is currently in a serious relationship with Lulu. Usha has heavily invested in this relationship and has orchestrated its every progress very carefully. Lulu is expectant and is set to wed very soon. Her mother disapproves as she is very young and feels she will be a disgrace to the family.

Meanwhile, Nandi is back from her self-imposed exile and the audience soon learns that while she was abroad, she met and married a man who has been physically abusing her. She tries to seek help from her brother Richard, to get away from the man, but he has serious social and political connections, which is proving difficult for Richard. The drama continues.

The ten episodes under review start with Mabel reading a newspaper that says that the police have credible evidence to get the murderer of Zollo, (Lulu's former boyfriend who died in a fire accident). Mabel spends a night in prison. Meanwhile her co-wife Usha is happy that she did. Richard and Arthur visit her after she is released but Lulu is unsympathetic claiming that her mother is bad. Mabel and Usha keep fighting over the allegations with Usha stirring the conflict. She engages people to generate evidence against Mabel. By the end of the ten episodes, Usha has called off her 'people' after Mabel discovers some footage of how she faked an attack so that the children could move back in with her.

Lulu on the other hand seems busy with her career and even starts a new segment on fashion in her television program with the help of her new boyfriend, Hakim. She helps her brother, Arthur to get back on the rugby team. Arthur is happy to be back on the team after

his mother instructed the coach to remove him from the team. Richard is busy looking for a lost Sweetie and still does not find her.

Bella has a date with "Kidnapped in Kapsabet" a man she met online. She finds out that it is one of her employees and ends the relationship. Meanwhile, Bella's pregnant friend Eve has an argument with her boyfriend and they end up not speaking.

There is famine in the region and the Bishop seeks Mabel's help. She refuses to help but later changes her mind when she learns that people are dying. She gets the support of Mali holdings; Usha is not happy about it, and she confronts Mabel and Mabel reminds her that she could still join in the efforts to aid the starving.

Table one: Female cast in *Mali*

	Character	Actress	Role
1	Usha Mali	Mkamzee Mwatela	Second wife to G Mali
2	Mabel Mali	Mary Gacheri	First wife to G Mali
3	Lulu Mali	Brenda Wairimu	Mabel's daughter
4	Nandi	Mumbi Maina	Mabel's daughter
5	Bella	Carolyne Midimo	Mistress to G Mali
6	Eve	Charity Odupoy	Journalist at Mali Holdings
9	Agnes	Kate Damaris	Domestic worker in Usha's house
10	Sarah	PerisWambui	Domestic worker in Mabel's house
11	Madze	Catherine Kamau	Lady from children's home

3.4.2 Triumph of Love

Triumph of Love (*Triunfo del Amor)* is a Mexican telenovela starring Maite Perroni (Maria Desamparada), William Levy (Maximiliano) and Victoria Ruffo (Victoria Sandoval) as the main protagonists. Dominika Paleta (Jimena de Alba), Guillermo Garcia Cantu (Guillermo Quintana) and Daniela Romo (Bernarda Iturbide Montejo) star as the main antagonists. Supporting cast include Erika Buenfil (Antonieta Orzoco), Diego Olivera (Juan Pablo Iturbide Montejo) and Osvaldo Rios (Osvaldo Sandoval). This soap was created by Delia Fiallo and Liliana Abud and produced by Salvador Mejia Alejandre. The production and distribution company was Televisa and its first run was from 25th October, 2010 to 26th June, 2011 on *Canal de las Estrellas* in Mexico. It has a total of 176 episodes each running between 42 and 45 minutes. The picture format is HDTV 1080i and the audio format is stereophonic. In Kenya, the first run was in 2012 and it was aired on Citizen TV and a re-run was aired in 2013.

3.4.2.1   Signature tune

The signature tune of the soap Triumph of Love is the song *Tres Palabras* sung by Luis Miguel, a renowned Mexican musician. It is sung in a mellow sonorous voice creating a romantic feel. The lyrics are as follows:

Listen to the confession of my secret

It's born from a heart

That is currently deserted

With three words (four in English)

I will tell you all the things,

Things that have to do with the heart

And that are precious

Give me your hands, come

Take my hands

Because I will confide in you

My distress

Only three words (four in English)

Are causing me anxiety

And those words are

I really like you

The persona of the song wants to confess his undying love to his lover. He is pleading with her to listen to him as he shares only four words – I really like you.

3.4.2.2 Opening montage

Victoria Ruffo is the first woman you see in the opening montage. She is placed dead centre of the screen and is wearing a black outfit and a straight string of pearl earring. Her hair is jet black, long and parted off centre falling to the sides, with one side caressing her face. She is shown several other times including: having coffee with her friend Antonieta, who is dressed in a pink blouse and black pants. Twice she is shown speaking with Father Juan Pablo and she seems to be beseeching him.

Maria Desemparada is shown walking down a fashion show runway wearing a red bustier gown with silver detail at the front. Her hair is pulled back and plaited in one line. In separate shots, both Max and Victoria watch her hawk-eyed and they seem impressed by what they see. Next we see Maria walking into Max's open arms and they smile at the camera. Later we see a dejected Maria on the verge of tears and another shot reveals that she

has been left alone on a bench by Max. By the end of the opening montage, Maria and Max are happily hugging each other and twirling together on the dance floor.

Bernarda is shown severally clasping a rosary and looking very stern. She seems very pious dressed in clothes that fully cover her up. She is also shown kneeling down in prayer in front of the image of the Virgin Mary and in another scene, walking with her son, Father Juan Pablo.

Jimena is shown only once. She is being driven by her husband Max and when they park the car, Max opens the door for her. She gets out – almost jumps out and she is furious. She roughs up Max but he avoids the slap. She is dressed in an olive green mini dress and it is accessorised with a black beret and high stiletto heels giving her a casual yet elegant look.

Linda is cast with Osvaldo Sandoval and Guillermo Quintana. She seems to be in control of the two men. Roxana, Jimena's mother is shown looking perturbed. She is frowning upon someone or something that is not clear to us. The last woman we see is Mrs Milagros kissing her soon to be husband who looks very happily surprised.

3.4.2.3 Synopsis

Triumph of Love *(Triunfo del Amor)* is the story of young, handsome, attractive, intelligent Maximiliano and Maria Desamparada, a gentle young woman who dreams of becoming a high-fashion model. She applies for a job with Victoria Sandoval, a successful Mexican designer, who doesn't know that Maria is the daughter she's been looking for, for so long.

Maximiliano meets Maria Desamparada at the fashion studio. He hides from her his true identity - that he is the son of Victoria, Maria's boss - and a powerful attraction arises between them immediately, an attraction destined to become a great love. She gives herself to

Maximiliano and a while later discovers she's pregnant. Before she can tell him, he tells her that he has to marry Jimena because she's pregnant. That's when Maria discovers that Maximiliano was cheating on her and she leaves, determined to hide her pregnancy.

Sometime later, Maximiliano finds out that the child Maria is expecting is his, not Ernesto's - the young photographer who's fallen in love with Maria and wants to marry her and take care of her child. Maximiliano divorces Jimena, who feeling spited, goes mad and looks for Maria, determined to murder her but Victoria intervenes and ends up badly wounded. Maria Desamparada discovers that Victoria is her birth mother and asks for Victoria's forgiveness. At the end, Maximiliano and Maria Desamparada walk down the aisle and their love triumphs.

4.4.2.4 Plot

Victoria Sandoval is introduced as a young servant working in the Iturbide's household. Juan Pablo Iturbide Montejo, the future priest, son of Octavio and Bernarda is attracted to Victoria, the attraction is mutual. In a night, Victoria becomes pregnant with Juan Pablo's child. Bernarda is furious upon discovering Victoria's pregnancy and kicks her out of the house. Victoria finds support from her friend, Antonieta and together they find work in a Humberto Padilla's sewing company, owned by Rodolfo Padilla the father of Federico. Victoria gives birth to a little girl and names her Maria. Although they are poor, Victoria is nonetheless happy, but her happiness is soon interrupted. Bernarda, intent on revenge, convinces herself that God has chosen her to enact his punishment on Victoria. She attempts to kill Victoria and her daughter, but instead only succeeds in separating them.

Years later, Victoria eventually succeeds in establishing a major fashion empire alongside her friend Antonieta. Victoria is happily married to Osvaldo a popular actor, who has two children, Maximiliano (Max) and Fernanda (Fer). Victoria seems happy with the life

that she leads, but secretly suffers and is tormented by the absence of her missing daughter, Maria.

Meanwhile, Maria Desamparada Iturbide Sandoval 'Maria' is now a young woman who is ready to leave the orphanage where she grew up. On her way out, she befriends and moves in with Linda Sortini and Nati Duval. Maria's aspirations to be a great model lead her to the most famous designer of the moment, Victoria. But far from being a friendly boss, Victoria treats her with contempt and arrogance, especially since Maria is compared to a younger version of Victoria. Maria does not let Victoria's negative attitude affect her work, and it is in the workplace where she meets Max. Max and Maria fall in love, but their love is rejected by Victoria, and she plots with Max's ex-girlfriend and fashion model Jimena de Alba to separate the two. Together they hatch a plot in which Max mistakenly ends up believing that he impregnated Jimena, and is forced to marry her.

Maria is pregnant with Max's child, but keeps her pregnancy a secret. She sacrifices her love and happiness so that Max can fulfill his mother's wishes to marry Jimena. She seeks solace from Juan Pablo, who is now a respected priest, and, unknown to her, is also her real father. Her identity is revealed to him in a secret confession from his mother Bernarda; he is therefore unable to reveal himself, as he is bound by the laws of confession. Maria also finds support in Jimena's renown photographer Alonso del Angel. He helps Maria through her pregnancy, and eventually aids her return to the modeling world. He falls in love with Maria, though Maria cannot reciprocate his love as she continues to love Max. Victoria deals with her hidden past by focusing on her fashion label; her husband feels increasingly isolated from her and consoles himself with another woman, Maria's friend and roommate, Linda. However, Osvaldo also hides secrets from his past; while everyone believes Max's biological mother Leonela Montenegro is dead, she is, in fact, alive, and in jail. Osvaldo is hated by his supposed "friend" Guillermo Quintana, out of jealousy for both the relationship he once had

with Leonela, and for Osvaldo's fame and fortune. He sets out on a path to destroy Osvaldo and his family, and begins by impregnating Jimena, and goes along with the plot to pass the child as Max's.

Max eventually finds out that Jimena's child isn't really his, but Guillermo's, which destroys his marriage. Max ends up maintaining custody of the child since he deems Jimena unfit to take care of him. He also learns that Maria is pregnant with his real son, and they are reunited. Jimena unites with Bernarda to destroy the Sandoval's family; Bernarda buys full control of Victoria's failing fashion label, and enlists Jimena as her star model. Osvaldo is shot by his ex-wife Leonela, but he survives. Victoria's happiness continues to disintegrate as she discovers her husband's infidelity, the fact that his first wife Leonela is still alive, and that she has breast cancer. Bernarda also abducts Maria's son, which also hurts Victoria as he is her grandchild; mother and daughter bond over this mutual pain, though not understanding why the bond is so deep. El Alacran is killed by Bernarda and then Rodolfo is killed in a shootout with the police officers.

Eventually, Victoria discovers the truth regarding her daughter's identity, and is troubled to learn that the girl she had worked so hard to destroy is in fact her daughter. Meanwhile, Bernarda plans to get rid of Maria and sets up her abduction. After the kidnapping, Alonso proposes marriage to Maria and she accepts. But Alonso is told by Jimena that he is infected by a virus that is destroying him and can cause death at any time. Therefore, Alonso rejects Maria and abandons her at the altar of the Church. Guillermo and Osvaldo are hired by Televisa for a production and in the middle of filming, Guillermo "drops" Osvaldo, who falls from a hill but he survives. The producer watches the tape and cannot believe the incident and dismisses Guillermo from filming with the promise that he will never get a contract for any other production. Alonso dies from the virus.

Casa Victoria and Casa Bernarda face off in a fashion contest. The winner of the night turns out to be Casa Victoria, with Maria as the flagship model of the moment. But the happiness of Victoria lasts only a moment, when Maria's nose begins to bleed and she loses consciousness. Maria is taken to hospital, where Dr. Heriberto Rios Bernal tells Victoria that Maria has the same virus that killed Alonso and must remain isolated to prevent further infections. Victoria goes mad with grief and Bernarda takes the opportunity to take Juan Pablito home, where she plans to make him a priest when he grows up, to make up for the sins she has made in the past. Max refuses to stay away from the love of Maria and removes the cloth insulation. He lies next to Maria, where he acquires the virus and passes out.

Meanwhile, Bernarda is arrested by authorities for the kidnapping of the son of Maria in the past. Milagros and Don Napo marry with friends and family. Cruz and Fer decide to adopt a child. Bernarda drinks poisoned wine. Bernarda is then trapped in a car on fire; she breaks the window and gets out of her car, kills Eva, then proceeds to run from the law. Bernarda gets onto a plane and dies in a plane crash. Roxana, Jimena's mother is arrested by police at the Sandoval's house. Guillermo is stabbed by Jimena, but survives. Osvaldo receives a call from his friend, and moves to Spain. Leonela is hit by Jimena with a broken glass, but she survives. Jimena arrives at Max and Maria's wedding, attempting to kill Maria, but fails and runs away to Guillermo's house. Guillermo and Jimena drive their car off a cliff committing suicide.

Maria and Max are happily in love with their two kids Juan Pablito and Osvaldito. Victoria is happy with her boyfriend Heriberto and her family. Fer is happy with her husband Cruz and their adopted daughter Victoria Cruz-Sandoval. Leonola is happy with her two grandchildren, her son and daughter in law Maria. Only true love can triumph over all the tricks, traps, intrigue, treachery and wickedness that seek to destroy true love - only then can there be triumph of love.

The eight episode under review for this study open with Max's father leaving the family. He advices Max not to sacrifice anything for love. Max takes his father's advice and goes to see Maria, his girlfriend. Max proposes to Maria and she accepts. Meanwhile Jimena, Max's wife has a nervous breakdown when she realises that she will be divorced and plans to kill Maria and she runs over her but Maria survives. Bernarda also attempts to kill Maria by burning the apartment block she lives in but she survives. When Juan Pablo takes temporary leave from being a priest, his mother Bernarda cannot forgive him. Juan Pablo decides to take care of Maria during her pregnancy so that she doesn't have to work as she got hurt when working as a cleaner. Meanwhile, Fer is distressed about her parents' separation and she goes for a horse ride with Cruz. She falls and injures her ankle. Later she goes for a car race with her ex boyfriend and the car, which was sabotaged under Bernarda's orders, crushes and she is seriously injured. Victoria pleads with Bernarda to tell her who her daughter is and she refuses. Victoria gets a picture of her missing daughter when she was young. She decides to tell Fer that she has a sister but it is the same night that Fer gets into a road accident. By the end of the eight episodes, Fer is paralysed waist down, Victoria is back to work, Max seems to be wondering which decision to make and Maria has not yet told Max that she is pregnant with his child.

Table two: Female cast in *Triumph of Love*

	Actress	Character	Role
1	Victoria Ruffo	Victoria Gutierrez de Sandoval	Mother to Maria; step mum to Max and Fer; wife to Osvaldo
2	Maite Perroni	Maria Desamparada Iturbide Gutierrez de Sandoval	Daughter to Victoria
3	Dominika Paleta	Jimena de Alba	Wife to Max
4	Daniela Romo	Bernarda Montejo Vda. De Iturbide	Mother to Juan Pablo
5	Erika Buenfi	Antonieta Orozco	Friend to Victoria
6	Susana Diazayas	Nati Duval	Friend to Maria
7	Ursula Prats	Roxana de Alba	Mother to Jimena
8	Carmen Salinas	Dona Milagros Robless Vda. De Martinez de Bravo	Mother to Juanjo

3.4.3   Generations

Generations is a South African soap opera which first aired on South African Broadcasting Corporation (SABC) 1 in 1994. It was created and produced by Mfundi Vundla while Morula Pictures are the distributors. The picture format is 480i. The soap has about 3,400 episodes to date with each episode running for about 21 minutes. It uses several languages but English is considered the key language. For all other languages used, English subtitles are provided.

3.4.3.1 Opening Montage

Generations opening montage comprises of eclectic images and an upbeat music tempo. The images comprise of a diverse range of images that include buildings, make-up kits and a media studio among others. Intertwined with these images are the cast members shown in what looks like random or up hazard shots. Dineo, Khethiwe and Ntombi are among the women shown therein.

Dineo is shown smiling and taking a sip of white wine. She is wearing a black bustier dress and she has a white shawl draped across her neck. Ntombi on the other hand, is dressed in a formal white blazer and she is looking pensive. In the many clips of Queen, she is always jovial; either while talking to her colleagues or to her friends. Khethiwe looks composed and content with what's going on around her. She has a demure manner around her.

3.4.3.2 Synopsis

The backdrop of *Generations* is the advertising industry, with a story line that celebrates dreams and aspirations of both the wealthy and poor, urban and rural folk. Rivalry, treachery and blackmail between siblings and friends and foes alike make *Generations* one of the most forceful dramas South Africa has ever produced. Suspense, intrigue and tension are

weaved in the soap as the plot unfolds and romance influences relationships between warring parties.

3.4.3.3 Plot

The eight episodes under review open with the departure of Ntombi's husband, Sibusiso going to an alcoholic rehabilitation centre. She is perturbed about the whole scenario and we see flashbacks of her life with her husband and daughter Chrissie on and off. At some point she quarrels her step-son for revealing that he was gay and blames him for forcing Sibusiso to go back to his alcoholic days. When she goes to visit him in the rehab centre, he refuses to see her and she is distraught. She has a vocal confrontation with Kennedy, her boss, who is happy to see him go to rehab and in fact it is stated that Kennedy sent Sibusiso a bottle of whisky to celebrate his rehab stay.

For next month's magazine cover, Dineo is working on a wedding theme dubbed 'winter and warm' and Karabo gets inspired by it. She asks Paul to think of marrying her and eventually, people assume that Paul asked to marry her and Queen goes ahead and starts making wedding plans. Paul is not happy as he is not sure of his feelings. Meanwhile, Karabo is thrilled about the up-coming wedding and even starts on the cake tasting.

Meanwhile, Dineo's mother, Ruby finds out about Dineo's feelings for Paul and warns her to stay away. She also tells Paul to leave Dineo alone. Khaphela sees Paul and Dineo kissing during a dinner hosted by Karabo and he tells her that he did not expect that of her. On finding out about the planned weeding, Dineo is not pleased with the turn of events and breaks up with Paul. Out of loneliness, she goes on a dinner date with Kennedy and the next day, he sends a pearl necklace to her.

Another wedding in the offing is that of Khaphela and Sarah. Khaphela had postponed the dowry negotiations but after a talk with Queen, he agrees to go on with the dowry negotiations.

In the office, Dumisani is in the habit of harassing his girlfriend, Khethiwe, and it is inferred that Khethiwe is a victim of domestic violence. One night, Dumisani beats up Khethiwe, something that has been happening over time, and she spends the night with her friend Rethabile, who urges her to report the incident to the police. They go to the police and report the incident but a few days later, Khethiwe withdraws the charges. When Khaphela finds out, he is outraged and roughs up Dumisani. Sarah is upset by this act but she is happy that Khaphela would want to protect the innocent.

Table three: Female cast in *Generations*

	Actress	Character	Role
1	Sophie Ndaba	Queen Moroka	Secretary at Gloss Ad Agency
2	Katlego Danke	Dineo Dlomo	Daughter to Ruby; employee at Gloss Ad Agency; ex-wife to Kennedy; girlfriend to Paul
3	Winnie Modise	Khethiwe Buthelezi-Ngcobo	Girlfriend to Dumisani
4	Sonia Mbele	Ntombi Khumalo Dlomo	Wife to Subisiso; mother to Chrissie
5	Connie Ferguson	Karabo Moroka	Girlfriend to Paul; senior manager at Gloss Ad Agency
7	Slindile Nodangala	Ruby Dikobe	Dineo's mother
8	Fundi Zwane	Rethabile	Friend to Khethiwe; intern at Gloss Ad Agency

3. 5   Chapter Summary

This chapter has explored the use of visual texts as the primary data collection tool. The rationale of why this method was chosen has been provided. The sampling procedure and the scope of the study have also been discussed. Two methods of analyzing collected data - discourse analysis and interpretative textual analysis - have also been explained and their merits highlighted. It has also set the context of *Mali, Triunfo del Amor* and *Generations.*

CHAPTER FOUR

OBJECTIFICATION AND SELF RELIANCE VERSUS VICTIMIZATION OF WOMEN

4.0   Introduction

Objectification theory (Fredrickson & Roberts, 1997) postulates that many women are sexually objectified and treated as an object to be valued for its use by others. Sexual objectification occurs when a woman's body or body parts are singled out and separated from her as a person and she is viewed primarily as a physical object of male sexual desire (Bartky, 1990). Objectification is also the act of representing women as passive and compliant with male sexual desires. Objectification theory posits that sexual objectification of females is likely to contribute to mental health problems that disproportionately affect women like eating disorders, depression, and sexual dysfunction. Additionally, various studies have indicated that women are overwhelmingly targeted more for sexually objectifying treatment than men (Henley, 1977; Gardner, 1980; Van Zoonen, 1994; Unger & Crawford, 1996; Fredrickson & Roberts, 1997). It is for this reason that this chapter will look at how *Mali, Triumph of Love* and *Generations* deal with objectification of women.

4.1   Objectification

In *Mali* women are objectified through their dressing, their language and the way they relate among themselves.

The dressing and accessories used by the female cast speak of self-objectification. As Aubrey (2006) states, "self-objectifying individuals come to view themselves as objects or "sights" to be appreciated by others" (p. 367). The women, especially Usha and Lulu dress for the male gaze. They are not coy about it and flaunt their outfits and body shapes. In popular

culture, body adornment can simultaneously be used to signify one's status and income and in *Mali* they do just that. Usha and Lulu being the more fashion conscious ones often have discussions about what to wear and how they look. In the first episode under review, for instance, Lulu, Arthur and Usha sit for breakfast and Lulu quickly asks, "Who is the fashion expert here? I need some advice. Usha quickly replies that that question should in fact be a statement and not a question when Usha is in the room. She points out that she is not only a fashion guru but also that she is fashion conscious. Lulu explains that she has the first meeting with Hakim (an editor who later becomes Lulu's boyfriend) and she doesn't know what to wear.

> Usha: First meeting, formal. So, of course you don't want to be too, what shall I say?
> Tacky. Basic black is always a good option. Um, don't show too much skin.

Lulu: Do I need skin?

Usha: Of course. And then just to express your personality, go with a touch of colour.

Lulu: For the accessorises?

Usha: But of course he is a man. So shoes.

Lulu: Shoes.

Usha: Shoes.

Lulu: Shoes.

Lulu is keen to look presentable when she meets Hakim. She aims to please the male gaze and takes extra effort to dress the part. When we see Lulu meeting Hakim she is dressed as advised by her step-mother. Hakim goes a step further in objectifying Lulu. When she stretches her hand in greeting, he holds her hand as if to greet her but instead pulls her up from a sitting position to him to lie on his chest. Blushing, Lulu greets him and when going to sit, she pulls her already short dress up leaving her thighs bare and crosses her legs to satisfy Hakim's male gaze. Her shoes are black and high-heeled representing the woman's favourite phallic symbol (Trebay, 2011). By pulling her already short dress up, Lulu wants to be seen

sexually and falling for the bait, Hakim smirks and looks sexually aroused. It takes Lulu's mumbling for Hakim to take his eyes off her thighs.

In another episode, the women in *Mali* have been invited for a photo shoot and they dress up for it. In one scene:

> *Usha to domestic worker: na huo mzigo uubebe vizuri. Unathamani kukushinda*
> *(Carry that bag well, it is more precious than you).*
>
> *Lulu to Usha: Usha you are going on a trip or something?*
>
> *Usha to Lulu: don't be silly, that's just my wardrobe for the photo shoot.*
>
> *Lulu to Usha: Are you serious? All this? This can fit to dress the entire Mali staff.*
>
> *Usha to Lulu: Ah! Laugh if you must. But my photo shoot is going to be perfect*

The fact that Usha needs an entire bag of clothes and accessories, implies that she is conscious about how she will appear to other people once the magazine cover is out. This scene takes place as Usha, who is already fully dressed in a black midi dress and is accessorised with a thin red belt, a red pearl necklace and high black stiletto heels, is applying makeup. Lulu is wearing a white tank top tucked in a black mini skirt with a high slit and a thin belt. These two outfits are seen as sexy depending on the age. Whereas, the younger Lulu wears a mini skirt, Usha chooses a midi dress befitting her age yet at the same time appearing sexy. During the photo shoot, Mabel is the only one not in black. She is wearing a pink and purple *kitenge* (a cotton fabric with prints associated with Africa) accessorised with a single strand of chain and small but pretty earrings.

In *Triumph of Love,* Fer's dressing style is casual. In one scene she is dressed in a mini double hemmed flowery skirt with a double breasted three-quarter blouse and a pair of ankle boots. In another instance she is wearing black leggings with an olive green blouse and a black opened jacket. She also wears a grey cloche hat with a silver bow. The way her pieces

are put together shows a lady who knows her body and can dress it up to accentuate her assets.

Fabian and Cruz both want to court Fer. Fer is interested in Cruz but is aware of the class difference. When Fer hurts her leg and is confined indoors, each of the two men serenade her. They later meet and talk about her as a trophy to be won. They even swear a pact that they will not use evil schemes to win her to them but rather, they promise to play fair and hope that the best man wins Fer's heart. They both decide to call on her as often as they can and the rest is left to Fer to decide whom she will go out with. Cruz wins and they eventually get married.

In *Generations,* while Karabo is the 'official' girlfriend to Paul who is known to all, Dineo is the *mpango wa kando,* the unknown girlfriend. Paul, instead of making a decision as to who he will date, strings along both women and even accepts a marriage suggestion from Karabo. The very same night, he receives a suggestive message from Dineo and they chat over phone with Karabo sleeping next to him. The following morning, Paul leaves in a hurry to go meet Dineo for breakfast. During that breakfast meeting, Dineo breaks up with him. This can be seen as objectification as what Paul is doing is replacing one woman with another and strings them along knowing well that he can only get married to one and not the other.

4.2   Self Reliance Versus Victimization

The 'Damsel in Distress' motif is a classic theme in classical literature, art and film. Maugh (2013) notes that the stories usually involve a beautiful woman placed in a dire predicament, who requires a knight in shining armour or hero to rescue her. This motif represents women as weak or defenceless and hence makes women appear inferior and

needy. But according to Farah (2013) the most unfortunate implication of the "Damsel in Distress is [that] women are inherently weak and their only strength is their beauty".

Television - and soap operas, are no exception - has propagated this stereotype over the decades. From children's stories like *Sleeping Beauty, Cinderella, Thumbelina and Beauty and the Beast,* to dramas like *Twilight* and *Grey's Anatomy* there is always a woman who gets herself in trouble and she is saved by a man. More recently, the computer animated film versions of these fairy tales, also use the same theme. *Tangled* (2010), is based on the German fairy tale of Rapunzel. Rapunzel is kidnapped by Gothel who wants to make use of the magical abilities in her hair. She is forbidden to leave the tower she is hidden in but through her feminine wiles, convinces Flynn to help her escape, fitting Farrah's notion of a damsel in distress.

With the advent and growth of the women's movement women have begun to be empowered and successfully rise above this stereotypical representation of victimhood. An analysis of these two types of women, is the focus of this section.

4.2.1   Housing

In communication, the usage of space provides non-verbal answers to questions on culture, worldview, and various demographics. Proxemics, the study of human use of space within the context of culture, is mostly associated with Edward T. Hall (Brown, 2011). In his studies, Hall (1966) came up with three sub-categories of the use of space. Fixed, semi-fixed and non-fixed featured space. Hall defines fixed-feature space as "one of the basic ways of organizing the activities of individuals and groups" (p. 1). Based on this, communication scholars draw reasoning by what they see. For instance, as far as soap operas are concerned, the location of where the shoot was based, acts as the fixed-featured space while the objects in the location like cars, chairs, and other furniture acts as semi-fixed featured space. In the

following section, the researcher describes the various houses of the leading female cast and offers an analysis of their objects in the fixed and semi fixed featured space.

The home of G Mali's first wife Mabel Mali is set in what looks like a plush neighbourhood. The establishing shot shows the house's compound which has green lawns and a manicured flower bed. At the centre of the lawn is a mighty white piece of art made from clay. The piece is held on the ground by different colours of stones predominantly, white and grey stones. The mansion itself is big and it is supported by white circular pillars detonating the affluence inside the house. The windows are large and though they do not conform to the English style, they look magnificent. The interior of the house is full of comfortable furniture and modern gadgets. The living room, which also is the sitting room, is well furnished with comfortable beige leather seats with wooden trimmings. The coffee table is of glass and wood. On the far side of the room, is a flower pot with a green palm tree. Next to it is a table stand where a reading lamp is placed. The drapes and sheers are maroon in colour contrasting with the other furnishing and at the same time working to give the room a warm feeling. The dining table is made of wood and has a rotating centre. On one wall is a large framed photograph of G Mali, Mabel, Lulu and Nandi in better times when they were a close knit family and happy. The kitchen is laid out in an open plan design. Modern gadgets include a fridge, a cooker and a microwave. With such an opening shot, the audience is left to make a decision as to who Mabel Mali is. In the audience's eye, she is an affluent woman living in the 'leafy suburbs', based on her age and that she is African, a married woman with children and maybe educated. She also may be a prominent member of society or at the least, her husband or children may be prominent members of society. As the drama unfolds, the audience discovers that she is indeed wealthy and has two daughters. The wealth she has is by virtue of her deceased husband.

The house of Usha Mali, is not set in an overly serene environment. It is right off a street and has no visible lawn suggesting that she lives in what is commonly referred to as the concrete jungle. The furnishings are very modern and lend an urban feel to the house. The square dining table seems to be the centre of activity in Usha's house. On one side is a white leather L-Shape chair with red patterned throw cushions that makes the room look trendy. From the dining area, one can see the kitchen which is full of modern amenities among them a microwave, an electric hot water kettle, an oven to name but a few. A two set painting is mounted on the wall while on one table stand, we see a framed photograph of Usha and her husband, G Mali. The image created in the audience's mind is that the owner is rich and has modern and trendy tastes. The owner is definitely a middle aged woman with a good sense of interior design. As it turns out, all this is true. These two homes of the Mali women, speak of riches and lavishness. They speak of materialism and consumerism based on the objects in the house.

According to various dictionaries, (Dictonary.com; Merriam-webster.com) the word *hacienda* refers to either a large landed estate, especially one used for farming or ranching or the main house on such an estate. In *Triumph of Love*, two women live in such haciendas. One is Victoria and the other is Bernarda. Just as the definition states, the haciendas are large and many activities take place therein.

Victoria's house defines affluence. It is a large mansion with all modern draping and fixtures. The sitting/living room is large, spacious and airy. It has the main sitting area that has modern settees and on one side there is a small coffee table and two elegant chairs set around it. On another side, there is a grand piano. Atop it is a vase with flowers and a bit of stationery. There is also a picture of Victoria and her husband Osvaldo. Against one wall, there is a full human size figuring. The image is painted black and dressed in an off the shoulder maxi beige dress. The walls are painted off white and the doors are painted

chocolate brown creating contrast with the walls. The beige colour provides a good palette for design. The exterior is also as beautiful and is in a posh and affluent neighbourhood. One can hear the chirping of birds nearby. The entire house is painted white making it appear very big. It has a side top balcony with a beautiful railing. The windows are designed to look like canopies and they are decorated by hanging live green flowers on them. The bedrooms that we see are also tastefully furnished making them look warm and inviting. They are large and all are en-suites. Fer bedroom is worth noting. On one end of her bedroom is a settee that is covered with two big teddy bears among other medium and small sized ones.

Bernardas' house while not as elegant as Victoria's is also large. Set in a green space, it is surrounded by trees and other plants in flower pots. The exterior is painted in a pale brick red colour that contrasts with the green lawn. The foyer is supported by four pillars making it appear very castle-like. From the outside, there are birds chirping. From the foyer, there are mahogany leather and wood chairs placed facing each other. There are short but wide stairs stretching from one end of the living area to the other end leading one to the sitting/living room area. The living room area is adorned with mahogany coloured settees and one wall is tastefully designed to be a book shelf – which already holds many books. There are many pieces of place art strewn all over the place. There is also an altar on one side of the living room and many wall hangings of the Virgin Mary around the house. Round the altar is a statue of Jesus and that of the Virgin Mary. There is also a fire place.

In stark contrast to Victoria's and Bernarda's hacienda, Maria lives in a simple house. It is a single, bare room with only the essential furniture which includes a bed, and a straight back chair. On the wall, there are two pictures on a frame of some art and one wall is lined with a book shelf that is almost empty. On the bed side table, there is a statue of the Virgin Mary. The floor is not carpeted and there is really nothing else. There is also an extra double decked bed on one wall indicating that she shares the room with two other people.

Karabo and Paul's house is modern and speaks of opulence. She has a display cabinet full of an assortment of art pieces. Her walls are also decorated with beautiful art pieces. This shows her not only as a wealthy woman but also a well-travelled woman as the art pieces are from different parts of the world. However, it could also be that she bought the art pieces locally. There are many flower vases all around the house full of fresh flowers. The presence of fresh flowers as opposed to the plastic ones most commonly found in many households, Karabo strikes the audience as a woman in touch with her femininity and affluent. The plastic flowers can stay for years without getting spoilt as long as they are cleaned regularly. Initially, they may seem expensive but in the long run, they are cheaper than the fresh flowers that need to be changed every two to three days. Secondly, plastic flowers do not have a scent as fresh flowers do.

Dineo's house seems small but very comfortable. She lives there with her mother Ruby. Most of the scenes are shot in the kitchen. They have a table-top cooker and a red spice rack sits on the kitchen counter. On one side of the room is a dining table where they usually sit and share their meals. On one wall is a set of four African trays pinned up in an appealing design. In another corner is a stack of cartons heaped upon each other. The top most carton is inscribed across it, 'Smirnoff', a popular whisky world over. This stacking of boxes up on others or atop furniture, is a common occurrence among middle class Africans in urban centres. The phenomenon has been occasioned by the rural-urban migration of the 1970s which saw many Africans leaving their rural homes to go to urban centres to work in new industries and business premises to earn a living. Their relatives, also migrating, would move in with them and hence, the once sufficient space would soon become crowded forcing the inhabitants to store their belonging in cartons. Another explanation to this would be consumerism where the middle class want to own every gadget in the market but because of

high house rents, the many gadgets cannot fit in the small kitchens or houses available in the areas they can afford rent.

For the Mali women, it is clear that their affluence is as a result of their husband and hence, they are not self-reliant. Even after the death of their husband, Mabel and Usha are not engaged in any useful enterprise or income generating activity and are thus still dependent on the wealth created and accumulated by their deceased husband, G Mali. Karabo and Dineo from *Generations* are engaged in professional work where they draw their income from and are hence self reliant. *Triumph of Love* offers us a mix of self-reliant women and dependent women. An example of a self reliant woman is Victoria who rises from poverty to immense wealth.

Hall's categorization of space utilization is of significance to this study as it speaks of self-reliance or dependency. In feminist gender analysis, representations of women living in affluence is not in itself a sign of self-reliance if that affluence is acquired through dependency on men. It could merely instruct women that to be self-reliant, they have to marry or be in relationships with rich men. On the other hand, representations of women living in such affluence which they have attained through other means such as their own business or professional enterprise or through the support of fellow women may instruct us that women do not need men in order to achieve material comforts.

4.2.2   Earning a living

The women in *Triumph of Love, Mali,* and *Generations* are largely self-reliant but there are a few who rely on others for support. A few have earned their wealth by means of marriage while a few are financially self-made women. Whether it be a senior management position or a domestic worker position, women in these soaps earn their bread and their keep. They work tirelessly and whereas some have broken relationships, some are successful at

juggling their private lives and their public lives. Majority of the women in the soaps are not only financially stable but they are also educated and have acquired various empowering skills. Key examples are illustrated below.

After being kicked out of the Iturbide household, Victoria finds support from her friend, Antonieta and together they find work in a Humberto Padilla's sewing company, which is owned by Rodolfo Padilla the father of Federico. Through their hard work, their designs start to get noticed in the fashion industry. With Antonieta spurring her on, Victoria requests to model the clothes that they design and she is granted the chance. It is that one act of confidence that paves way for her to create a leading fashion house.

Bernarda is one woman who is in control of her life. She is presented as a strong woman who is ready to take on the world whatever the cost. Her husband is dead and since she has only one son, Juan Pablo who is a priest, she makes all decisions concerning her life. The problem is that the decisions she makes, are very unpopular and they lead to her being ostracised. One such decision concerns herself and the Bishop of the church she attends. When Juan Pablo resigns from priesthood, she is very upset with him and since he refuses to listen to her reasoning, Bernarda seeks the Bishops intervention. After explaining the matter to the Bishop, she requests him to reject Juan Pablo's resignation letter. The Bishop tells her that he has already accepted the letter and that he is in fact on support of his request. This annoys Bernarda so much that she slaps him severally. After resulting to violence, she is forbidden from taking sacrament in church by the Bishop.

Maria Desemparada is the best example of the traditional 'rags to riches' story. She is raised in a Catholic orphanage, but from a young age she aspires to be a runway model. Through many hurdles like lack of adequate food and a poor education, she achieves her dream. She becomes the leading model in the fashion industry and has a contract with casa

Victoria. When she falls in love with her boss's son, she is fired and her name is disgraced in the industry after malicious rumours about her are spread around the industry. At the same time, she is pregnant and is conscious of the fact that she needs to earn a living in order to cater to herself and her unborn child. She seeks work in a hotel and the only available work is that of a bathroom cleaner, a job that she takes and does diligently in spite of her friends telling her to disclose to Max that she is pregnant with his child so that he can offer financial support. After an accident while cleaning the bathrooms, she is rescued by Juan Pablo and seeing her desperation, he decides to quit the priesthood and offer Maria financial support.

Even with this promise, and injury, Maria soldiers on and goes out to look for another job. She sees a sign advertising a vacancy for a seamstress and she tells Nati that while at the orphanage she learnt how to sew and will hence take up the job. She takes up the job and is quite successful at it. It is here (through photos taken of her and published in a magazine contribute) that she is re-discovered as a model, After a long hiatus from the modelling world, she works hard and is once again crowned queen of the runway. The character Maria is represented as a young ambitious woman who knows what she wants from the beginning. Despite the many challenges that face her, she commits to a purpose and strives to attain it.

The fact that these women make it in life by sheer hard work, belief in self and self determination is a clear sign that women are not only courageous and industrious but also that they can do mighty things by themselves and on their own terms. It is also noteworthy that besides offering employment opportunities to many other women around them, they act as shining examples and role models to others around them.

4.3   Victimhood

As discussed earlier (Maugh, 2013; Farah 2013), women over decades have been portrayed as victims of unfortunate circumstances in need of male rescue. A perfect example

of a victim of unfortunate circumstances is Victoria. When Osvaldo leaves her, Victoria is quick to play the victim card by blaming her husband for cheating on her with Linda:

> Victoria: Fer (daughter to Victoria) I am begging you. Please don't punish me for what happened. You know perfectly well that your father is the one who is at fault.
>
> Fer: You actually believe that mama? You think papa is the only one who made your marriage fail?
>
> Victoria: I was always faithful to him and I gave him all my love.
>
> Fer: Oh! Mama. Mama I live here too. And I saw how you neglected papa all these years. Did you forget all those nights papa and I had dinner all alone? How about all those nights you didn't come to papa opening nights or performances, mama?
>
> Victoria: Fer, you know I had to deal with the business.
>
> Fer: Well, then don't blame papa. You see you had the share of the blame even if you choose not to admit it. I broke up with Federico… because I don't want to make the same mistake that you made mama.

Fer puts her on the spot to accept that she had a role to play in the break up of the marriage. Victoria sees Osvaldo's crime of cheating on her as greater than her neglecting him for the sake of the company. Victoria resigns herself to her fate and silently wishes that her husband would return. Even when Fer is involved in a road accident, she does not make any effort to contact and inform Osvaldo of the incident but instead delegates it to her son Max. Whereas the disintegration of a marriage is a result of the two people in the union, it is amazing how often women are blamed for the breakdown of a family. Parramore (2013) explains that a poll done in United Arab Emirates revealed "a clear tendency to blame women for not keeping their husbands happy leading to divorce". In the same article, Parramore (2013) highlights a front-page headline in *The Huffington Post* that read "Women: Five reasons your divorce is your fault" all proving that women are to blame for their divorce. Worse still is the emotional toll separation and/or divorce takes on a woman. According to Sharma (2011), "divorce dampens women's self esteem and divorced women reportedly

undergo very significant amount of strain"(p. 125). In support of this claim Amato and Previti (2003) posit that the end of a marriage is disruptive to family members, and its adverse effects fall especially hard on children and women. These representations appear to instruct us that women are the ones to be blamed for family disintegration and divorce. It is a negative representation that only helps to propagate the stereotype that women are to blame for all the wrongs in the world.

On many occasions, Fer has been represented as a damsel in distress and in need of male rescue. After an argument with her mother, Fer is so sad that Cruz offers to take her for a ride. They mount their horses and ride to the river. She is still not happy and Cruz lifts her spirits by serenading her, which works. Her high spirits are subdued when the horse she is mounting takes off without her sitting properly. She injures herself and Cruz comes to her rescue even carrying her home. For the next few days, Cruz takes care of her and even hires macchiato to serenade her. While they are singing, the audience is treated to a close up of Fer's face and we see the love she feels for Cruz. Cruz is scolded by Victoria for not taking good care of Fer as it was his neglect of her that led to the accident in the first place. When Fer points out that it is not such a big deal, nobody listens to her and Jimena, Max's wife, suggests that Cruz should be fired. Jimena's issue with Cruz is not that he hurt Fer but rather that he is from a lower social class and Jimena knows he is in love with Fer.

When her leg heals, Fer is bored and just to spite her mother, and to entertain herself, she agrees to go out with Federico, her former boyfriend, in spite of her earlier refusal. She ends up in an accident which leaves her in a coma. When the emergency crew arrives, they say that she is too badly injured to be moved immediately and that her lungs are failing and hence requires mouth to mouth resuscitation. Cruz, who works part time for the emergency crew, immediately takes it upon himself to save the damsel in distress by breathing life into her. He resuscitates her and she is safely transported to hospital. It is this reliance of male

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figures to be the ones to offer help when needed that leads to women being referred to as the weaker sex. Such scenes are scattered all over the soaps and are reminiscent of the barbaric age where men ruled the world by sheer brute force.

Maria has also been portrayed as a victim of ill circumstances. She is abandoned at birth, fired from her job at the peak of her success, falls in love with Max- who gets married to Jimena and not her, gets pregnant and almost loses her pregnancy many times, falls down while working, is intentionally run over by Jimena, her apartment is burned down by Bernarda, among many other unfortunate things all happening to one person. When all these bad things happen to one person, it is clear that she is being represented as an object that needs rescuing. A case in point is when Bernarda wants to kill her by burning the apartment block she lives in. Even though the fire fighters arrive on the scene, it is not them who rescue her but rather her boyfriend, Max. All the other victims of the fire tragedy, including Bernarda's friend Nati, are rescued by firemen. In another scene, when her child is kidnapped by Bernarda's hired goon, it is Ernesto, her boyfriend, who uncovers the plot, rescues the baby and in a very romantic set-up, filled with flowers, serene background music and sloweddown shots presents the baby to a crying, over-excited Maria, acting as her knight in shining armour who, asks her to marry him.

Khethiwe is a victim of domestic violence. Her abuse is both physical and psychological. In one instance, Rethabile, Khethiwe's friend and an intern at Gloss Ad Agency, is stressed out about finishing her assignments and her report. As she is venting to Queen, the secretary at Gloss Ad Agency, Dumisani, Khethiwe's boyfriend and senior manager at Gloss Ad Agency, appears on the scene and offers to help her with her report writing. Later she is seated in Dumisani's office and they are going over the report when Khethiwe enters. Rethabile explains that Dumisani is helping her out with her assignments and reports to which Khethiwe points out that he has never offered to help her out.

Progressively, Dumisani makes it a point to offer Rethabile help in Khethiwe's hearing. During a dinner party hosted by Karabo, the CEO of Gloss Ad Agency, Dumisani asks Khethiwe about the contents of her report to which she replies that it is confidential and walks off annoyed, leaving Dumisani in a huff. Early next morning in the comfort of their house Dumisani warns Khethiwe to never embarrass him again.

> *Dumisani: What was that about last night giving me that attitude in front of everyone*
>
> *Khethiwe: Oh! That*
>
> *Dumisani: Yes. That*
>
> *Khethiwe: It is your fault not mine*
>
> *Dumisani: Oh! Right. You embarrass me in front of our friends and colleagues and it's my fault?*
>
> *Khethiwe: You keep asking me what I'm going to write in my report*
>
> *Dumisani: It is a simple question*
>
> *Khethiwe: And I keep telling you I'm not going to tell you. So don't blame me.*
>
> *Dumisani: Why are you being so secretive?*
>
> *Khethiwe: Let go of me*
>
> *Dumisani: This means we are one now. We can't hurt each other*
>
> *Khethiwe: Don't you dare talk to me about hurting each other. And you should be grateful that I am very secretive. I haven't told a single person what happens under closed doors*

This scene demonstrates how women accept to be victims of abuse despite fully knowing that they are being abused. Throughout history, women were considered the property of the men in their lives. In ancient Rome, Stevenson and Love, (1999) note that men were allowed to beat their wives with "a rod or switch as long as its circumference is no greater than the girth of the base of the man's right thumb". Khethiwe is well aware that she is being harassed but does nothing to stop the harassment. Even when she is beaten up, instead

of pressing charges against Dumisani, she drops the charges and tells everybody else to mind their business. What is worrying or significant about Khethiwe's predicament is that she is a young and educated woman who is already pursuing a modern career path. This means that women of all demographic groups can be victims of domestic violence. Standpoint feminism articulates the ills of patriarchy with violence key among the parameters they use (Chodorow, 1978). Another angle to this is the silence that comes from it. Khethiwe maybe blames herself for being beaten or perhaps feels embarrassed about revealing this to anyone else. Even though everyone in the workplace knows of this particular incident, apart from Rethabile, no one else offers any sort of help to either Khethiwe or Dumisani. The social knowledge being produced here seems to say that when a woman is abused, she is in that situation by herself and it is up to her to sort out the mess. This may speak of the normalization of domestic violence in Africa. Speaking to Catherine Ndinda, a woman brought up in Makueni County, Kenya, (C. Ndinda, personal communication, July 9, 2014) about how the Kamba people of Kenya respond to emergencies, she explains that a scream, no matter how frenzied or urgent sounding, especially from a woman would not be responded to as it would be considered that it was a man disciplining his wife, a common and accepted fixture in traditional African setting. The correct way to ask for help would be to shout "*wuwiiii aume nakuu*" (wuwiiiii men, this way). Again a sign that it is only men who can come to your rescue and never women.

When women feel or know that they cannot control the one thing that truly should belong to them, their body, then they cannot be inspired to take control of any other aspect of their being. Through the normalization of violent and illegal acts against women such as female genital mutilation and/or cutting enforced early marriage, domestic violence has taken root in Africa and not just among the rural folk but also the urban elite. These practices

should be discouraged, as a woman's well being should be a national priority in addition to expanding spaces and creating platforms for her voice to be heard.

4.4   Chapter Summary

This chapter sought to explain what objectification is and it looked at various instances where women are objectified or where women objectify themselves or other people. It provides various instances where these has taken place and explains the detriments of objectification. The chapter also provided examples of women who are represented as relying on themselves by ably meeting all their needs and providing an avenue for others to be self reliant. As a contrast, it also offered instances where some women have been shown as victims of unfortunate circumstances in need of rescuing. The chapter presents the disadvantages of women being seen as victims and also offers the advantages of the reverse.

In the three soaps under review, under the feminist theory, there are a few women who are represented as being self reliant. They include; Maria Desepmparada, Victoria Sandoval, and Antonietta. *Generations* offers us Karabo, Dineo, Queen, Rethabile and Ntombi while *Mali* offers us Lulu, Bella and Eve. They surmount varied challenges and emerge self reliant and employers of many other women. Women who are dependent on men include; Bernarda Montejo, Jimena and her mother Roxana all from *Triumph of Love*, Khethiwe from *Generations* and Mabel and Usha Mali from *Mali.*

CHAPTER FIVE

LEADERSHIP AND THE PUBLIC VERSUS PRIVATE LIFE OF WOMEN

5.0   Introduction

This chapter will be split into two sections with the first section dealing with leadership and the second section will delve into the public versus private life of women as presented in soap operas.

5.1   Leadership

In the African context, Kiamba (2008) posits that traditional beliefs and cultural attitudes regarding the role and status of women in society are still prevalent and many women, who are part of this system, find it difficult to dislocate from the cultural tradition lest they be ostracized. Some of these beliefs and attitudes hold that women cannot be leaders. Suda (2002) notes that the urban labour force participation rate for women in Kenya increased from 30 per cent in the early eighties to 56 per cent in 1995. With new incentives like the women enterprise fund, *Uwezo* fund and the youth fund, initiated by the Jubilee Government that took power in 2013, women are bound to leap to create their private enterprises. However, despite their growing participation in the workforce, there are still very few women in the top echelons of public decision and policy making positions in Kenya. Sadie (2005) asserts that cultural attitudes are hostile to women involvement in decision making positions. One of the reason that Suda (2002) gives for the high rate of unemployment, under-employment, poverty and powerlessness among many Kenyan women is "the existence of social, cultural and structural barriers to effective female participation in the labour force". In agreement, Sadie (2005) adds that despite women's education and entry into the job market, the woman's role is typically of home maker. The man on the other hand

is bread winner, head of the house and has a right to public life. Eyben (2010) describes political empowerment as "people's capacity to influence policy, make demands, and call to account the state institutions that impact upon their lives. This includes political representation and collective action". With women being the majority in Kenya, (according to the population census of 2009) female political empowerment is something that should be encouraged. Where women make it to the policy making positions, "it means having to juggle cultural expectations with their leadership roles" says Sadie (ibid). Access to mainstream decision-making and political power for African women is a far off process that mainly exists in the minds of these women, and rarely achieved.

A report issued by Africa Centre for Women found that "women's involvement in decision-making contributes to redefining political priorities, placing new issues on the political agenda which reflect and address women's gender-specific concerns, values and experiences, and provides new perspectives on mainstream political issues. Without the active participation of women and the inclusion of their perspectives at all levels of decision-making, the lofty goals of equality, development and peace cannot be achieved" (ibid). It would then therefore mean that every society seeking development, should consider empowering women to be comfortable in the public sphere of life.

In mass media, the representations of women in their private life and men in their public life is the accepted norm. In the 90's, up to 85 per cent of characters on children's television were male, and in general drama men outnumbered women by three or four to one (Chandler, 1998). In research from 1975, Miles found that in the United States, a mere fifteen per cent of lead roles in action-adventure programmes were female (Gunter, 1986). In politics, Henderson (1999) argues that female politicians are routinely described according to their dress and appearance, while the media also concentrate heavily on the house wife/mother aspects of their lives. At the same time, Haines (1992) argues that female

politicians are expected to behave better than their male colleagues, and when those high expectations are not met, the condemnation is all the greater. Women's Media Center, a US based non-profit women's media organization through their research in 2013 found the following:

> By a nearly 3 to 1 margin, male front-page bylines at top newspapers outnumbered female bylines in coverage of the 2012 presidential election. Men were also far more likely to be quoted than women in newspapers, television and public radio; On Sunday TV talk shows, women comprised only 14 percent of those interviewed and 29 percent of roundtable guests; Talk radio and sports talk radio hosts are overwhelmingly male; Forty-seven percent of gamers are women, but 88 percent of video games developers are male.

Clearly with this skewed representation, Harper (2006) is right to state that "there is a suggestion of sexism from these statistics, and if there are less women actually on television and taking lead roles, then already women are misrepresented, firstly by the suggestion that there are less women than men in the world, and second by the inference that it is only really men who are capable of taking a lead and being the 'hero'".

This section therefore will explore the types of leadership roles presented for women in the soaps analysed and how the women in those roles are represented in the soaps.

5.5.1 Heroines

The three soaps under review all have very strong female heroines. There is Victoria Sandoval who runs a fashion empire she built from scratch, Maria Desemparada who became a leading runway model without parental or family support and Antonieta who believed in the ideas and dreams of her friend, Victoria, and helped her build an empire. In *Mali,* Usha, Mabel, Bella, Lulu and Nandi are all strong protagonists and antagonists and the whole soap revolves around these five women. From *Generations,* Karabo and Dineo are presented as strong, independent women who have ascended to leadership positions despite many

challenges. All these women can be seen as heroines who have ascended to corporate decision making platforms.

Karabo is the CEO of Gloss Ad Agency and her company is doing better than her competitors. She has managed to motivate her staff and also mentor her colleagues to an extent that even when she is away, the company runs smoothly. Dineo is represented as a hard working young lady. She was the wife of her former boss Ken of Mashada Ad Agency. The positive thing about her representation is that unlike many women, she did not get the job because she was friends with the boss. She is capable of doing her job and while at Gloss ad agency, she receives accolades from her peers and juniors. Even her boss Karabo congratulates her for the good job she is doing. Her mother is also proud of all that she has achieved in such a short time.

Maria Desemparada is the main character in *Triumph of Love.* Her story is the perfect rags to riches story. She advances herself from poverty to the heir of a fashion house and a great model commanding a lot of respect in the industry. She is humble, hard working and respectful. She grows to a fine lady without any parental support showing that she is determined to make it in life. From a domestic worker, Victoria rises to be the owner of a fashion house and leader of industry in a male dominated industry.

These women strive to attain greatness and they must stand against all odds and surmount many challenges and they eventually make it to the top of their industry meeting many, if not all, of their ambitions.

5.1.2 Humanitarian Philanthropists

After their husband's death, Mabel and Usha Mali are left to run the Mali Holdings Empire. They employ qualified people to do the daily running of the office and hence, we do

not see them involved in the day to day transactions of Mali Holdings. Usha is not involved in any way in the business. On the other hand, Mabel is involved in charity work through the Mali Foundation. She is seeking to provide food for orphaned children and poor people as there is a famine ravishing the country. As seen earlier, this is a stereotypical representation of women. In the public sphere, rich wives are expected to behave in only two ways; either as a humanitarian philanthropist or perpetual shoppers - No wonder Mabel makes fun of Usha by telling her to start a reality TV show and name it "Idle Rich Wives".

Humanitarian philanthropy is the preferred choice of work for most African first ladies. Examples include Margret Kenyatta (Beyond Zero campaign), Jeannette Kagame (*Imbuto* Foundation) and Mary Ayen Mayardit Kiir (Concern for Women and Children). Janet Museveni is an exception as she is an elected member of parliament representing Ruhaama County in Uganda and also the minister of Karamoja Affairs in Uganda's cabinet. In the West, wives of presidents and the wealthiest men have their own careers and are in leadership positions. Examples would be; Melinda Gates, wife to Bill Gates, one of the wealthiest men in the world, is an educated American business woman in her own right. While working for Microsoft, she participated in the development of multimedia platforms like Publisher, Microsoft Bob, Encarta and Expedia. Another example is Hillary Clinton (secretary of state, US Senator and a leading democratic presidential nominee).

The choice of humanitarian philanthropy by first ladies and wives of the rich is significant as it shows that primarily women, even of high social and economic classes are still concern with the traditionally ascribed roles of the female gender. Their philanthropic activities, just like Mabel Mali's, are geared towards providing food for women and children as they are seen by society as vulnerable people.

5.1.3 Successes in Public Life; Failures in Private Life

Victoria Sandoval offers leadership in Casa Victoria, a clothing and modelling label of which she is the chief executive officer. At the helm of the company, she brings change to an entire industry by asking her models to choose the outfits they would rather model from the collection as opposed to the dominant practice of being assigned clothes to model. This is in tandem with recent studies over the years that have provided evidence that corporations derived significant benefit from appointing women into executive positions. One 2007 study found that boards with significant representation of women have a 66 per cent higher return on invested capital, 53 per cent higher return on equity and a 42 per cent higher return on sales compared to boards with more men (Catalyst report). Another study of listed European and BRIC (Brazil, Russia, India and China) companies in the period 2007-09, McKinsey & Company (2010) found that companies with the highest share of women out perform companies with no women: by 41 per cent in terms of return on equity, and by 56 per cent in terms of EBIT (Earnings Before Interest and Taxes). In the industry, Victoria starts out as a runway model and ends up to be a runway model of high repute. She slowly builds her fashion house to be the best in the industry. She is helped by a reliable work force, key among them, her son Max and her best friend Antonietta. Victoria's strong leadership skills guide her effective team to win numerous awards.

While her business empire is at its peak, Victoria takes leave of absence to go and sort out her domestic matters. Her longing of her missing daughter overwhelms her and she decides to take a break from work. While she is away, she leaves Roxana to run the company and Roxana steals and mismanages the company running it down. Victoria's working relation with her son Max is good. Max is represented as a young hard working man who commands the respect of his mother and colleagues alike. With this foregrounding, one can make an assumption that Victoria would have left the running of the company to him but it appears

that his relationship with Maria offends his mother so much to an extent that she by passes him and gives the position to Roxana, his mother-in-law to be. Whereas Max worships his mother, Victoria, his sister Fer is not so convinced that neglecting a family for the sake of a business is worth it. When Victoria separates with her husband, her daughter Fer, who looked up to her, stops worshiping her. Fer blames her mother of neglecting her father and sees this as contributing to the separating of her parents. Consequently, Fer ends up greatly despising her mother Victoria. Victoria's husband also leaves her citing neglect - while in fact he has been having a sexual affair with Linda, an employee at Victoria's fashion house. The fall out between Max and his mother is about Maria. Victoria does not like Maria as she is from a lower social and economic class. Victoria refuses to accept that Max and Maria are in love and sees Maria as a gold digger.

This kind of representation speaks of the second wave of feminism where women questioned their place in society. Was it only at home or did they have a say in the public realm? In 1962, through her book *The Feminine Mystique*, Betty Friedan's shocked many by contradicting the accepted wisdom that housewives were content to serve their families and by calling on women to seek fulfilment in work outside the home. Friedan (1962) captured the frustration and the despair of a generation of college-educated housewives who felt trapped and unfulfilled in their homes. As one said, "I'm desperate. I begin to feel I have no personality. I'm a server of food and a putter-on of pants and a bedmaker, somebody who can be called on when you want something. But who am I?" (Collins, 2009 p. 117). While Friedan's writing largely spoke to an audience of educated, upper-middle-class white women, her work had such an impact that it is credited with sparking the "second wave" of the American feminist movement. A few years later, in 1966 NOW was formed and its clarion call was "to take action to bring women into full participation in the mainstream of American

society now, exercising all privileges and responsibilities thereof in truly equal partnership with men" (Fudge, 2005).

The failure of women in the public sphere is a representation that shows women as a gender cannot manage to have both a successful family life and a successful business career. One of the two has to suffer and often, it is the family that suffers leading to divorce or ill behaved or irresponsible children. The representation also glorifies women who decide to forego a public life for a private life. Women watching such a program understand that if they venture out into the public domain, they may succeed and this success will ruin their families. Consequently, the result of this is that they decide to stay at home and raise their children and hence, the presence of few women in the public domain.

This same script is repeated in *Generations*. The CEO of Gloss Ad Agency, Karabo, is running a successful media company while at the home front, she is not even aware that her boyfriend (later fiancé) is cheating on her with one of her employees. Karabo was taken ill and went away for medical treatment. Before she left, she was in a relationship with Paul. While she is away, Paul starts dating Dineo who works under Karabo. Dineo was once married to Paul's brother Ken. When Karabo comes back from medical leave, she assumes that Paul is still interested in her and they continue dating. Paul does not mention that he is dating someone else. Since Karabo is in love with Paul and is grateful for the support that Paul gave her when she was ill, one evening, Karabo suggests to Paul that they should get married. It is startling that it totally escapes Karabo that Paul is no longer in love with her yet in the public sphere, Karabo is a successful leader heading the ad agency. This representation portrays her as a success in public life and a failure in private life.

5.1.4 Decision Making

Karabo stands out as the CEO of Gloss Ad Agency. She is in charge of a large work force and she seems capable of leading them to great success. After Dumisani is released from custody for domestic violence, he comes back to work. He is dirty and looks unkempt. Karabo asks him to take time off but he refuses and tells her that it was only a misunderstanding and not domestic violence as everybody thought. When Karabo points out that he spent the weekend in jail, he says that if the crime he had committed was serious he would still be in jail. He adds that it was Khethiwe, his girl friend whom he had assaulted, who after all, dropped the charges. However, Karabo suspects that Khethiwe's predicament is as a result of the negative reports submitted by the interns. Interns, and Khethiwe is one of them, are under Dumisani's charge and the reports they write are handed in to Karabo. Khethiwe's report was positive but the other interns wrote negative things about Dumisani. When speaking to Karabo, Queen, the office secretary, suggests that Dumisani and Khethiwe need to seek professional help. Additionally, Rethabile and the booking officer at the police station advices Khethiwe to seek professional help. When people in the office find out, Dumisani calls for a staff meeting where he expressly states that he did not abuse or assault Khethiwe and warns all the employees that the rumour mongering going on will not be tolerated under any circumstances.

For many feminists, the underlying cause of domestic violence is patriarchy (McRobie, 2013). The radical second-wave feminists see issues like domestic violence, abortion and other sexual and reproductive issues as being dictated by men and their clamour is that patriarchy as a system, just like race and class, should be abolished (Krolokke, 2005). Their agitations were characterized by slogans such as 'Woman's struggle is class struggle' and the most famous 'The personal is political' (Hanisch, 1970), directing the feminist

agenda to attempt to combine social, sexual, and personal struggles and to see them as inextricably linked.

In this age of entertainment-educational soap operas, the above scene would have been a good point to speak out against domestic violence. Good examples of the successes of entertainment-educational soaps include the long-running South African television series *Soul City* that has 12 million viewers and regular viewers are almost four times as likely to use condoms than others. In Saint Lucia, the radio drama *Apwé Plézi (After the Pleasure)* became so popular that producers had to set up a separate helpline for people requesting information on family planning. Brazilian women with exposure to soap operas, which usually portray small families, have been found to have significantly lower fertility than others (Bansal, 2012). In Kenya, Mediae a media production company took Miguel Sabido's, a world renown producer, approach of entertainment-educational dramas and had very successful themes like HIV/AIDS prevention and polygamy in their drama *Makutano Junction.*

For the average TV viewer, when they see Karabo's lack of interest in Khethiwe's abuse and that Dumisani goes unpunished both by the law and at work, it only propagates the myth that women deserve to be beaten. For a woman in Karabo's position, more is expected from her - after all, she has broken through the glass ceiling. She is learned and understands the vicious cycle of domestic violence. Instead of insisting on the couple seeking help, she lets Dumisani off the hook without even a reprimand yet it is clear that when the media finds out about the incident, it will portray her company in bad light. She does not even bother to ask Khethiwe her side of the story.

What this means is that she is not sensitive to the plight of other women in the work force. As a leader, she should be conscious of the effects of domestic violence and even ask

Khethiwe to seek medical care and offer any needed support. At the least, we should have seen Karabo reprimand Dumisani. By not doing so, she helps in mainstreaming gender violence as what we see is that 'it is always the woman's fault'.

In the business world, rational thought is seen as king while emotional decision making is frowned upon (Palmquist, 2009). Lulu and her mother do not see eye to eye and are not talking to each other. After G Mali passes on, the fight for the inheritance, creates a wedge between Mabel and Usha. In her war to get all the inheritance, Usha manages to create bad blood between Mabel and her two daughters Nandi and Lulu. This results in Nandi trying to kill her mother and Lulu blames her mother for it and hence she does not talk to her. She even moves out of the house and goes to stay with Usha. When Lulu is offered an opportunity to contribute to raising funds for charity by covering a charity event spearheaded by her mother, Mabel, in her TV show, she passes on it based on her relationship with her mother without even a second thought. Had Lulu taken a moment to think about it, she may have seen the great opportunity the campaign could be to her as when her brother Arthur takes it up, is of immense help to his career. When Arthur, her step brother is presented with the same opportunity to ask his rugby friends to take part, he wholeheartedly agrees and is enthusiastic about the whole campaign which is in aid of the starving people. Because of this, Lulu loses her chance to grow her viewership. Whereas Arthur sees the opportunity in the campaign to advance his popularity, Lulu is more interested in her personal strife with her mother and refuses to talk to her. This means that women cannot put aside their personal issues and engage in business matters as peers as opposed to the social institutions we belong to. In essence, this eventually leads to foregrounding women as more emotional than men and hence bad leaders and at the same time backgrounding them as good leaders. However, Hudson (2013) notes that having emotional leaders is not a bad thing but rather that "a leader must know when the right time and place is for emotions to play a part in their lives and must

come to realize when they are experiencing emotions that may negatively affect their judgment".

The same is replicated with Bella in *Mali*. After she finds out that her online love, "kidnapped in Kapsabet", is one of her employees she is annoyed and embarrassed about it. She does not to relate with him and even hides the truth from her best friend Eva who has been egging her on. In a meeting about the food campaign, she offers her cafe as a meeting ground but when she is requested to attend and supervise the meetings, she adamantly refuses. She does not give a reason but to the audience it is clear it is so that she can avoid meeting "kidnapped in Kapsabet" who is a waiter at the cafe. Again, as a woman, she cannot disassociate her personal life from her public life. In this instance, it would have been better to hold her emotions and head the meetings.

5.2   Public Versus Private Life of Women

Many studies indicate that in the media, women are often presented in their private life as opposed to men who are presented in their public life (Folkerts et. al, 1998; Suda, 2002; Sadie, 2005; Kiamba, 2008; Yi & Dearfield, 2012). Whereas men are shown as politicians, business leaders and decision makers, women are portrayed as mothers, wives, daughters, sisters among other private titles. Tunstall (2000) argues that media representations highlight women's domestic, sexual, consumer and marital activities to the exclusion of all else. The media generally ignore the fact that a majority of all women go out to work. Men, on the other hand, are rarely defined by their marital or family status. Working women are often portrayed as unfulfilled, unattractive, possibly unstable and unable to sustain relationships. It is often implied that working mothers, rather than working fathers, are guilty of the emotional neglect of their children (Tunstall, 2000). In agreement, a content analysis study of women's magazines conducted from between 1949 and 1974, and 1979 and

1980 by Ferguson (1983) notes that such magazines are organized around a cult of femininity, which promotes a traditional ideal where excellence is achieved through caring for others, the family, marriage and appearance. This chapter will describe instances where women have been represented as sacrificing all else for the sake of love and marriage, where women are portrayed as not being able to balance between their public life and their private life and finally the chapter will offer an insight into their parenting role.

Describing the trivialization and condemnation of women's achievement in the mass media, Tuchman et al. (1978) used the term symbolic annihilation. Various studies (Newbold, 2002; McKay & Johnson, 2011) found that on television, sports presentation of female athletes tends to sexualize, trivialize and devalue women's sporting accomplishments. Whereas sports is not a parameter of study in this research, the foregoing goes to illustrate that symbolic annihilation is perpetuated in the media with women being depicted as more comfortable and successful in the private sphere of life.

5.2.1 Relationships

5.2.1.1 Quest for love

Soap operas revolve around love affairs - who is dating who and who is trying to get the attention of who. Female characters in soap operas will do almost anything to be loved by the man they have set their eyes on. Studies into soap operas and television in general, reveal that women tend to have higher expectations of their romantic partners' physical attractiveness and pleasant personality (Eggermont, 2004); and to hold unrealistic expectations about marriage (Segrin and Nabi , 2002). To be loved seems the ultimate goal of soap women and in reality, this poses a challenge. A few scenarios have been discussed below.

Bella, is a senior manager at Mali Enterprises and she seems to be in control of a lot of things in the office. We hardly see her in her private life and whereas this is a good thing, the problem is that when we see her in her private life she appears to be incapable of finding someone to love. She engages in an online relationship with a man calling himself 'Kidnapped in Kapsabet' with whom she is very much in love. When they arrange to meet, he turns out to be one of his employees at Cafe Afrique. She is rather embarrassed and to her credit, she does not fire him from work. Career women are portrayed as women who cannot find love; either because of their success in the public sphere, a male domain or because they are not deemed as feminine enough. Demonstrating this very fact Kareithi (2013) narrates the story of Wangari Maathai, the 2004 Nobel Peace Prize Laureate and how she ended up divorced. In 1977 she founded the Green Belt Movement which she used to lead women to resist anti-environmental policies flaunted by the Moi regime (Wangari Maathai biography). The then president, Daniel Arap Moi, "regularly referred to her as a 'mad woman' and vilified her for refusing to be a proper woman in African tradition and to respect men and be quiet" Kareithi (2013). Her husband left and after a lengthy separation, her husband sued for divorce stating that she was too strong-minded for an African woman. Whereas it is un-African for a woman to have a mind of her own, it is this very fact that made Wangari Maathai to be the first lady in East Africa to earn a doctorate degree and to later be the first African lady to be awarded a Nobel Peace prize. This story fits well into the narrative of Bella who is a successful manager who cannot find love.

Maria and Max are in love. The only hindrance to their relationship is that they come from different socio-economic backgrounds. This makes Max's step mother, Victoria, to vehemently oppose their union. Since, Max will not listen to his mother, she enlists the help of Jimena, a young beautiful lady who is secretly in love with Max and would do anything for Max to notice her. Jimena is encouraged by Victoria, to get closer to Max through any means.

After a one night stand with Max, Jimena lies to Max that she is pregnant with his child while in actual fact, the child is Guillermo's. Max chooses to marry Jimena as he would have an opportunity to raise his child. Despite the marriage, Max is still in love with Maria and impregnates her. Meanwhile, when Jimena finds out that Maria is pregnant she is devastated as she is aware that Max does not love her. She plans to eliminate Maria from the picture and comes up with various strategies to ensure this. She tries to kill her, rams into her with her car, and tries to pay her off but nothing works. The quest for Max's love becomes her life's pursuit and when it does not happen, she loses control of her emotions and gets a nervous breakdown. This representation of wholehearted devotion and want of a man, leads women viewers to replicate the same in real life, yet the reality is that it takes two people to fall in love. Even when the man in the picture wrongs a woman (like having a sexual affair while married to her), it seems acceptable and this in itself speaks of masculine hegemonic power balances where the man will be forgiven - and even sought after - for all his sins and if the same were to happen to a woman, she would be banished to misery and disgrace as she is expected to abide by the rules made by men.

Another element of love affairs that is quite common in these soaps, is that love or being in love, must be painful - either emotionally or physically for the female gender. For instance, Dumisani and Khethiwe's relationship is wrought with both physical and emotional domestic violence, with the man, Dumisani, being the aggressor, yet Khethiwe, his girl friend, repeatedly forgives him and even accepts to live with him. Mabel, Usha and Bella all loved the same man and this made them fight among themselves bringing emotional pain. In fact, their state seems to normalise polygamy and *mpango wa kando* (extra marital) affairs something that is detrimental to women advancement and national social well being as observed by various scholars (Jelen, 1993; Thompson and Erez, 1994; Chambers 1997; Al-Krenawi, 1998; Al-Krenawi & Graham, 1999; Wing, 2001; Madhavan, 2002; Starr &

Brilmayer, 2003). The *mpango wa kando* affairs have been largely to blame for the spread of HIV/AIDS among married couples in Kenya. Rightly Von Struensee notes that "polygamy negatively impacts a woman's health, including mental health, sexual and reproductive health and her death from AIDS". Citing data from the National Aids Control Council, Kemei (2013), notes that "married couples and those in stable relationships account for the highest percentage of new HIV/Aids infections in Kenya". An advert advocating for condom use within the *mpango wa kando* relationships, was banned in Kenya (Koigi, 2013) with the church stating that it was un-African to discuss bedroom matters openly and more so among women. The *'Weka Condom Mpangoni' (*let condoms be part of the plan) educational advert, did not sit comfortable with some stakeholders, especially those that are perceived to value the sanctity of marriage, morals and family. Press releases issued by many NGOs immediately after the ban of the advert indicated that they did not support the ban calling it a case of the proverbial ostrich burying its head in the sand. The Agency for Cooperation and Research in Development (ACORD) stated "stigma, and denial of vital information for facilitating behaviour change amongst populations will not only pose a higher risk of HIV infection, but will also reverse the efforts towards the fight against HIV/AIDS. Discrimination against women's access to prevention information in the fight against HIV/AIDS can only be compared to a flame on petrol" (ACORD report). Koigi (2013) explains that the problem with the advert was the use of a female cast and that women were empowering themselves by sharing necessary information. Of great importance is the fact that the same advert with a male cast continued to air on TV proving that in Kenya, and in Africa at large, bedroom matters are the domain of men and while women cannot talk about sex, men can.

In April 2014, during deliberation on the Marriage Act, polygamy was a subject of debate. The Marriage Bill 2013 that was tabled in the parliament of Kenya in July, 2013

sought to have women consenting to a polygamous marriage. The plan was to have the first wife to agree to her husband marrying a second wife. The male dominated parliament with 90.2 per cent male representation of all 349 members (Nzomo, 2013) voted against the suggestion. Additionally, the chairman of *Maendeleo ya Wanaume* (progress for men), Nderitu Njoka, speaking to Mureithi (2013) said that "a man should not seek advice to get another wife. He should do so as long as he is able to take care of them" thus invalidating a woman's voice. With this kind of rhetoric from the chairman of this movement, it is no wonder then that gender inequality still exists. *Maendeleo ya Wanaume* is seen as the equivalent of *Maendeleo ya Wanawake*, an organisation that was formed in 1952 to champion the advancement of the African women. The statement clearly points out that that the decision maker of the home is the man, a fact that is practised by many patriarchal societies around the world making feminism popular among women. According to Ferree (1990), "feminists agree that male dominance within families is part of the wider system of male power, [and] is neither natural nor inevitable, and occurs at women's cost" (p. 866). This same fact is upheld by Christianity as a religious institution as it encourages patriarchy. In Christianity, wives are asked to supplicate themselves before their husbands. "Wives, submit yourselves to your own husbands as you do to the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church, his body, of which he is the Saviour (Ephesians 5: 22-23). 82.5 per cent of Kenyans, identify themselves as Christians and they have been socialized to view patriarchy as a continuum with one end the representations of God as Father and of fathers as rulers over wives and/or children, and at the other end, the politics of sexual differentiation that privilege males while otherizing women.

5.2.1.2 Weddings and marriages

Marriage and wedding matters are in the private domain and they are often primed to be a concern of women only (Ferree, 1990), yet women are in these relationships and

marriages with men. Engstrom (2008) quotes Ingraham (1999) saying "weddings, marriage, romance and hetero-sexuality become naturalized to the point where we consent to the belief that marriage is necessary to achieve a sense of well-being, belonging, passion, morality and love" (p.120). In *Mali*, Eve is pregnant with Ron's child. At some point she tells Ron, her colleague, she is not moving into the same house with him unless they are married. She talks to Bella about this:

> *Bella: You have Ron and he is going to take care of you and the baby.*
>
> *Eve: The other day, I asked him what his plans were after we got married. The guy just froze.*
>
> *Bella: What did you expect? You surprised him.*
>
> *Eve: Bella, what kind of a man who has a child with a woman that he claims he loves has no plan of marrying her?*
>
> *Bella: Because he is a man. The words 'marry me' to a man is like asking a man to chop off his toes and eat them after digging in a garden full of maggots the whole day. And bare foot.*
>
> *Eve: Bella*
>
> *Bella: What?*
>
> *Eve: So What? Am supposed to be his baby mama?*
>
> *Bella: Baby mama. Can you even listen to yourself? You have been watching too much of those Tyler Perry movies. What am saying is that keep demanding for your right to be married but don't push for it. It doesn't work in the long run.*
>
> *Eve: Thank you Oprah.*

The way that Bella describes the idea of marriage to men is not only funny but condescending to women who actually would want to be married. Bella makes marriage sound like something men do at gun point as opposed to their own volition. The reality is that Kenyan law (Article 45, Constitution of Kenya) does not provide for same-sex marriages and this means that all these marriages are between consenting men and women. Bella's advice speaks to the long held stereotypes that marriage is a feminine preserve that men should only

engage in as a last resort. As Chimamanda Adichie (2013) rightly states "... because I am female I am expected to aspire to marriage. I am expected to make my life choices always keeping in mind that marriage is the most important. Now marriage can be a source of joy and love and mutual support. But why do we teach girls to aspire to marriage and we don't teach boys the same?" It is this notions and expectations of an African lady, and representations that perpetuate the vicious cycle of polygamy and women staying in abusive marital relationships. Various scholars (Mincer, 1985; Spitz and South, 1985) indicate that there is increased marital conflict within career couples a factor that may be attributed to more women taking up careers outside their homes. Polygamy - because then it is the aspiration of many ladies to get married and since there are fewer men accepting to marry, then ladies prefer to be second, third or even fourth wives than stay single (Sidikou & Hale, 2012). Being a single African lady of marriageable age, many people assume you are stubborn, opinionated, big-headed and rude (Zeitzen, 2008), among other negative adjectives. It is then logical that many older single women are not happy with their status and would like to change them as soon as they can. In a quote attributed to Charlotte Bronte she points out that "the trouble is not that I am single and likely to stay single, but that I am lonely and likely to stay lonely" bringing to light the perceived loneliness of single women. What was true in the 1800's is still true today as Small (2013), notes: "the single black female was [is] looked at as desperate and incapable of attracting the right men, doomed to a lifetime of loneliness". This repeated and stereotypical portrayal of women's quest for marriage eventually leads to women being disadvantaged in marriage. Bella advices Eve to ask to be married but not push for it as it would work against her - in essence, Eve should be cautious. One interpretation for this is that in Eve's eyes, Ron is a precious jewel that any person in their right mind cannot let go. So if it is means cajoling, or even supplicating herself to him, or using whatever means that would ensure that she marries him, then it is Eves' lot in life to

do it. Another interpretation would be that Eve needs to step back and let the man make the decision. When Ron is ready, he will propose to her and they will get married. The problem with both interpretations is that the process and decision is taken out of the woman's hand and wholly rests with the man and thus invalidating her desire for marriage yet on the other hand, she has been raised to get married. Since social knowledge is acquired from this kind of media scenes, any viewer watching this scene will draw the same conclusions drawn here: that a woman should get a man to propose to them by any means necessary.

Livingstone and Liebes (1995) state that this desire for women to get married at all costs, suggests "that feminine maturity is achieved only through marriage. "The peak of any soap usually involves a marriage and usually the soap also ends with a wedding ceremony. In the case of *Triumph of Love,* it ends with the lavish wedding of Maria Desemparada and Max Sandoval. The end of any drama is seen as very key as it offers a conclusion and helps to tie in all loose ends and to resolve conflicts.

In a scene from *Generations*, Dineo is working on a magazine issue based on the wedding theme. In a very animated way, she is explaining to her staff of writers and photographers about what type of stories and pictures she expects to fill the magazine. While she is briefing the staff, Karabo happens to pass by and when she glances at the mannequin with a wedding dress, she doubles back and sits in for the session. It is this briefing that inspires Karabo to propose marriage to Paul. Whereas Karabo is very excited about the proposition, Paul is very hesitant and wishes that Karabo would take back the proposal. When she serves cake as a dinner dessert stating that they were cake - tasting, the art of designing a wedding cake and tasting for flavours, fruit, sugar and alcohol contents, for their wedding, Paul does not appear to have even heard her. Paul's reaction is in tandem with the studies (Laski, 2013; Ford, 2013) stating that weddings are a preserve of women and men are not

enthusiastic about them. Engstrom (2008) posits that women are so wrapped up in weddings that they literally buy into the wedding ideal.

Elsewhere in *Triumph of Love*, Sarah was set to marry Khaphela and they had organised for dowry negotiations. When Subisiso is taken to rehab, Khaphela postpones the event and Sarah, while patient, is not happy about it. She is sad and Queen decides to talk to Khaphela. When Khaphela decides to go ahead with the dowry negotiations, Sarah is overjoyed. This lacklustre effort of Khaphela to plan for the negotiations and Paul's disinterest depicts marriage as a woman's affair as discussed above in Engstrom, 2008; Laski, 2013 and Ford, 2013.

5.3   Parenting

7.2.1   Representations of motherhood

Mabel Mali, the first wife of G Mali has two daughters. Her first born is Nandi Mali while Lulu is the second born. Whereas Nandi does not feature in the ten episodes under review, Lulu features prominently in every episode. Richard Mali and Arthur Mali are the two sons of Usha Mali, G Mali's second wife.

The relationship between Usha and the children is good as Richard, Arthur and Lulu are living with her, despite the fact that Usha is Lulu's step m other. Lulu and her mother Mabel, are not in good terms and this is shown the one time they meet during a photo shoot. It is Lulu who suggests to Usha that they need to go and have lunch instead of talking to Mabel. In fact, Lulu does not even acknowledge her own mother when she walks in, or during the entire photo shoot. When Lulu is told by Usha and her step brothers that her mother spent the night in custody for killing Zollo, she seems totally unmoved by it. The two men go to visit Mabel individually but Lulu does not visit her at all. This speaks of an

acrimonious relationship of parent and daughter with even the editor of the newspaper under Mali Holdings, Hakim asking Lulu what the 'beef' with her mother is all about and why she had to embarrass her in public like that. On a follow up request, Hakim asks her to take another picture with her mother saying that the one they took was not good enough. Lulu says "getting me and my mum to seat and behave is not going to be possible". What we can draw from this is that Mabel maybe a good mother but her children do not think so. Nandi, her first born tried in vain to kill her and Lulu disagreed with her and moved out of her house to go live with her step mother. Mabel is presented as a backward woman in terms of her dressing and ideals on proper behaviour. In one instance, during the photo shoot, she tries to pull down the hem of Lulus dress to lengthen the dress. Lulu protests loudly.

For decades, there has been friction between mothers and their daughters and this partly leads to the adage that women are their own worst enemies. For instance, bringing up of girl children in Africa is considered the mothers job. However, civilization, globalisation and its inherent transmission of cultures, provides a different world view between the young and old. This inadvertently leads to a clash of ideologies between the young and old, on dressing, behaviour, romance and socialization. The outcome of this has been that in the media, the mother/daughter relationship has been downplayed in favour of that of the mother and son (Cavell, 1981; Scheman, 1988; Walters, 1992). This is clearly seen in *Triumph of Love* where Max is the favourite child of Victoria and Bernarda does everything to protect her son, Juan Pablo. There are no scientific studies to show that by large mothers love their sons more than their daughters, but this seems to be a popular representation in the media.

Scheman (1988) argues that the absent mother story promotes the argument that mother/daughter separation is a necessary step for growing up and for falling in love. In agreement, Livingstone and Liebes (1995) rightly point out that "from the Hollywood melodrama to the 1990s soap opera, the psychoanalytic theme is re-enacted: a daughter is

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painfully separated from her mother but emerges from suffering into a feminine sexual identity, proved by her desire for a man and celebrated through the wedding. There is no better example of this than the life of Maria Desemparada. Separated from her mother at birth, she is raised in an orphanage where she fends for herself. When she leaves the orphanage, she finds work as a model, showing off sexy outfits and falls in love with Max. As fate would have it - or the melodramatic script - her mother, Victoria, who is yet (Victoria does not yet know that her lost daughter is Maria) unknown to her, refuses to bless her union with Max and does everything in her power to ensure that the two are separated. As the drama comes to an end, Maria and Max get married in a lavish wedding.

The presiding paragraphs describe mother-daughter animosity as represented in the soaps under review. A continued perpetuation of this negative relationship is detrimental to society as young ladies will not get the guidance and counselling they need from their mothers and aunties. Consequently, the task of guiding the young has passed on to other social institutions like schools (Ministry of Education - Republic of Kenya; Ministry of Education and Sports - Republic of Uganda) and religious institutions. Cobb (2008) quotes a magazine article written by Alice Fisher in the August 19, 2007 edition of *The Observer Magazine* saying "The mother/daughter relationship isn't easy, and stardom does little for this delicate bond...". This statement holds true and especially based on the representations presented in the presiding and following paragraphs. However, the question that cultural hegemony scholars are concerned about is why blame only women? Where are the fathers of these children? The father of Maria, Juan Pablo, is alive and in fact was offering guidance and support to her long before he knew Maria was his daughter. Juan Pablo later finds out that Maria is his daughter through a confessional from his mother.

Usha has been cast as a woman who likes to interfere and meddle in other people's affairs. When it comes to her children, this is seen prominently. In Arthur's life, Usha is

portrayed as interfering with his sport of choice, rugby. Usha goes to his coach, Cedric and asks him to pull Arthur off the team. Despite Arthur being praised by his coach as an excellent and determined player, she threatens him that if Arthur is hurt while playing, he would lose his job as a coach. The following day Arthur comes to the breakfast table limping and very excited that he was "the main man of the match". Usha bursts his bubble and tells him that they have to go to the hospital to have the leg checked. It gets to a point that Arthur has to assert his wishes on his mother's stating "stop interfering with my life mum". At one point, Arthur and Lulu scheme on how to get Arthur back on the team and they send the coach a text message using their mother, Usha's phone. Yet another incident involving Arthur is the semi-finals of the rugby tournament and the narrative indicates that his mother did not even know that they were happening yet Arthur was participating.

> *Arthur: I got you both (Usha and Lulu) VIP tickets*
>
> *Usha: You know how I feel about that game*
>
> *Arthur: I know how you feel mum but it's time you showed me some support.*
>
> *Usha: I support you*
>
> *Arthur: I know you would like to mum but I need you to show it.*
>
> *Usha: But I do show it*
>
> *Arthur: Show it in a way that makes sense to me not in a way that makes sense to you.*
>
> *Usha: Fine. I will come to your rugby game.*

One instance that stands out is in the seventh episode under study. As Lulu comes down to the breakfast table, she is very excited and is in a jovial mood. She tells her step mother that she needs to talk to her about something.

> *Lulu: … my show has this new fashion segment*
>
> *Usha: Oh! Darling, you know I support all your ventures but I don't really watch your show.*

Casting Usha as a non supportive parent is perpetuating the narrative that parents, and especially mothers, are not available to guide and counsel their children. This in turn is disempowering to many women who try to raise their children to the best of their ability. Once in a while, we see the 'good mother' side of Usha. When they discover that Mabel spent the night in custody, Usha is interested in the issue and when Richard says that he is going to visit her, Usha advices him not to but when Lulu comes into the room, she composes herself and breaks the news to Lulu gently. When Richard is worried and concerned over Sweetie's (his girlfriend), disappearance, Usha comforts him saying that he has done all that he could have done and that he should stop worrying. She tries to reason with him the way any good mother would. This is a typical representation of the mother/son relationship that speaks of the oedipal complex as stated by Freud in his psychoanalysis theory.

There are few scenes where we see Mabel interacting with her children or her step children. They seem to all have had a tiff about something a while ago. Richard has just come round to liking her as he states during a conversation that "we are now in a good place". In the same scene we see Mabel talking to Richard about important issues; like her being accused of murder and Richard offers his support - again, reflecting the stereotypical image of mothers being in need of help especially from their sons. *Triumph of Love* is a soap that contains two prominent families and a few supporting families. One main family is that of Victoria and Osvaldo Sandoval where Victoria has adopted two of Osvaldo's children – Max and Fer, from his first wife. The other family is of Bernarda Iturbide Montejo and her son Juan Pablo Iturbide Montejo. The link between these two families is Maria Desemparada who is the child of Victoria and Juan Pablo.

Victoria is adored by her children although she meddles in their private affairs. When Osvaldo leaves her, her daughter Fer is distraught and blames her mother for her father's

absence. Victoria goes to see how she is coping and the following is the conversation that they have:

> Victoria: Fer I am begging you. Please don't punish me for what happened. You know perfectly well that your father is the one who is at fault.

> Fer: You actually believe that mama? You think papa is the only one who made your marriage fail?

> Victoria: I was always faithful to him and I gave him all my love.

> Fer: Oh! Mama. Mama I live here too. And I saw how you neglected papa all these years. Did you forget all those nights papa and I had dinner all alone? How about all those nights you didn't come to papa opening nights or performances, mama?

> Victoria: Fer, you know I had to deal with the business.

> Fer: Well, then don't blame papa. You see you had the share of the blame even if you choose not to admit it. I broke up with Federico… because I don't want to make the same mistake that you made mama.

This is a conversation that shows a mother talking to a child as an equal. This could be because Fer is a grown up and it provides an opportunity to talk openly. In this conversation Fer acknowledges that whereas she understands what is happening, she learnt by observation and hence a lesson that we can take from this is that children also learn by observation. One thing that stands out between Victoria and Fer is mutual respect. Even though Fer is not talking to her mother, Victoria still brings a tray of food for her in bed when she is injured. Later when Fer is throwing a tantrum because she is being advised not to go see Federico, she opens up to her mother and explains why she is not talking to her.

> Victoria: … in hospital, you told me you admired me.

> Fer: Yes. Yes mama I admired you. Now I don't.

> Victoria: I see. It is because your father left me. Right? So you stopped admiring me?

> Fer: No. No. No. That is not it. I only stopped admiring you because there is absolutely nothing left of the woman I worshipped. Because you have forgotten how to be fearless, strong willed and invincible. You used to be all that mama. Look at you

now, you are not even a shadow of who you once were. Tell me, how can I admire you now? You've given up on yourself mama. You are worth nothing.

Victoria: Fernanda!

Fer: I am telling the truth mama. Victoria Sandoval is finished. You are the one responsible for destroying her. Oh mama.

Relating to Max for Victoria is easy as they work together and have mutual respect for each. There are instances that Victoria over steps in her mothering but generally, she is agreeable to Max. Once, Max brings her a picture of her missing daughter and she is elated and full of hope that one day she will find her child. In the same scene, she resolves to tell Fer about her missing daughter and to take better care of Fer. Unfortunately, she does not get to talk to Fer as Fer is involved in a road racing crash and Victoria is as distraught as any mother would be. She is inconsolable as she blames herself for not keeping Fer in the house. Victoria pleads with God to keep Fer alive and even asks Juan Pablo to pray for her.

Bernarda and her son are at loggerheads because Juan Pablo has decided to leave priesthood for the sake of his daughter. Despite her son being a fully grown man in his 40s, she demands an explanation as to why he is not wearing his priestly garments. When he explains his rationale, instead of being a supportive mother as we would expect of a religious woman, she is more concerned with her soul's eternity. Her son rightly tells her that that is beyond him and that it is only God who can determine that. She insists that he should make a sacrifice for her and get back to priesthood to pray for her.

In another instance, Juan Pablo implores his mother Bernarda by the name of his late father Octavio Iturbide to let him have his way as he wants to take care of his daughter. Spitefully Bernarda tells Juan Pablo that Octavio Iturbide was not his father, but rather his father was a married man who took advantage of her something that shatters Juan Pablo.

A common request between the two leading women is asking their sons to choose them over others. This represents the two mothers as narcissistic and suffering from a personality disorder and hence disempowering them. Narcissistic parents are defined as "a parent affected by narcissism or narcissistic personality disorder. Typically narcissistic parents are exclusively and possessively close to their children and may be especially envious of, and threatened by, their child's growing independence" (dictionary.com). Bernarda and Victoria, in relation to their sons, Juan Pablo and Maximiliano respectively, fit into this category. Bernarda asks Juan Pablo to choose her over his own daughter while Victoria asks Max to choose her over Maria, his girlfriend. Both sons do not choose their mothers. Bernarda asks her son, "So you would rather have your wretched daughter with you over your own mother who gave life to you and sacrificed her entire life for you?" She further cautions him that "if you go through with this, you can forget that I am your mother" and when he goes to visit her, she chases him saying "don't come back until you have repented. Don't come back until you are wearing your priestly garments. Go away. Go away from me". When Max informs his mother of his intention to divorce Jimena so as to marry Maria she tells him "have you gone crazy? … No. No. No. Listen to me Maximilliano. Never, never will I agree that you join your life with that immoral woman. And if you insist, you will have to choose between me and her". This is not normal behaviour and would be a case of a reversal of the Oedipus complex as theorised by Sigmund Freud and it ends up representing the woman as having a personality disorder and also fully reliant on her son as opposed to a nurturing mother. Max further asks his mother how she could ask him to make such a choice and the following heated argument ensues:

> Max: you know mother, I never imagined that you would let your spite for her go that far. And here I thought that you cared for my well being.

> Victoria: How dare you doubt my love for you? I raised you. I accepted you . I loved you and I treated you as if you were my own.

Max: In exchange of what mother? Tell me. That I pledge obedience to you? That I sacrifice my happiness to pay for your love and dedication?

Victoria: No. You know that's not true. The only thing that I want is to protect you.

Max: Mum, don't lie. Don't try to lie to me that the real intention by telling me that what you are doing is protecting me. Because mother, we both know that your only wish is to have your will be done. Your decisions, your impositions… I didn't want to say this to you. But I think your selfishness, your arrogance, are the reason for everything terrible that has been happening to you.

Victoria: Maximiliano! That's not true.

Max: Stop mother. You don't know how to love. You are a heartless woman.

Victoria: That's enough. Don't you dare speak to me like that again.

Max: Don't worry. I will never say anything again. Because I think this will be the last time you and I will ever talk. Because if you insist in making me choose between Maria and you, mother, this time, I am going to choose her. Because Maria Desemparada is the one I love. And I am going to marry her whether you like it or not. Do you hear me?

Victoria : Maximiliano! if you marry her, forget about me

Max: I can't mother. You know why? Because I will be ungrateful if I do. And in spite of everything you have done, I love you and I acknowledge you as my mother. But I realise that you don't love me as you say you do. Because you would rather see me unhappy with a worthless woman such as Jimena than to be with the woman that I love.

Victoria slaps Maximiliano but he does not retaliate. He instead walks out on his mother. However a few hours later, they are both talking again. Victoria asks Max to forgive her for imposing her life on him. She humbly states that even if she does not agree, she accepts his decision to get divorced from Jimena but requests that he waits till his child is born. Max of course, is very happy. Traditionally, it is unheard of for parents to ask for forgiveness from their children despite the wrong done. In one way, what Victoria does is positive and goes to show that even parents can err. Another interpretation of this is that Victoria has realised she has a personality disorder and is asking Max to bear with her as she still wants Max to stay married to Jimena though for a set time. From a different angle, one

can look at it and assume that the reason that Victoria would want Max to stay married to Jimena is because it may offer her hope that her marriage may still work, though her husband has already left.

5.4 Balance between Career and Personal Life

The relationship between Mabel and Usha is not without acrimony. From the time that their husband dies, they are engaged in long and drawn out arguments over everything and nothing: from the will to the running of the company; from the raising of children to inheritance issues and who to date or not. They interfere with each other's affairs and Usha, being the more conniving one ensures that Mabel suffers a lot, even spending a night in police custody. This acrimony affects their lives - both personal and public. An illustration of their constant bickering is below:

Usha: Mabel, what do I owe the honour?

Mabel: I have come here to tell you to leave me alone

Usha: What are you all about now

Mabel: I am her to warn you

Usha: Warn me

Mabel: Yes. Think twice before you mess with me. Be very careful

Usha: Or What?

Mabel: How does the saying go? If you rattle a snake...

Usha: ...Prepare to be bitten? Since you are dishing out clichés, I have one of my own. Do unto others as you would have them do unto you. It's your turn on the fairy's wing, Mabel. So lay back. Take it like a woman

Mabel: Till when? Somebody dies?

Usha: It depends on who is doing the dying. If it's you, that's something I could live with. Pun intended.

Mabel: You think you are untouchable? Don't you?

> *Usha: No no. I know I am not. Which is why when I strike, I strike hard. And I strike well. And I do not wince when someone decides to pay me back. How about you just grow up?*

> *Mabel: I am growing. I am learning. Don't you worry about that*

The above scene shows Mabel and Usha in their private life. In the public space, the Mali matriarchs do not have a lot of space. In one instance Mabel makes fun of Usha and tells her to start a TV show. "An avid shopper and a comedian. Why don't you start a show on TV. Maybe [a] reality show. What would you call it? Idle Rich Wives?" probably in reference to 'The Real Housewives of Atlanta" an American reality TV show that focuses on the personal and professional lives of several women residing in Atlanta, Georgia.

Mabel's only representation in the public sphere comes when she is requested to help feed starving children and at first she refuses. After she sees a news clip on how children are dying of hunger, an appeal to her motherhood instincts - a domain of the private life - she concedes and agrees to contribute money to the campaign. She invites Usha to join her and Usha flatly refuses. She says that on the previous day Arthur's friends devoured everything that was in her fridge and trivialises the famine issue by saying that her good deed of feeding starving children was already done by that single act. Even when Mabel insists that that is what G would have wanted, Usha replies saying "G is dead and life is for the living". Mabel suggests to the managers of Mali Enterprises to use the Mali Women Foundation to spearhead a campaign to fight hunger. The idea is agreed upon. However, since Usha rejects the idea, the money that Mabel donates is from her personal savings and not family wealth. This representation shows that Mabel, and hence women, are still represented in the private sphere. Though this occurrence is in the public sphere, the provision of food is a domain of the private sphere and hence this upholds traditional and stereotypical representations of women.

For Victoria Sandoval, she does not have a distinction between her private life and her public life. It is in fact, her career that makes her family life crumble. She stays too long in the office, neglecting her husband and young daughter and the results are that she is divorced and her daughter falls in love with an irresponsible man. After her divorce, the once career committed Victoria, leaves the company and decides to look for her missing daughter, Maria and the company falls in turmoil and collapses.

7.4   Chapter Summary

This chapter has looked at the leadership positions held by the leading female cast in the soaps under review. The examples of women leaders discussed herein are all that the three soaps under review had to offer. We find that whereas the cast is full of women, very few of them are leaders. Additionally, the few leaders presented to the audience, end up making faulty decisions at one point and that decision either sets back their companies or totally leads to total ruin of the companies.

Another key finding is that the female leaders in these soaps are often very successful in running companies but due to engagement and/or entanglements from their private lives, they exit the public domain. What this shows is that the average woman, when given a choice between being successful in the public realm and being successful in the private realm, she will most likely pick being successful in the private domain. The examples offered in these soaps do not show the opposite or even present a situation where a woman is successful both at home and at work. In conclusion, this chapter holds that women are still represented in their traditional roles and success in the private world is what is expected of them.

This chapter also dealt with the representation of women in the private and public sphere. Women seem to be represented in a way that says, as a woman, one can only be successful in one sphere; either the public or the private but not both. By providing examples

from the three soaps under study, the chapter explores the spheres that women have been portrayed in and what they expel their energies on.

In as far as the quest for love and marriage is concern, we conclude that whereas both men and women are involved in a marriage, it is women who pursue the tying of the knot. Women have been socialized to use any means necessary to get the man to the altar and writer Lauren Weisberger writes a whole novel *Chasing Harry Winston* that gives the fictional story of three young ladies all pursuing men so that they can get a piece of Harry Winston (Harry Winston is an American company that is an American luxury jeweller and producer of Swiss time pieces and unique engagement and wedding bands).

Parenting is another parameter that has been explored in this chapter and the finding is that women are the dominant and present parents in most circumstances. Fathers are largely absent from the rearing of their kids and when they are present, their roles are superficial. Ironically, two female characters are represented as having a personality disorder and hence over relying on their sons.

Women have also been shown as incapable of balancing their life and hence emerging successful in all aspects of their lives. Women are shown as successful in the private sphere and failures in the public sphere. Where a few women have broken the corporate glass ceiling, their private affairs are in disarray.

These representations are very detrimental to the well being of a society that has more women than men.

CHAPTER SIX

COMPARISONS, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

6.0   Introduction

This chapter will compare and contrast the representations of women in foreign and local soaps. It will also draw conclusions from the analysis presented in the preceding chapters as well as offer recommendations for further research.

6.1   Comparing Foreign and Local Soaps

This study set out to do a comparative analysis of the representation of women in local and foreign soap operas that are broadcast in Kenya. By using the four themes already identified, this section will look at the similarities and the differences in the representation of women in the three soaps under review. The section will also draw conclusions as to whether these representations resist or reinforce traditional gender roles and whether these representations will aid in the attainment of gender parity in Kenya.

6.1.1   Objectification of Women

Women in the three soaps have been objectified. The foreign soaps, especially *Triumph of Love,* is rife with female objectification. The objectification cuts across all themes like dressing, walking styles, body image and use of language. In *Mali* and *Generations,* the most objectified women are in their youth; not that it is any better. Dineo and Khethiwe, both from *Generations*, have been represented as objects to fulfil the wishes of the men in their lives.

6.1.2 Leadership

In the three soap operas, there are several women holding leadership positions. In the Mexican soap, *Triumph of Love,* Victoria Sandoval and Maria Desemparada stand out. These two women are represented as leaders both in the public sphere and in the private sphere. Maria advances herself from poverty to the heir of a fashion house and a great model commanding a lot of respect in the industry. She is humble, hard working and respectful. She grows to a fine lady without any parental support showing that she is determined to make it in life. What stands out about her is her resilience and her focus on her goals and ambitions. From a domestic worker, Victoria rises to be the owner of a fashion house and leader of industry in a male dominated industry. As a leader, she brings positive change to the fashion industry. In the private sphere, Victoria and Maria are represented as going against the grain of the average woman. When Victoria gets married to Osvaldo, she adopts his two children. What is notable though is the fact that even after their biological father leaves Victoria, the two children, now grown up, choose to remain with Victoria. This can be seen to mean that Victoria is not the stereotypical step-mother who is abusive to step children. As for Maria, when she discovers that she is pregnant with Max's child, she does not load the burden on him. Maria is represented as an independent woman who does not need the help of a man to take care of her offspring. She does not tell Max that he is the father of the child as she feels that he will think she is trying to trap him into marriage. Instead, she finds work and vows to do the best in order to sufficiently provide for her child. In the African setting, the man who impregnated any woman, was expected to take care of the child and its mother whether married or not. So, the representation of Maria is resisting traditional gender roles.

Karabo and Dineo, both from *Generations,* are represented as fairly good leaders. In the public sphere, Karabo is an effective leader. When it comes to mixing business matters with personal matters in the office, she is represented as one who would rather separate the

two. The two wives of G Mali in the Kenyan soap, *Mali,* are not represented as leaders. They are not directly involved in the public sphere. The supporting cast in *Mali* presents better overall leaders. Bella and Lulu are both working women. Bella was bequeathed Cafe Afrique, and though she oversees its management, her character fits into traditional gender representation as women would acquire property only after their husbands' death or through their husbands' wealth. Lulu on her part, is the host of a lifestyle and fashion show on TV. On one hand her representation resists traditional views of women as she is in gainful employment while on the other hand, her representation conforms to traditional representations that women can only handle the features and lifestyle news and not the more male dominated politics and business segments of news (Kareithi, 2013).

With all these representations, it is logical to conclude that *Triumph of Love* does a better job of representing self-made leaders who dominate and bring positive change to the public sphere thus resisting traditional representation of women. The other two soaps, *Mali* and *Generations*, largely conform to the traditional representation of women.

6.1.3 Public Versus Private Life

In the three soaps, women seem to be represented as being more comfortable in the private sphere of life. This in itself conforms to the traditional gender roles where women where to be found in the home cleaning and taking care of their children.

In their quest for love, marriage and children, the women are represented as ambitious and unstoppable. They will cross many hurdles, forget humanistic morals and forge unthinkable friendships to achieve this goal. This obsession with romance, is strictly found in the private domain. In *Mali,* the characters Lulu, Bella, Eve and Usha are at one time 'madly' in love and would do anything to get married to the men they have set their eyes on. From *Generations,* the audience is treated to a rare spectacle according to African cultures when

Karabo proposes to Paul changing the status quo. However, Dineo and Karabo are chasing after the same man.

Polygamy was a fixture in the traditional African setting and was an accepted practice (Fenske, 2011). Mabel and Usha are co-wives and their husband was having an office affair with Bella, one of his managers. In modern times, whereas polygamy is shunned by many, it is still practiced by a few people. The more common situation, and seemingly acceptable arrangement is for both men and women to engage in extra marital affairs. It is only in *Mali* where we find a polygamous family while in the other two soaps, there are several extra marital affairs among the cast. One such affair is between Paul and Dineo. Dineo is aware that Paul is dating Karabo. A positive representation of this affair is that the character 'Dineo' is a young lady in her late 20's or early 30's with a good career and she seems comfortable with her life. The African lady was socialised to be 'proper' and never engage in sex before marriage let alone having a sexual affair with a married man whereas the man was free to sow wild oats, so to speak.

This representation is oppressive to women as it means that women are stuck with only two options - the madonna or the whore. The Madonna-whore complex is "a pattern of thought that divides female-humanity into two mutually exclusive categories: Madonnas and Whores. The virtuous Madonna figure, possessing and protecting social virtue is an object of worship and everything that all females should aspire to be. However, sex is not part of this. Anyone who fails to live up to the Madonna standard is a Whore driven exclusively by sexual desire and (therefore) lacking in morality and humanity" (Sinha, 2013). The common quote, with no clear attribution but severally linked with the German priest Martin Luther comes to mind. The quote reads: "The word and works of God are quite clear, that women were made either to be wives or prostitutes". This is the quagmire that most female characters find themselves in. They are represented as either of the two and any attempts to represent them as

real human begins with emotions is strictly undermined. Yet, the reality is that women are sexual beings with emotions; sexual feelings too that can be aroused. This is the rare representation of women in the media - as always good at heart, kind, motherly, always chaste; but so is the whore representation of women with massive sex appeal, catering to the Male Gaze and Fetish Fuel, often evil and scheming.

This Madonna-Whore complex reinforces the traditional gender roles assigned to women. The reality is that "The personal is political", as highlighted in an essay by *Carol Hanisch's (1969)*. Feminist theory speaks to the shared struggles in the private sphere of all women of all classes, ages and race and highlights the need to break down all barriers. The ideal is to have real female characters as opposed to strong female characters or worse, as discussed above, Madonna-Whore characters. Writing on 'strong' female characters, Bowman (2013) notes that "we need get away from the idea that sexism in fiction can be tackled by reliance on depiction of a single personality type, that you just need to write one female character per story right and you've done enough". Bowman (2013) points out that male characters get to be a variety of things while women only get to be 'strong'. It is this representations that feminist theory challenges.

In all three soaps, we see a similarity in parenting. Women are the ones involved in parenting while fathers are predominantly absent. This speaks of the traditional representation of women as the primary care givers, something that the feminist theory sees as disempowering to women.

The female characters in all soaps seem to be overwhelmed by their personal issues. One takes a leave of absence from her CEO position to go look for her lost daughter; another is fired from her job and her name tarnished because she is having a love affair with the

boss's son and yet another is having an affair with the boss's boyfriend. These issues seem to weigh them down and hence the reason why they can only perform well in the private sphere.

6.1.4   Self reliance versus victimization

For women to be empowered, they need to be able to rely on themselves for their day to day lives. Self reliance comes with a feeling of independence and hence empowerment. In a survey done by Star TV (of India), it was found that women who were economically self-sufficient, had a stronger decision making power in the business and family, were very popular (Ahmed & Khalid, 2012).

Mali offers the viewer two types of self reliant women. The first type are women who have come into wealth based on their relationship with men. Mabel and Usha have their husband G Mali to thank for their wealth. The second type, and the most important, are the women who have acquired their wealth, education, among things through their own sweat. Lulu, though daughter to G Mali, is a hard worker whose TV program's rating are high. There are many other women working and earning a living in the *Mali* cast. Notably is Bella, who is a senior manager at Mali Holdings. Her connection to G Mali puts her in better stead as the owner of Cafe Afrique! What is important is that she was already a professional woman even before she was bequeathed with the cafe.

Victimhood is a common theme in the representation of women in TV. Women have been seen as weak people in need of rescuing. Most of the characters presented in the three soaps are either victims of men or ill circumstances. Khethiwe, from *Generations,* is physically and emotionally abused by her boyfriend and no action is taken against him. This kind of representation is negative and only serves to perpetuate the stereotype that men cannot be punished. Victoria and Maria both from *Triumph of Love* are victims of ill circumstances.

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In terms of comparison, *Mali* has the worst representation of self-reliant women while *Triumph of Love* has the best representation of over-all self reliant women.

6.2   Conclusions

This research set out to compare the representation of women in local and foreign soap operas that are broadcast in Kenya. The study was framed within a changing media environment that has experienced the emergence of the production of local soap operas. This study has demonstrated that the foreign soap opera studied did a better job of representing women positively than the Kenyan produced soap opera.

To answer the four research questions on (1) the representation of women in foreign and locally produced soaps broadcast in Kenya; (2) the differences between these representations; (3) whether these representations resist or reinforce traditional gender roles; and (4) whether these representations contribute to the attainment or undermining of gender parity in Kenya, the researcher conducted a qualitative study. Specific analytical methods that included critical discourse analysis and interpretative textual analysis were used. Feminist media theory was used as the guiding theoretical framework for the study.

6.2.1   The representations of women in local and foreign soap operas

It is unfortunate that centuries after the advent of the feminist movement and decades after the emergence of television, women are still negatively and stereotypically portrayed. The soap opera genre that started in the 1930's on radio before moving to TV in the late 1950's, was predominantly targeted to women.

This study established that majority of the female characters are still traditionally represented in the private domain as mothers, wives, daughters, sisters and friends. Additionally, these characters seem to thrive at playing these roles in the private domain. In

the public domain, the female characters presented there are seen as weak, dependent on male validation and overall, failures.   From the viewer's gaze, there are few positive role models who can inspire and stir female audiences to action.

6.2.2   Differences between the representations of women in local soaps and foreign soaps

The foreign soaps, seem to encompass a more detailed story line and versatile female characters compared to the local soap. This could be because the Kenyan industry is only a couple of years old as opposed to South Africa and Mexico which have decades of soap opera production under their belt.

Another factor that can come into play is the fact that the *telenovela* has a limited run-time averaging 150 episodes as opposed to *Generations* which to date has about 3,000 episodes. This limited time run, could make the producers pack everything into the 150 episodes as opposed to the never-ending format adapted by *Generations.* For *Mali,* it is too early to tell which format they will use in the long run but what seems to be playing out is the never-ending dialogue.

In terms of female objectification, the two African soaps seem to be a bit more conservative as compared to the Mexican *telenovela.* Where the African soaps objectify women, the women are young in their 20's and early 30's; not that it is any better.

Mali is the only soap that has a clear depiction of polygamy. Mabel and Usha were both married to the now deceased G Mali. In the other two soaps, marriage comes as a climax of a particular storyline or the concluding dialogue as opposed to *Mali,* where the story begins with an already married couple. In *Triumph of Love*, there is a positive and diverse

representation of mother hood with various single mothers successfully bringing up their children.

6.2.3   Resisting or reinforcing traditional gender roles

In a nutshell, all the soaps studied reinforce traditional gender roles of women. First, women are represented in their private domain. They are the wives and daughters and lovers of rich men. They take care of children and they run the homes. Second, when, and rarely, they are portrayed in the public domain, they make good leaders but only for a short time and hence their consistency is questioned. Issues from their private domain interfere with their good sense and they end up taking extended leave of absence or they abandon ship all together. Additionally, through polygamy and love affairs, for men to have more than one sexual partner is depicted as normal whereas when women engage in these affairs, they are depicted negatively. Domestic violence reinforces traditional beliefs that the woman's body belongs to the man. By having these scenes where the perpetrators go unpunished, it is reasonable to conclude that this reinforces negative traditional values.

6.2.4   The attainment or undermining of gender parity in Kenya

Based on the evidence presented in this study, it is clear that soap operas, in their current state and form, cannot be relied upon to bring about gender parity. The evidence speaks to a deliberate and conscious representation of women in their traditional roles of African women where a proper African woman was expected to be comfortable and concern herself with domestic issues. However, it is only fair to state that there are a few instances and a few female characters that are portrayed as empowered in all respects of the word. Some of these empowered women know their rights but most importantly, they have been cast as women who know themselves and know what they want.

The question as to whether soaps can play an important role in development, is mute. The only thing that has to be done is to ensure that the script writers represent women as real people with challenges which they are striving to meet head on in a changing world.

The questions that this study set out to answer have all been answered and explained above by stating that women have been negatively represented and that the foreign soaps do a better job at resisting traditional representation of women. Finally, soap operas do play a significant role in shaping perceptions on gender; hence influencing gender parity but more often than not, that role is detrimental.

6.3   Recommendations

6.3.1   Recommendations for Script Writers

The study has established that women are portrayed as playing the traditional African roles expected of women. According to the feminist media theory this is negative and retrogressive and hence should be shunned by script writers. If we had female characters who were diverse: strong, weak, young, old, religious or not, educated, among other portrayals. Give the audience women who are not only as leading characters but also women who act as female sidekicks, mentors, comic relief, rivals, villains and inspirational. As Lori (madlori.tumblr.com) a blogger who blogs on writing laments: "

> Screw writing "strong" women. Write *interesting* women. Write well-rounded women. Write complicated women. Write a woman who kicks ass, write a woman who cowers in a corner. Write a woman who's desperate for a husband. Write a woman who doesn't need a man. Write women who cry, women who rant, women who are shy, women who don't take no shit, women who need validation and women who don't care what anybody thinks. THEY ARE ALL OKAY, and all those things could exist in THE SAME WOMAN. Women shouldn't be valued because we are strong, or kick-ass, but because we are people. So don't focus on writing characters that are strong. Write characters who are *people (sic)*.

10.4   Recommendations for Further Research

"African" Feminist Theory - This study focuses on gender representations in the media productions, in this case soap operas. A further study focusing on the audiences of these programs would provide us with an understanding of how Kenyan women who watch soap operas construct their own meanings of these texts. The findings of this study combined with those of the suggested study would offer a likely starting point for a home-grown model for analysing media texts from a feminist perspective.

This study considered only the female gender and it would be interesting and informative to see a study focusing on the male gender. It would act as a comparison to this study and the knowledge could be of significant help to the media industry. Second, for this study, the researched chose only one genre of television while quite aware that there are many other genres. A study touching on any other genre; be it drama, talk shows, comedy or political shows would be worth conducting.

The third recommendation would be to do a longitudinal study on the effects of soap operas on people who watch soap operas regularly. It would be insightful to ascertain whether there is a measureable impact of this continued viewing.

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