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"A Gender Tale"

Theorising Femininity and Masculinity in the Novels and Plays prescribed for Forms Five and Six Students in Fiji and Samoa.

Thesis submitted for award of Master of Arts

University of the South Pacific

by

Margaret Dutt

Department of Literature and Language

20 August, 1999

No part of this thesis has been previously submitted for a degree or award, or part thereof, to any institution or university.

......*Dutt*..................

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Acknowledgments

When a subject is highly controversial and any question about sex is that, one cannot hope to tell the truth, one can only show what opinion one does hold.

Virginia Woolf
(in Williams & Gardener, 1989

Abstract

The representation of female and male subjects within a discourse is often theorised by feminist critics who attempt to identify stereotypical images of femininity and masculinity. When these stereotypes are prevalent in prescribed primary and secondary school literary texts, they have the potential to define, construct and perpetuate gender ideologies. This thesis focuses on an analysis of fifteen novels and plays prescribed for forms five and six students in Fiji and Samoa. It will examine these literary texts for gender stereotyping from a quantitative and qualitative perspective. The qualitative perspective, which forms the bulk of this thesis, focuses on the portrayal/representation of the main protagonists in the context of feminist criticism and theories of masculinity. The analysis reveals that the literature textbooks selected for students in Fiji and Samoa are based largely on patriarchal binary thought and reproduce common ideologies of gender. Although the impact of these stereotypical images cannot be ascertained, it is important to select a quantitative balance of textbooks that acknowledge women and men as authors, subjects and readers. Anti-sexist literature and postcolonial approaches to teaching literature in the Pacific can assist to deconstruct gender stereotypes as we enter a new millennium.

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Activity / Passivity

Sun / Moon

Culture / Nature

Day / Night

Father / Mother,

Head / Heart,

Intelligible / Sensitive

Logos / Pathos,

Form, Convex, step, advance, seed, progress.

Matter, concave, ground - which supports the step, receptacle.

Man

———————

Woman

<div align="right">

Helene Cixous
(in Wearing, 1996:31)

</div>

Chapter One

Femininity, Masculinity and Representation

> *Discourse is identified as the means by which the human subject is created.*

(Miller, 1984:62)

Once upon a time, a genre called the 'fairy-tale' was born. Its birth signified the internalisation and perpetuation of pre-existing gender ideologies, that are at the heart of the phallocentric[1] culture; "Sleeping Beauty, trapped in her castle, awakened by the kiss of a prince who struggled and fought to find her and takes her as his bride; Cinderella, the poor, motherless child bullied by her step-sisters and neglected by her father until one day her prince seeks her out and saves her; Rapunzel, the beautiful maiden trapped in her tower, made lonely and sad by her imprisonment, rescued by the knight who climbs up to her window on her golden tresses..." (Ussher, 1997:10)

Fairy-tales, children's first stories, form a small part of a larger, more intricate relationship between literature and gender. This genre, like many others, imparts the message of what it is to be 'woman' or 'man' and conforms to Cixous' dichotomy of 'patriarchal binary thought'. Activity/ Passivity, Sun/Moon, Culture/Nature and so on

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[1] Phallocentric: male dominated/controlled (symbolic of the power associated with the phallus in the patriarchal realm).

correspond to the underlying binary opposition[2] Man/Woman, where woman is hierarchised as negative, inferior and powerless. In comparison, man is presented as positive, superior and powerful. This is because man claims for himself the defining position of Self and relegates woman to the position of Other.[3] These modes of thinking and classifying people according to gender "are not simply terms of a binary opposition, but instead represent a socially constructed hierarchy" (Threadgold & Cranny-Francis, 1990:141) that serves to promote the patriarchal value system.

Apart from its intricate relationship with gender, literature as a body of writing is often related to life. "It has been traditionally believed that creative forms of writing can offer special insights into human experience and sharpen our perception of social reality." (Morris, 1993:7) Literary texts may also provide an understanding of how society works to disadvantage women, and can raise awareness on gender discrimination and ultimately help to end it. Despite this interconnectedness between the two variables, literature and life, life may be distinguished as a lived experience, while "literature constructs a representation of that already existing reality by means of words." (Morris, 1993:7) This does not mean that literature mediates life but that it constructs its own model of the real in the post-structuralist genre. In theorising this relationship, one must understand the mechanics of representation and its kinship bond with semiotics[4]. "Representation is

2 Binary Opposition: two contrasting poles of classification – in this context applied to the construction of gender identities where the male subject is superior and the female subject is inferior.
3 In any Self/Other binarist position, the Self always has the power to project the Other.
4 Semiotics: the study of signs, the conventions of communications that produce meaning. It is not restricted to a study of language or language texts but considers the conventions of sign systems that function to all human activity. (Stevens & Stewart 1996, 200)

always a process of signification, of semiosis, of meaning-making, but like the sign, representations (which in fact are signs) can be 'taken' as referring to something else, something 'real' outside signification, something which was not made but is." (Threadgold & Cranny-Francis, 1990:2)

At this point, one may argue that there is nothing outside the sign and signification. The 'real' as Jacques Lacan persuasively shows, is always beyond language or language like systems. "Lacan considers that human subjects enter a pre-existing system of signifiers which take on meanings only within a language system. The entry into language enables us to find a subject position within a relational system (male/female, father/mother/daughter). This process and the stages which precede it are governed by the unconscious." (Selden & Widdowson, 1993:138) This argument can be extended by considering the subject position of the female within a patriarchally dominated language system. "If, as Irigaray and others insist, language itself is already a written, gendered practice, embodying patriarchal discourse and relations – then learning literacy for girls would seem to amount to a 'double displacement' – an initiation into both linguistic codes and into gendered public and private domains of literate practice." (Christian-Smith, 1993:ix) Using the structuralist theories of Swiss linguist Ferdinand de Saussure, it is possible to divide the sign (representations) into signifier and signified. The signifier is defined as "a mark, either written or spoken" (Selden & Widdowson, 1993:104) while the signified is "a concept (what is 'thought' when the mark is made)" (Selden & Widdowson, 1993:104).

The above theory may be used to explain how the phallocentric metaphor impinges upon ideologies of femininity and masculinity that underlie dominant representations of 'woman' and 'man'. In an attempt to understand how such ideologies are constructed and naturalised (through processes of signification), a distinction must be made between the terms 'sex' and 'gender'. "Sex is a biological term: gender a psychological and cultural one." (Oakley, 1972:158) The sex of a person determines his or her reproductive role. It refers to the basic biological or scientific fact that contributes to an individual's sense of being male or female. Gender, however, refers to those social and cultural factors that shape a person's identity. These are imposed by society and are learned through processes of enculturation and conditioning. The 'gendered' status of a person and the supremacy attributed to the male is symbolic of the phallocentric metaphor. Threadgold and Cranny-Francis highlight this relationship between phallocentrism and gender. "Phallocentrism, located in all our dominant male-stream western ways of thinking and talking about and making our world is a discursive and representational construction of our world in binary terms such that one term is always regarded as the norm and highly valorised while the other is only in relation to it and devalorised." (Threadgold & Cranny-Francis, 1990:1)

The application of Saussure's theory of representation to the terms 'man' and 'woman' immediately signify one-dimensional thought processes commonly associated with gender. For instance, character traits such as passivity, dependence, and nurturing usually signify femininity, while physical strength, dominance, and power signify masculinity. Hence the implication is that the male is the authoritative Self while the female Other is

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subservient to him. In this way, our world and its inhabitants are constructs of a outside the expressibility of patriarchal discourse. Thus suggesting that gender and sex are categories determined by discourse and are never free from it.

"Representations of 'woman' are of central importance in the construction of female subjectivity. We learn to do 'woman' through negotiating the warring images and stories about what 'woman' is (or what she should be)." (Ussher, 1997:13) One influential medium of transmitting such representations is those scripts of femininity that pervade the primary and secondary school curricula. This is particularly evident in the English curriculum, and more specifically in the area of literature. "Literature is the staple of English teaching. To ignore sexism in literature is to deny the power of literature to shape and inform our experience." (Hunt et al, 1984:39) In this way, literature's subjectivity[5] allows the author to impart values and ideologies to its readers as opposed to Mathematics and the Sciences that are analytical and objective. Thus, an intricate link can be established between literature as a subject and the perpetuation of stereotypical or non-stereotypical ideologies of gender, such as the phallocentric metaphor. In the Pacific, as is with the rest of the English speaking world, literature is a compulsory component of the secondary school English curriculum. The novels, plays and poems that students are exposed to daily have the potential to influence their lives by providing them with false (or real) representations/images of the world. Hence, "the teaching of literacy, reading and literature in schools is a normative, political, practice, not simply the neutral

[5] By subjectivity I refer to the absence of right and wrong answers as such and argue that literature has the ability to facilitate discussion and critical thinking.

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transmission of skills but a practice entailing strategic decisions about who should read, what they should read and to what ends and consequences." (Allan in Christian-Smith, 1993:viii)

At this point it is important to consider the subject position of the reader of any literary text. Christian-Smith highlights that "reading is an epistemic and political practice. It entails learned and sanctioned ways of knowing and ways of doing things with written language which are tied up with power, status and position in text-based economies and societies." (1993:vii) In this respect, literature does not exist as an objective fact but as a text in process that is capable of being subverted by the reading process. This is the essence of structuralist theories. "Structuralists have tried to persuade us that the author is 'dead' and that literary discourse has no truth function." (Selden & Widdowson, 1993:103) For the purpose of this thesis however, I maintain that a large percentage of secondary school students in the Pacific are not familiar with reader oriented theories and therefore accept most of the stereotypical images present in literary texts. This is because the education systems do not facilitate critical thinking and creative discussion that will enable students to deconstruct texts. Social, cultural and societal factors also impinge on a student's ability to interpret a text. For instance, Pacific Island cultures usually do not encourage young people to speak out publicly and challenge ideas. The classroom situation is no exception. If such beliefs are perpetuated, the subversion of stereotypical images in literary texts would almost be impossible. Although this is a largely generalised assumption, I am inclined to believe that there will be a handful of students curious enough to question patriarchally dominated literary texts.

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This thesis focuses on how literary texts (discourses) construct and represent the female and male subject. It is shaped around my personal experiences as a form five and six student in 1991 and 1992. Most of the literature texts I studied at that time are still prescribed for students today, with the exception of Margaret Craven's *I Heard the Owl Call My Name* (1976) that was recently added to the syllabus. As a literature student with a passion for reading I was always disappointed with the selection of textbooks. Many a time I would close a play or novel in frustration because apart from its largely Eurocentric basis, it was all about men. My experiences with Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* (1958) and particularly with Peter Shaffer's *The Royal Hunt of the Sun* (1991) were problematic. The fact was not that I disliked reading about men, but that I disliked reading only about men. Shakespeare, Shaffer and Achebe are great writers, but are they the only writers worth prescribing/studying? I would seek in vain for a female character with whom I could identify and emulate but never succeeded in finding one in that pile of prescribed texts. Okonkwo, Pizarro and Julius Caesar dominated my forms five and six literature classes. If the texts contained female characters, these women assumed marginal positions and often 'took their exit' before the novel/play ended. They were never very important characters and the insignificant roles adopted by Portia, Calpurnia, and Okonkwo's wives troubled me. This gender bias was accentuated through peer group discussions outside the classroom where my male counterparts compared themselves to heroes like Okonkwo. While the thought of being compared to Okonkwo's wives made me aware of inequalities associated with Achebe's culture, it was nevertheless daunting and often resulted in a deep philosophical questioning of this oppressive structure called 'patriarchy'. I was aware of the concept of gender inequality and had heard about the

changing role of women but saw no evidence of this in the literature textbooks studied in primary and secondary schools. Where were the women novelists and playwrights? My secondary school English classes were centred on this search for women writers and protagonists who were shut away in the 'literary attic'. I never found them during those years. Millard identifies with this experience. "Subtly, through omission, rather than design, I was brought to see literature as a male province and my own tastes something I needed to be weaned from, unsuitable for a grammar school girl with a serious interest in the subject... Encounters with the literature of the English Curriculum stifled my sense of a female self." (Millard in The Working Party on Gender, 1985:59)

Coupled with the patriarchally dominated selection of textbooks, is the way that literature is taught at the secondary school level. Based on my earlier encounters with the exam oriented curriculum in Fiji, literature textbooks are frequently studied in terms of four areas: setting, plot, themes and characters. Within this rigid structure, the novels and plays are taught at face value and students are asked to answer questions based on what they have read. Critical thinking and analytical, discussion type questions are usually not encouraged because they are considered time consuming to teach and mark, and may result in a wide array of conflicting ideas. In this respect a large percentage of the literature textbooks prescribed for students in Fiji (and other Pacific Islands) are rarely taught in their historical context. Hence by abstracting literature from history, its pedagogic value is decreased. Therefore, one may speculate that the system (intentionally or unintentionally) fails to produce a critical reader, but instead produces one who merely assimilates information that is prescribed to her/him. Although this thesis focuses on

texts as sources of transmitting gender ideologies, it is important to stress that the way these textbooks are taught is crucial to the perpetuation (or destruction) of stereotypical gender ideologies.

My experiences with a male dominated literature in the classroom setting made me question the long established literary canon that comprises a large percentage of the prescribed literature textbooks. Morris poses similar questions:

> What perception of reality do the great books of our language offer us? Who evaluates and selects the texts from the literary canon? Why is it that when we think of 'great books', the names that most automatically come to mind are those of male writers? What images of womanhood are constructed for us in their work? Whose values and ideals are represented in the highly acclaimed literary masterpieces of our culture? Are there really so few great women writers?
>
> (Morris, 1993:8)

I intend to explore the above questions and theorise dichotomies of femininity and masculinity, in relation to the secondary school literature textbooks prescribed for two Pacific Island countries. The target groups forms five and six were selected because they sit for external examinations and follow a standard, two-year prescription that is similar throughout the country. Based on personal experience it is also my belief that books studied at this age are important because they can influence the thoughts of a young person who is undergoing a transition to adulthood. In an attempt to satisfy my curiosity, I selected an additional Pacific Island country to observe whether a similar pattern of gender discrimination was present in literature textbooks outside of Fiji. Samoa was selected out of several other Pacific Island countries because its education system is of a

similar standard to Fiji's. I have also narrowed the focus from all literature textbooks to two selected genres: novels and plays. These comprise a total of five textbooks from Fiji and twelve from Samoa. This imbalance may be attributed to the fact that the schools in Samoa have more freedom to select the texts they wish to teach. Comparatively, the texts prescribed for students in Fiji are imposed by the Ministry of Education. The third genre, poetry, is excluded from this analysis because the poems studied differ extensively among secondary schools. Entire volumes of poetry are prescribed and teachers select a cross section of poems that they would like to teach. It would be impossible to critique the image of woman and man in all these poems. Such a task would require a separate, in-depth analysis.

The aim of this thesis is to ask, among other questions, "how a text represents women [and men], what it says about gender relations, how it defines sexual difference." (Belsey & Moore, 1989:1) It is not my intention to condemn the novels and plays prescribed for secondary school students but to critically question the suitability of these texts by using two different types of analysis. Michele Andree's analytical checklist for the identification of sexism explores two approaches: a quantitative analysis of content and a qualitative analysis of content. The quantitative analysis consists of a "statistical and comparative evaluation of the number of male and female characters featuring in the titles, texts and illustrations in literature textbooks". (Andree, 1980:49) I will adopt a modified version of this quantitative analysis to statistically analyse the position of women and men as authors and subjects in the novels and plays studied in Fiji and Samoa. This analysis may help to identify women's absence from, or under-

representation in, the textbooks. I am aware that one cannot tell a novelist/playwright how many women characters to have or how many to make main characters, but when female authors and protagonists are grossly under-represented in a nationwide curriculum, selection procedures need to be questioned. (Refer to the Appendix section for the results of the quantitative analysis.) The second approach identified by Andree is a qualitative analysis. This involves an "analysis of the characteristics attributed to male and female characters featuring in titles, texts, and illustrations in literature textbooks". (Andree, 1980:49) This second approach forms the bulk of this thesis and draws extensively from a variety of other approaches and theories.

Before attempting a qualitative analysis, it is essential to formulate an appropriate methodology for criticism. Michelle Barrett in *Women's Oppression Today* (1980) identifies four processes that reproduce gender ideologies. They are: "stereotyping, compensation, collusion and recuperation." (Barrett, 1980:210) Although these processes will be defined and examined in the theoretical analysis of the texts, the concept of a 'stereotype' must be elaborated on. Barrett defines a stereotype as "the way gender difference is rigidly presented". (1980:108) Similarly, according to Wrightsman (1977), a stereotype is a "relatively rigid and oversimplified conception of a group of people in which all individuals are labeled with so-called group characteristics." (Basow, 1992:1) Based on this concept, I will adopt Annis Pratt's "stereotypical criticism" as the basis for my qualitative analysis. "Pratt uses the term "stereotypical criticism" to describe works in which the image of woman in both male and female literature is examined for bias".

(Stevens & Stewart, 1996:85) I will extend this definition to include the image of woman and man, and examine this bias from a feminine and masculine perspective.

Chapters two to five comprise a criticism of female stereotypes in the novels and plays, and draws closely on ideologies of western feminism[6]. Feminist criticism is derived from a wide range of sources and is not based on a single school of thought. It includes various types of criticism such as Marxist Feminist, 'First Wave', 'Second Wave', 'Third World'/Third Wave, Deconstructive, Black and African, Asian and Women of Colour. Although these interlocking branches of feminist theories have different emphasis/foci, they are similar in the sense that they all attempt to resist patriarchy. Two main strands of feminist criticism are the Anglo-American approach and the French approach. While the French approach is largely theoretical, poetic and innovative, the Anglo-American approach is more subjective and focuses on cultural representation and historical reality. "The confrontation between Anglo-American feminist criticism and French "feminist" theory began in the late 1970s as an initially quite polemical exchange between a primarily sociologically and historically oriented literary criticism, focused on questions of female identity, authorship, and authority, and a system of thought based on European philosophy, linguistics, Lacanian psychoanalysis, and Derridean deconstruction." (Sielke in Kowaleski-Wollace, 1997:17)

My feminist criticism, for the purpose of this thesis, refers to the views of French feminists such as Helene Cixous and Simone de Beauvoir, but is directly centred upon

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[6] Feminism: in the context of this thesis, refers to the awareness of women's oppression within patriarchy and attempts to challenge this subordination and achieve the liberation of society.

the Anglo-American approach which focuses on Images-of-Women criticism. "Images-of-Women-Criticism as represented by Susan Koppleman Cornillon's *Images of Women in Fiction*, for instance, focused on stereotypical and thus supposedly 'unreal' characterizations of women in texts by male as well as female authors." (Sielke in Kowaleski-Wollace, 1997:17) Mary Ellmann's *Thinking about Women* (1968) constitutes the basic source for Images-of-Women criticism by searching for female stereotypes in the work of male writers and critics. Moi identifies these images as presented by Ellman. "Ellmann sums up the eleven major stereotypes of femininity as presented by male writers and critics: formlessness, passivity, instability, confinement, piety, materiality, spirituality, irrationality, compliancy, and finally the two incorrigible figures' of the 'witch' and the 'shrew'." (Moi, 1985:34) When such Images-of-Women are frequently duplicated in literary texts, they become stereotypical. Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar's feminist classic *The Madwoman in the Attic* (1979) places special emphasis on the two dominating images of the angel and the monster. Gilbert and Gubar argue, "For every glowing portrait of submissive women enshrined in domesticity, there exists an equally important negative image that embodies the sacrilegious fiendishness of what William Blake called the "Female Will"." (1979:28) Betsy Wearing in Appendix 1 offers a list of stereotypic traits (common Images-of-Women and men) usually associated with the representation of the male Self and female Other in western culture. I intend to draw closely on these generalised character traits in my theoretical analysis of the protagonists by referring to the views of Virginia Woolf, Kate Millet, and other 'First-Wave' and 'Second-Wave' feminist critics. In addition, references will be made to 'Third World/Wave' feminist theories when considering the works of postcolonial writers.

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In an attempt to critique each novel and play in its socio-cultural context, different theories will be adopted to analyse the portrayal of the female and male characters. Gender, as a socially constructed site, is closely associated with what Kate Millet terms "sexual politics". She argues that sexual relationships are political because they are socially constructed and therefore could be different. Barrett supports this view by arguing, "a central element in this argument is recognition of the distinction between the physical characteristics of males and females and the personality and behavioural characteristics deemed 'masculine' and 'feminine' in specific cultural and historical situations." (1980:43) Similarly from an anthropological perspective, Marilyn Strathern maintains that "societies are conceived as entities with their own special sets of features (cultures), each internally organized and thus also constituted by attributes intrinsic to themselves". (1988:32) Barrett reaffirms the above view that models of femininity and masculinity are irrevocably related to culture and society through her reference to Margaret Mead. "Mead's revolutionary *Sex and Temperament in Three Primitive Societies* demonstrated in 1935 that the qualities we 'naturally' think of as masculine or feminine, may be turned upside-down in other cultures." (Barrett 1980:43) Thus Shakespeare, Achebe and Hereniko's protagonists will differ in their portrayal as a result of their contrasting socio-cultural subject positions. In addition to gender, cross cutting influences of class and race are crucial to consider in this analysis as they extend notions of Otherness.

'Otherness' is a fundamental category of patriarchal modes of thought that underlies all binary oppositions of gender.[7] Simone de Beauvoir's *The Second Sex* (1949) explores a dichotomy that she terms 'Paradox of Otherness'. Beauvoir argues that "woman is riveted into a lop-sided relationship with man: he is the 'one' and she is the 'other'." (Selden & Widdowson, 1993:210) This notion of Otherness is a category of human thought that may be traced back to primitive societies and is evident in most ancient mythologies. It has always existed. Beauvoir elaborates on the construction of the Self/Other dichotomy. "No subject will readily volunteer to become the object, the inessential; it is not the Other who, in defining himself as the Other, establishes the One... But if the Other is not to regain the status of being the One, he must be submissive enough to accept this alien point of view." (Beauvoir in Nicholson, 1997:14) This theory forms the basis of much of the feminist criticism in the chapters to follow.

The second perspective I adopt for this qualitative analysis centres on the representation of the male subject and his position within patriarchy. This is important to consider because the way a text represents man can contribute to the elaboration of gender stereotypes within the phallocentric order. As critics we need to dispel the all too common belief that gender stereotyping is confined to the female and it cannot in any way oppress or restrict the male reader. Some male critics have proved that patriarchy stereotypes and limits men as well as women. For instance, Williams and Gardener highlight that "developing manhood entails absorbing the expectations and values of

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[7] One may argue that all sign systems promote binaries, and in this sense all sign systems are perhaps patriarchal.

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those around us." (1989:44) This involves living up to the masculine image that society has constructed. Since there is no established form of 'masculinist criticism, I will draw upon selected theories of masculinity and adapt them to suit the context of my analysis in chapters six and seven. These theories will be applied to the portrayal of the male protagonists in the novels and plays prescribed for forms five and six students in Fiji and Samoa. Some male critics that will be considered include Andrew Tolson, Harry Brod, Michael Kaufman and Victor Seidler. Their theories focus on images associated with masculinity and highlight the tendency/"phallacy" of patriarchy to limit/restrict males through their acceptance and perpetuation of such ideologies. They also expose the increasingly volatile nature of the masculine stereotype.

Chapters two and three focus on the novels studied by forms five and six students in Fiji and Samoa.[8] The novels prescribed for Fiji are: *Things Fall Apart* and *I Heard the Owl Call My Name*, while those prescribed for Samoa include: *Things Fall Apart*, *I Heard the Owl Call My Name*, *Lord of the Flies*, *Cry the Beloved Country*, *Animal Farm*, *To Sir With Love* and *To Kill A Mockingbird*. Chapters four and five comprise an analysis of the plays prescribed for the secondary school students in the two countries. They are: *The Royal Hunt of the Sun*, *The Tragedy of Julius Caesar*, and *Androcles and the Lion* in Fiji, and *The Tragedy of Othello*, *The Tragedy of Romeo and Juliet*, *The Tragedy of Macbeth*, *The Pohutukawa Tree and Sera's Choice* in Samoa.

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[8] Refer to bibliography for publication details of all these texts.

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These four chapters will focus on a qualitative analysis of the female characters in terms of feminist theories. Chapters six and seven are crucial to this thesis because they theorise masculinity in the fifteen prescribed literature textbooks and help to expose binary oppositions and stereotypes. Chapter six qualitatively analyses the character traits of the male protagonists in the novels while chapter seven qualitatively analyses the portrayal of male protagonists in the plays. Both chapters draw on theories of masculinity. Chapter eight summarises the major conclusions and offers some general recommendations. The appendix section consists of tables and graphs that comprise the quantitative analysis.

A brief overview of societal and cultural factors in Fiji and Samoa helps to contextualise this thesis from a cultural studies perspective and provide an overview of the position of women in the two countries. Previously, the status of women in traditional Fijian societies were largely determined by cultural factors. As society under-went a transition from a highly traditional to a somewhat modern one, so did the position of women. Through the introduction and reinforcement of the English aristocratic lifestyle, the impact of double colonisation on women in Fiji was, (and 'in some cases still is) extensive, particularly among women of upper classes. Tongamoa outlines the impact of double colonisation on women in Fiji; "many of the changes and new perspective of the roles and status of women in contemporary Fijian society have been influenced by formal education, Christian beliefs and teachings, mass media and greater exposure to foreign values and cultures." (1988:6) The degree of this change, however, differs extensively among societies and within societies. "Fiji is basically made up of two major ethnic

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groups, both of which are traditional, especially in their perceptions of women and women's role in society. As in many other societies, women are primarily seen as mothers and homemakers and any other role they may have is of secondary importance." (Vakatale, 1992:60) This is particularly evident in rural areas in Fiji where factors such as race, religion, gender and class continue to oppress Fijian and Indian women alike. Arranged marriages and other cultural beliefs ensure that women maintain their subordinate positions within patriarchy. Comparatively, in urban Fiji, women's roles have changed drastically. This may be attributed to modernisation, one such example being the western education system. Today a large percentage of women in urban areas are employed, educated and financially independent, although this differs among women depending on the impact of other influences such as race and class.

In Samoa (as is with Fiji), there has been a transition from a traditional society to a modern one, although one may argue that the degree of this transition is not as profound as it is in Fiji. This may be because Samoa remains a country firmly grounded in traditional and religious values. "In Samoa today, the *Fa'a Samoa* ideology still underlies all national development planning, the public perception being that the traditional *Matai* authority systems prevail at family and village level." (Fairbairn-Dunlop, 1996:6) The *Fa'a Samoa* encompasses ideals of a way of life that most Samoans have accepted and practice. Eight identifiable components of the *Fa'a Samoa* include: "language, religion, customs, family, landholding, housing, dress and wealth." (National Council of Women of Western Samoa, 1984:16) Through the perpetuation of such ideals, women in Samoa are subjected to a patriarchally defined way of life, although such a generalisation cannot

be made for all women living there. "The traditional Samoan village is organised according to *matai*, the *aualuma* (daughters of the village), the *faletua ma tausi* (wives of the *matai*), the *aumaga* (untitled men) and *tamaiti* (children)." (Badcock et al, 1997:4) In this way, the status of a woman is determined by the category she assumes that is determined by social aggregates. For instance, "the status of wife is much less than that of a sister, but a woman who marries and stays in her family with her husband has a much better status than a woman who marries and moves to her husband's family." (Badcock et al, 1997:8) Furthermore, in the Samoan context, "more than the headship of the household, the most important title is "*Matai*", who is head of an extended family and controls a number of households." (Luteru, 1981:11) Although a few women have now acquired the *Matai* title, a large percentage of females in Samoa (as is with most of the Pacific Islands) continue to conform to the long established male order. "Social location is more significant than gender in accounting for women's experiences. As a result, women display considerable strength - educational statistics for example, illustrate women's ability to mobilise national support systems, at the same time however, customary norms prevent women from using their knowledge and skills except in particular domains of activity and on certain occasions." (Fairbairn-Dunlop, 1996:iii) Hence, the general background of the two Pacific Island countries is quite different.

There are several limitations with this thesis. Firstly, this thesis draws largely on western feminist theorists due to the Eurocentric nature of the curriculum. Wherever possible I

have referred to the works of Third World feminist theorists/critics.[9] Secondly, due to the number of novels and plays prescribed (particularly for Samoa), an in-depth analysis of each text (and character) is impossible considering the size/scope of this thesis. Therefore, it is necessary to summarise the main points, make considered judgments and omit the treatment of minor characters. For example, chapters six and seven that theorise masculinities are very brief and condensed into two chapters instead of four. It would have been fascinating to extend this critique and explore each character thoroughly using a wider array of theory. Despite its limitations, the purpose of this thesis is largely analytical, informative and deconstructive[10]. It attempts to tell a theoretical story based on the stories that students are exposed to daily in their English classes. Hence the title, "A Gender Tale", (based on the literary genre, Fairy Tale) is highly symbolic for images of gender (femininity and masculinity) found in two genres of literature - novels and plays. It may also be interpreted as an attempt to deconstruct the long established legacy of Sleeping Beauty, Cinderella, Rapunzel and the "Phallic" Prince.

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[9] It is important to acknowledge the work of Arlene Griffen, a feminist critic from the Pacific. Griffen, in her Masters and Doctorate Theses focuses on Images-of-Women criticism. Refer to the bibliography.

[10] Deconstructive: based on the deconstruction theories of Derrida. Deconstruction theories dismantle binary oppositions. "Deconstruction is useful to feminism in so far as it offers a method of decentring the hierarchical oppositions which underpin race, gender and class oppression, and of instigating new, more progressive theories."

Chapter Two

Theorising Femininity: Achebe and Craven

> *English is the key area of the curriculum in terms of fighting sexism; we should be increasing pupil awareness of bias in language, in the media, in the home -- and using personal experience as the basis for exploration and change.*

(Hunt et al 1984:18)

Images of femininity (as is with masculinity) are constructed around social and cultural signifiers of gender. These images ensure that the female, (Gilbert and Gubar's 'madwoman') figuratively remains in the metaphoric 'attic'. "The feminine is nothing more than a very elaborate metaphor, or a symptom of profound discontent that lies at the heart of the phallogocentric culture... The 'feminine' bears no immediate or even direct relationship to real life women; I believe that as feminists we should question the rather ancient mental habit which consists of using the 'feminine' as the sign, the metaphor or the symptom of illness and discontent." (Braidotti in Threadgold & Cranny-Francis, 1990:36) In the next four chapters I attempt to explore the phallocentric metaphor of Otherness and focus on a crucial question: 'Do the women in the forms five and six literature textbooks prescribed for students in Fiji and Samoa adhere to the feminine stereotype (as defined by their culture) or do they possess other, unconventional images of femininity?'

Strathern, in her anthropological study, outlines Barrett's conception of representation as a culture specific process. "Barrett insists that representation is not free floating: it is contextualized ("linked to historically constituted real relations")." (Strathern, 1988:65) For this reason, it is essential to analyze the protagonists/characters in the novels and plays in relation to the socio-cultural setting of that piece of literary work. Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* attempts to capture the plight of Africans in the traditional Ibo Society. The novel is initially set in pre-colonial Africa and ends with colonialism at its peak as the white man imposes his religion and culture on the Africans. Throughout the novel, the Ibo society is presented as male-dominated, traditional, polygamous, warfare-focused and hierarchically organised around the masculine principle. Men hold powerful positions within the private and domestic sphere, and are also responsible for the construction of a patriarchally dominated culture. They are the instigators of women's oppression through the way they organise their society. Such factors help to contextualise the representation of Achebe's female and male protagonists and distinguish them from western models of femininity and masculinity. Hence Strathern's anthropological view that gender is a construct of society is adopted.

Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* presents one man's internal conflict with stereotypical traits of gender (as defined by his society), and places the phallocentric metaphor high upon a pedestal as the ideal of masculinity. Iyasere captures this conflict by arguing, "for Okonkwo, the conflict between the private self and the public man is the conflict between feminine and masculine principles." (in Innes & Lindfors, 1978:103) This conflict captures the significant role of patriarchal customs in naturalising gender

relations. Through Okonkwo's overpowering presence and relationship with the female protagonists, the masculine principle dominates the novel. Comparatively, the female protagonists are under-represented, marginalised and silenced through their stereotypical, one-dimensional portrayal as daughters, mothers and wives. They are traditional, grassroots women subjected to a male-dominated culture that serves to promote the interests of man.

The oppressed state of Achebe's women in *Things Fall Apart* may be analysed in terms of Beauvoir's Self/Other dichotomy. This dichotomy (although it is a western model) reveals the unequal subject positions of females and males in the world at large. Okonkwo, the main protagonist, is the One/Self (the subject) while his wives are the Other (the objects). This dichotomy is perpetuated throughout the novel and is reinforced by Okonkwo's thoughts. For instance, when he thinks to himself, "no matter how prosperous a man was, if he was unable to rule his women and children (and especially his women) he was not really a man." (Achebe, 1958:37) Hence, masculinity in the Ibo society is equated with a man's ability to control and dominate his wives, while femininity is associated with a woman's acceptance and tolerance of her subservient position. To her patriarchy is law and she accepts this passively without questioning unjust practices. If she breaks the silence or attempts to deconstruct the feminine stereotype she is punished severely. Gayatri Spivak defines this subaltern[1] woman'. "Today what I call the 'gendered subaltern', especially in decolonised space has become

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[1] Subaltern: as defined by the Subaltern Studies Group is the underclass subject whose position is mediated by the bourgeois subject system -- pathetic to her/his voice/values. Mohanty relates this term to binary oppositions and uses it synonymously to mean woman.

the name of woman for me." (Mohanty et al, 1991:227) The term subaltern is appropriate to the women in Achebe's novel because it represents a category of persons pushed below the rest, suppressed and silent.[2] ⚡

In most traditional societies culture is a central force that puts patriarchy on a pedestal and works towards the detriment of women. Culture, according to Sanday and Taylor, "refers to those ways of thinking, feeling and behaving passed on from one generation to the next. To participate in society's culture, one must experience the process of socialisation." (1995:28) Cultural practices that suppress women in *Things Fall Apart* are arranged marriages, the payment of bride prices and polygamy. The practice of polygamy is one of the traditional means by which men assert their power over their defenseless female counterparts. Through the association of the phallus with power, a man's sexual assertiveness is measured according to the number of wives and children he possesses. Females are merely objects of pleasure and their bodies are desired for sexual intercourse and bearing children. Okonkwo's three wives are products of cultural indoctrination and exist to serve their husband and enhance his standing in society. The practice of arranged marriages further accentuates the powerlessness of the female in the traditional Ibo society. She has no say in her future and is physically objectified and admired, then sold to her suitor. Her commodification underlines her dependence on man. She does not belong to herself but to a supreme male self. This practice is similar to Strathern's

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[2] One may argue that there are minor female characters, for instance the two priestesses Chika and Chielo, who are powerful. This argument may be counteracted by the fact that although they do possess power, the source of this power is Agbala, the Oracle, whom they ultimately serve. Therefore, they still submit to the patriarch.

concept of "the gift" which she analyses in terms of Melanesian societies and cultures. "The concept of 'the gift' has long been one of anthropology's entry points into the study of Melanesian societies and cultures... Often gifts subsume persons themselves, especially under patrilineal regimes where women move in marriage from one set of men to another...This behavior [transaction] is assumed to be categorically neutral with power residing in the control of the event and of the assets, as in the manner in which 'men' control 'women'." (Strathern, 1988:xii) Taking into account this anthropological perspective, women in the traditional Ibo society may be likened to gifts. They are controlled by the father, then the husband, in a polygamous society. The manner in which they are passed down (like a gift, commodity) from one patriarchal figure to another enforces their subordinate status. In this way, there is a similarity between the Ibo Society and Melanesian Societies on how women are transacted and to what ends.

Stevens and Stewarts highlight that, "just as the phallus is implicitly - and sometimes explicitly - assumed to be the only significant sexual organ, the masculine is accepted as the central point of reference, the only source of validity and authority. Women are defined only in terms of their relations to men, only in terms of what they lack." (Stevens & Stewart, 1996:89) Okonkwo's first wife displays characteristics of this submission and is described in terms of this 'lack'. She is not named but is referred to as "Nwoye's mother" or "Okonkwo's first wife". Her identity and existence as a mother and wife are constructed around her husband and son. Berger provides a general view of this confinement. "To be born a woman has been to be born, within an allotted and confined space, into the keeping of men. The social presence of women has been developed as a

result of the ingenuity in living under such tutelage within such a limited space." (Berger, 1972:46) Oknokwo's first wife's confinement to the domestic sphere is determined by her position in society as a woman (and the biological implication of that status), as well as her relationship with the men in her household and society at large. This is intensified through her society's emphasis on sexual division of labour and her confinement to the family unit. "For it is within the family that masculine and feminine people are constructed and it is through the family that the categories of gender are reproduced." (Barrett, 1980:77) Hence the organisation of the family and its role in the social formation of societies are crucial to the development of gender identities. Okonkwo's first wife's portrayal in the household is centred on typical female tasks. "She was peeling new yams, and in a basket beside her were green vegetables and beans." (Achebe, 1958:30) On other occasions she assists Okonkwo's two wives to cook, clean and prepare for feasts.

Okonkwo's third wife is portrayed in a similar way. She is a victim of her husband's violent nature and is subjected to physical and verbal abuse like the rest of his wives. One incident that highlights her subordinate status is when she goes to a friend's house and does not return in time to cook Okonkwo's afternoon meal. "And when she returned he [Okonkwo] beat her very heavily." (Achebe, 1958:21) The manner in which Okonkwo beats his wives advances his physical supremacy and reminds them of their inferior position as his Other. It also highlights how the Ibo Society as a whole perpetuates a conventional view of female Otherness and condones violence against women (except during the week of peace). Achebe's light-hearted portrayal of such serious issues within

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the novel may be perceived as problematic. Petersen supports this point of view. "My sense of humour has always stopped short at the pleasant little joke about Okonkwo being punished, not for beating his wife, but for beating her during the week of peace. The obvious inequality of the sexes seems to the subject of mild amusement for Achebe." (Petersen in Ashcroft et al, 1995:254.)

Okonkwo's second wife, Ekwefi, is portrayed in more detail. As she reflects on the past, the reader is given a psychological insight into her innermost thoughts. "There was no festival in all the seasons of the year that gave her as much pleasure as the wrestling match. Many years ago when she was the village beauty Okonkwo had won her heart by throwing the Cat in the greatest contest within living memory." (Achebe, 1958:28) Here the stereotypical relationship between masculinity and physical strength and femininity and beauty is emphasised. Ekwefi is attracted by Okonkwo's power and strength, which stimulates her desire to be 'conquered' and possessed by him.

> Two years after her marriage to Anene she could bear it no
> longer and ran away to Okonkwo. It had been early in the
> morning... She went in and knocked at his door and he
> came out. Even in those days he was not a man of many
> words. He just carried her to his bed and began to feel
> around her waist for the loose end of her cloth.

> (Achebe, 1958:76)

The above example highlights Ekwefi's sexual submissiveness and Okonkwo's assertiveness as he immediately carries her to bed and initiates sexual intercourse. It also reflects culturally prescribed roles of sexuality, where the male dominates and the female passively complies with the aim of satisfying the male's desire.

Ekwefi's decision to leave her husband for Okonkwo emphasises her rebellious streak as she challenges traditional marriage practices. Her inner strength is also highlighted as she takes control of her life and makes an important decision for herself. She chooses Okonkwo over Anene. From an opposing perspective, Ekwefi 'colludes' in her own victimisation. Michelle Barrett defines collusion as the process where "attempts are made to manipulate and pervade women's consent to their own subordination and objectification." (Barrett, 1980:110) The moment Ekwefi becomes a part of Okonkwo's polygamous family, she submits herself to him physically, mentally and sexually. As a result she is subjected to a vicious cycle of domestic violence and leads an oppressed, tormented and fearful life. For instance, she is beaten by Okonkwo for cutting a banana plant. (Achebe, 1958:27) This violent outburst over a trivial matter suggests that Okonkwo will go to lengths to find excuses to 'keep women in their place'. Moments after she is beaten, Ekwefi mutters something about Okonkwo's gun, and he fires a shot at her. (Achebe, 1958:28) Although he does not intend to hurt her, Okonkwo uses this strategy to frighten her and remind her how violent, domineering and powerful he is.

Adrienne Rich's *Of Woman Born* (1967) emphasises the historical reality that "while motherhood is the experience of women, the institution of motherhood is under male control and the potential of all women to be mothers conditions their lives." (Christian-Smith, 1993:212) This relationship between motherhood, the household and familial relations is linked to ideologies of femininity that stem from biology and produces a dependence that suppresses women. Ortner outlines this relationship between biology and nature. "Her "natural" association with the domestic context (motivated by her

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natural lactation functions) tends to compound her potential for being viewed as closer to nature, because of the animal-like nature of children, and because of the infrasocial connotation of the domestic group as against the rest of the society." (Ortner, 1974:80) Ekwefi's life is centred on her desire to become a mother and she encounters a succession of hardships before she has Ezinma. "She had borne ten children and nine of them died in infancy, usually before the age of three. As she buried one child after another her sorrow gave way to despair and then to grim resignation. The birth of children which should be a woman's crowning glory became for Ekwefi a mere physical agony devoid of promise." (Achebe, 1958:54) As a result of her failure to enter the realm of motherhood and experience what Achebe terms "a woman's crowning glory, Ekwefi is portrayed as bitter and resentful towards other women. (Achebe, 1958:54) In this way patriarchy (and biological determinism) sets women in competition against each other. Gilbert and Gubar in *The Madwoman in the Attic*, theorise "female bonding is extraordinarily difficult within patriarchy: women almost immediately turn against women because the voice of the looking glass sets them against each other." (1979:38) Ekwefi's attitude also highlights the stereotypical belief that womanhood is equal to motherhood and stresses the importance of the "natural" process of motherhood for traditional 'grassroots' women. Their very existence is determined by their ability to be mothers, and failure to do so leads to the questioning of their femininity and worth/value.

Spelman highlights that "the most significant difference between girls and boys, women and men, is in terms of the degree to which they see themselves as related to and connected with others. The basic feminine sense of self is connected to the world, the

basic masculine self is separate... As long as it is women who mother, in the social context in which they do, these differences in women and men will continue to exist." (Spelman, 1990:84) Through the portrayal of Okonkwo's three wives, Achebe highlights their connectedness with their husband and ultimately their children. They exist in terms of these relationships. Consequently, their relationships with their daughters (for instance, Ezinma) are important in the construction of gender identities. "For a young girl...the personal identification with her mother, which was created in early infancy can persist into the process of learning female role identity, learning to be a woman involves the continuity and development of a girl's relationship to her mother, and sustains the identification with her as an individual...This pattern prepares the girl for, and is fully reinforced by, her social situation in later life; she will become involved in the world of women, which involves again, in motherhood, "personal identification" with her children. And so the cycle begins anew. (Ortner, 1974:82)

Processes of gender socialisation are evident through Ezinma's behaviour and actions within a specified realm of femininity. On one occasion she serves Okonkwo a meal and then sits down. He says to her, "Sit like a woman!... Ezinma brought her two legs and rested them in front of her." (Achebe, 1958:30) She is told how to sit, how to act and what behaviours are appropriate and inappropriate as defined by her culture. Through parental conditioning, she is moulded into society's perception of the ideal woman and accepts her "acquired cultural gender identity." (Morris, 1993:2) Woolf elaborates on the acquisition of gender identity. Her main argument is "that gender identity is socially constructed and can be challenged and transformed." (Selden & Widdowson, 1993:207)

In *Things Fall Apart,* Okonkwo and Ekwefi are responsible for constructing Ezinma's identity. Ezinma, however, makes no attempt to challenge and transform these patriarchal ideologies but passively accepts them.

As she matures, Ezinma assumes the stereotype of the beautiful, exotic maiden, physically objectified by the male gaze. She is described as desirable, but somewhat moody.

> Ezinma grew up in her father's exile and became one of the
> most beautiful girls in Mbanta. She was called the Crystal
> of Beauty, as her mother had been in her youth. The young
> ailing girl who had caused her mother so much heartache
> had been transformed, almost overnight into a healthy
> buoyant maiden. She had, it was true, her moments when
> she would snap at everybody like a hungry dog. These
> moods descended upon her suddenly for no apparent
> reason. But they were rare and short-lived. As long as they
> lasted, she could bear no person but her father.

(Achebe, 1958:122)

One may even speculate a possible case of 'penis envy' through the way that Ezinma looks up to her father, almost as if he were God. "The concept of 'penis envy' is based upon the view of woman as man's 'Other', lacking the penis which he possesses (precariously). She is not viewed as existing at all except as a negative mirror-image of man." (Selden & Widdowson, 1993:229) Ezinma's 'lack' makes her worship her father and submit to his wishes. Okonkwo, in turn, uses her submission to his advantage as he contemplates manipulating Ezinma's body to enhance his status in society. "With two beautiful grown-up daughters his return to Umuofia would attract considerable attention. His future sons-in-law would be men of authority in the clan. The poor and unknown

would not dare come forth." (Achebe, 1958:122) Ezinma adheres to Okonkwo's wish and colludes in her subordination by convincing her half-sister, Obiageli, to refuse any marriage proposals until they return to Umuofia. In this way, she has internalised her appropriate gender identity and perpetuates it to please the father - the patriarch.

Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* highlights the concept of absolute powerlessness in a male dominated society where obedience is the only means of survival. Although some aspects of this novel may be perceived as educational and informative this analysis views it as largely problematic as the characters perpetuate stereotypes associated with females and males. Man is at the centre of the story while the women are beaten, abused, and assume a marginal position in the novel. They are dependent, submissive, passive, domesticated, and deprived of a voice in any decision-making processes outside of the private sphere. In addition, *Things Fall Apart* does not echo a liberating female voice but a traditional one deeply embedded in Ibo culture and patriarchy. "Achebe's much praised objectivity with regard to the merits and flaws of traditional Ibo society becomes less than praise-worthy seen in this light: his traditional women are happy, harmonious members of the community, even when they are repeatedly beaten and barred from any say in the communal decision-making process and constantly reviled in sayings and proverbs. It would appear that in traditional wisdom behaving like a woman is to behave like an inferior being." (Petersen in Ashcroft et al, 1995:253)

Gilbert and Gubar, in *The Madwoman in the Attic* (1979), explore the position of the woman writer. "Before the woman writer can journey through the looking glass toward

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literary autonomy, however, she must come to terms with the images on the surface of the looking glass, with, that is, those mythic masks male artists have fastened over her human face both to lessen their dread of her "inconsistency" and by identifying with her the "eternal types" they have themselves invented to possess her more thoroughly." (Gilbert & Gubar, 1979:17) Margaret Craven's novel *I Heard the Owl Call My Name* was an early attempt by a woman writer to step into a male-dominated literary world. Upon a first reading the novel appears largely male-dominated through Craven's creation of the two main male protagonists: Mark and Jim. A closer analysis of the text, however, reveals that Craven's novel contains disguised elements of the feminine principle struggling to break free from stereotypical characteristics of male-authored texts. "Fanny Fern recommended that women write as therapy, as a release from the stifling silence of the drawing room, and as a rebellion against the indifference and insensitivity of the men closest to them." (Showalter, 1985:136) Craven's novel may be perceived as this 'therapeutic novel' that gently nudges society to wake up to women's oppression and understand issues that affect the lives of native American Indian women.

The scenic descriptions in the opening passages of *I Heard the Owl Call My Name* are romantic and peaceful, and contrast strongly with Achebe's introductory paragraphs. They reflect an inner peace within Mark and convey the serene style of the author. "[Elaine] Showalter takes the view that, while there is no fixed or innate female sexuality or female imagination, there is nevertheless a profound difference between women's writing and men's." (Selden & Widdowson, 1993:219) Through her plot, style, themes and creation of a character like Mark, Craven's *I Heard the Owl Call My Name* differs

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extensively from Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart*. In Achebe's novel, the women are extensively subordinated and regarded as the Other, while in Craven's novel they possess more status in society. More importantly, Craven's female protagonists are given a voice through her creation of a sympathetic male narrator. Mark's role as a vicar and care-giver collapses binary oppositions between male and female as he becomes a part of the 'feminist struggle' and actively attempts to improve the quality of life for Fourth World Women.

I Heard the Owl Call My Name is set in an American Indian village called Kingcome. Protagonists such as Mark (the white missionary), the District Commissioner, and Keetah's sister's boyfriend are emblems of the western culture. The first world influence is intensified through institutions such as the church, the school and government bodies that are mentioned in the novel. In this respect, *I Heard the Owl Call My Name* may be classified as a "Fourth World" novel. American Indian Literature "is a literature of the Fourth World, that is, of the indigenous minorities submerged in a surrounding majority and governed by them. It must and does deal with problems inherent in this position..." (Mudrooroo in Ashcroft et al, 1995:230) Although Craven wrote the novel in 1967, a time when the discourse of the Third World and Fourth World was beginning to emerge, this analysis attempts to explore Craven's female protagonists in terms of the status of Native American or American Indian women today. Such women often claim a Fourth World status and may be compared to Aboriginal and Maori women. In this way, American Indian Literature, like Maori and Aboriginal Literature, "is and can be more vital in that it is seeking to come to grips with and define a people, the roots of whose

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culture extend in an unbroken line far back into the past in which English is a recent intrusion." (Mudrooroo in Ashcroft et al, 1995:231) This historical/cultural background qualifies the use of the term "Fourth World" in a First World setting and contextualises the portrayal of Craven's women.

Craven's Marta and Mrs Hudson comprise an indigenous minority of American Indian/ Native American women who are uneducated and confined to the private/domestic sphere. Marta's domain is the kitchen and home and she is constantly engaged in household chores. Her character traits reveal that she is caring, loving and considerate, and conforms to most stereotypical, western, ideologies of femininity. "At the tribal feasts held for the Bishop, it was she who always slipped him a little dish of peas from her garden because he detested mashed turnips, and when he had first come to the village years before, cowering in a canoe under a tarpaulin in heavy rain, it had been she who held a cup of coffee to his lips because his hands were so cold and he could not hold it." (Craven, 1967:23) Therefore Marta possesses qualities associated with Coventry Patmore's "Angel in the House' stereotype that generally characterises a woman as "sympathetic, unselfish and pure". (Selden & Widdowson, 1993:209) Marta is also the one who Mark confides in when he is about to die. After he tells her that the owl called his name, she replies, "Yes, my son." (Craven, 1967:125) This mother-son bond is strengthened as Marta fulfills her care-giving role right to the end.

Marta's domesticated social position does not automatically result in her subordination, as is with Achebe's women. She is important in what she does and most of all, she earns

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the respect of her society. "Marta was one of the grandmothers of the tribe. Her hair was white, which in Indian means that she is very old. Her face was finely wrinkled and of obvious gentility. She was the daughter of an heredity chief, the wife of a chief, the mother of a chief." (Craven, 1967:23) It is possible to speculate that the status of American/Indian women is very different from African, or Asian women. Nevertheless, one may argue that Marta's prestigious position in the hierarchy of her society may be attributed to her noble heritage and upper class status. Here the class/gender debate between Marxists and Feminists re-emerges. Mackinnon briefly captures this conflict, "Marxists have criticised feminism as bourgeois...[for] to analyze a society in terms of sex ignores class divisions among women... Feminists charge that Marxism is male defined...that analysing society exclusively in class terms ignores the distinctive social experiences of the sexes. (1982:3-4)" (in Strathern, 1988:25) It is debatable whether Marta is respected for her thoughts and ideas as a woman, or for her noble heritage under the three common stereotypes of daughter, wife and mother. It is through her link/relationship with three sets of men that she is considered noble. Nevertheless, she is not portrayed as silent and passive, and is allowed her say in society as she openly expresses her opinions to Mark or to any other member of the village.

Mrs Hudson conforms to some generalised, problematic, representations of femininity. She is constantly concerned with food and is presented as a gossip. As is with cooking, gossiping is a stereotypic trait closely associated with females. It is also symbolic for idleness and incompetence. Mrs Hudson's obsession to serve and please man is questionable and ensures that she colludes in her own subordination. "Mrs Hudson, the

matriarch, was pleased that a vicar was again in residence. The Bishop would surely come more frequently, perhaps even with a boatload of landlubber clergy to be fed and housed, and the young wives would gather here in her house to defer to her judgment, speaking softly in Kw'akwala. 'What meat shall we have?' 'Roast beef...'" (Craven, 1967:22) In this way Mrs Hudson dedicates her life to such chores and adheres to Patmore's 'Angel in the House' stereotype. She is also very fond of Mark and acts as a mother figure towards him. Despite Mrs Hudson's adherence to stereotypical modes of femininity as defined by her society, her status as a matriarch complicates her portrayal. The term 'matriarch' refers to "a female who is the head of a family and is of a similar status to a patriarch". (Fowler & Fowler, 1964:751) Mrs Hudson is powerful over the women (if not over all the men), and is in charge of most household and village affairs. Through her position as a matriarch, her important portrayal is acknowledged by her society in both the private and public spheres. Therefore, Marta and Mrs Hudson's perpetuation of conventional stereotypes of femininity is balanced by more positive aspects of their characterization. They are Fourth World Women existing within the confines of a patriarchal society, yet they are allowed a voice, and are recognised for that voice.

Ellie is the innocent victim of man's power. Her Fourth World status intensifies her subordination and makes her helpless as her ethnicity, culture, sex and age contribute to her dependence on men. She cannot resist abuse and succumbs to the desires of her drunken father who manipulates her body for pleasure and beats her mother. According to Barrett, "two major issues of struggle in the politics of sexuality are rape and domestic

violence against women." (1980:44) By physically asserting his power over his wife and daughter, Sam shows them that he is in control of their bodies. "Male dominance is sexual. Meaning: men in particular, if not men alone, sexualize hierarchy; gender is one. As much a sexual theory of gender as a gendered theory of sex, this is the theory of sexuality that has grown out of consciousness raising. Recent feminist work, both interpretive and empirical, on rape, battery, sexual harassment, sexual abuse of children, prostitution and pornography, support it." (Mackinnon in Nicholson, 1997:158) Ellie is this victim of male dominance and sexual politics. She is caged in a cycle of brutality and violence where her only option is to comply with the demands of men. "Just before dawn when the day and night were locked in their tug-of-war, and day began to slowly push away the dark, Ellie the little lost one, returned to the house of Sam, her father. Ellie went willingly to the bed of any man who beckoned her, and since, at thirteen years, brutality was all she knew of masculine attention, she liked best the man who mistreated her the most." (Craven, 1967:24) Mark's attempt to free Ellie from this abuse is reformist and highlights his disapproval of violence and abuse against women. He is assisted by Ellie's mother (Sam's wife), who loses her temper and stands up to her husband. "She beat him over the head with a skillet and locked him out of the house, and wouldn't let him in until he agreed to let Elfie go out to school." (Craven, 1967:93) Through Ellie's mother's resistance Craven makes an important point that the liberation of society is more effective if women initiate the change themselves.

The concept of 'double colonisation' was popular in post-colonial and feminist discourses in the 1980's. It suggests that "women in formerly colonised societies were

doubly colonised by both imperial and patriarchal ideologies." (Ashcroft et al, 1995:250)

Craven's younger female protagonists are more vulnerable to this western influence.

Keetah's sister is one such victim of patriarchy and western culture. She is described as

the Native American/American Indian girl aspiring to become the white woman. "She

was a pretty girl, her hair carefully cut and waved, her fingernails red, and the heels of

her slippers very high, and on her face that radiance of fulfillment, of all wonders of the

new life she was about to enter." (Craven, 1967:54) Her hair, fingernails, clothes and

European boyfriend are emblems of the colonial influence. Keetah's sister's 'double

colonisation' is underlined when her 'white' boyfriend uses her to acquire a priceless

mask from her village. Once he has the mask, they flee to Canada and he abandons her

there. The RCMP officer tells Mark the story of her destruction.

> The man didn't marry her. When she found out about the
> mask, she objected, I suppose. He left her in Vancouver,
> penniless, and he disappeared. I don't suppose she'd ever
> seen a paved street, or a train, or a telephone. There was no
> place for her to go, no work she was trained to do. She
> drifted to the only place where she was welcome. 'A beer
> parlour?' 'Yes. The money men paid her kept her alive. No
> one knew what tribe she belonged to. Even if she'd had the
> money to charter a plane, I suppose she would have been
> ashamed to return to her village. Soon she was taking dope
> - it's what is apt to happen - and one night she took too
> much, deliberately probably, though we'll never know.

(Craven, 1967:65)

Craven's portrayal of Keetah's sister is sympathetic, and highlights the pain and suffering

she experiences as a result of man's selfishness. Patriarchy, colonial ideologies,

traditional pride, prostitution and drugs finally destroy her. She cannot stand up and fight,

and dies a victim of an all-pervasive patriarchy.

Craven's strongest female character, Keetah, is an intricate blend of the traditional and western. Throughout the novel she challenges patriarchal constructs of femininity and uses silent resistance to express her disapproval of Jim's attitude towards her. "When Gordon returned to the fishing, the elders returned. Keetah's dark head bent again to her notebook, and Jim reasserting the old role of the tribal male, pounding on the table when he wished coffee, and Keetah, putting down her pen to wait on him without a look, without a word." (Craven, 1967:76) Keetah's expression, 'without a look, without a word' suggests that she does not like to be dominated by man. This is later reinforced when Jim tells her that she will marry him. Mark questions, "'And what did she say?' 'She said I had no manners. She said when I want coffee, I bang on the table. She said I want a wife only to keep my house...'" (Craven, 1967:61) Keetah's negative reaction highlights her condemnation of women's subordination. She will not marry Jim while he holds those views and be treated as his housewife. She will not collude in her own subordination.

Unlike her sister, Keetah does not allow herself to become caught up in the western world. She is exposed to the white man's world and education system, but retains her Indian identity. "At school she had not belonged... I could not sleep. I could not eat... The world swallowed me, and I knew I could not stay here because my village is the only place I know myself." (Craven, 1967:114) Here she acknowledges her traditional heritage and will not be swept away by Gordon's influence and his acceptance of the white man's culture. However, one aspect that appeals to her is the way that the white man treats his

woman. Her envy of western relationships, as opposed to traditional/arranged ones, reveals her longing for the equality that can be found in the First World.

Keetah's story reflects the choices that she makes. She is not a submissive woman who completely surrenders herself to man. She knows what she is doing and is in control of her life physically and mentally. Her decision to become a single mother and bear Gordon's child is a courageous one, considering the cultural implications of her action. It also signifies her control over her body and sexuality. She explains to Mark the reason for her pregnancy. "Not to hold him [Gordon]. To let him go. To keep a part of him here in his village with his own people so they can last, so I, too can live." (Craven, 1967:115) Mark's response accentuates his understanding, concern and respect for the decision she has made as he assures her, "Someday you will take Marta's place and become one of the great women of your tribe, and I shall always be proud of you." (Craven, 1967:115)

"An important and contentious issue raised by [Stephen Heath's] *The Second Fix* is the question of the relationship between author, sex, and text." (Belsey & Moore, 1989:12) Craven's novel reveals a disguised relationship among these three variables through her underlying references to women's issues and her intricate construction of a liberated male character. In this way, "writing by women can tell the story of the aspects of women's lives that have been erased, ignored, demeaned, mystified and even idealized in the majority of traditional texts." (Morris, 1993:60) Upon first glance of the novel, one may question why Craven's main protagonist is not a female. A closer analysis reveals that Mark is a finely woven blend of the masculine and feminine. Through his

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characterization, Craven subtly implies that women's liberation, empowerment and change is a joint venture involving both the male and female. "Feminism means the liberation of women so that they can become equal with men in every way in society. It means breaking barriers of attitudes that are so hard in both men and women so that they have a different concept of women. Feminism is the liberation of society." (De' Ishtar, 1994:238) If one adopts the above definition of feminism, then *I Heard the Owl Call My Name* possesses feminist sentiments. There is hope for womankind as the novel ends.

Chapter Three

Theorising Femininity: Golding, Paton, Orwell, Braithwaite and Lee

> *Discriminatory attitudes towards girls and women*
> *are manifested in the following ways: compared with*
> *boys and men, women are mentioned less frequently*
> *in the texts and appear less frequently in illustrations*
> *and the roles assigned to them are more restricted*
> *and less varied.*

(Andree, 1986:27)

In stereotyped texts,[1] "too few variables of identity, activity or characteristic are suggested for either sex; for the most part, boys and men are brave and fearless, clever and often aggressive, girls and women are domestic and dependent... Although these elements may not appear very serious when taken individually, it is the totality of the picture that alarms, especially if earlier and later materials is similar." (Baines in The Working Party on Language & Gender, 1985:49) A close observation of the quantitative analysis in the Appendix section, as well as the qualitative analysis that is to follow, reveals that a large percentage of the 'total picture' consists of the perpetuation of common, western stereotypical Images-of-Women in literature textbooks in the Pacific. From the seven novels studied in Samoa, most present women (if they appear at all) as either 'good' or 'bad'; the 'angel', or the 'witch'. This is reflected in William Golding's

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[1] Stereotyped texts: those that extensively reproduce one dimensional images of femininity and masculinity, and perpetuate patriarchal binary thought. Andree's quantitative and qualitative analysis can help to identify whether a literary text is stereotypical or non-stereotypical.

Lord of the Flies, Alan Paton's *Cry the Beloved County*, George Orwell's *Animal Farm*, and Braithwaite's *To Sir With Love*. The prescribed texts also include Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* and Craven's *I Heard the Owl Call My Name* which have already been discussed. One exception, however, is Harper Lee's *To Kill A Mockingbird*. This novel presents an interesting feminist criticism as it dismantles gender stereotypes and successfully captures a female voice.

"The construction of the narrative point of view is one of the most powerful means by which readers are imperceptibly brought to share the values of the text... Not surprisingly, in male-authored texts the attitudes and values are predominantly male-oriented. The effect of this is that 'as readers and teachers and scholars, women are taught to think as men, to identify with the male point of view, and to accept as normal and legitimate a male system of values, one of whose central principles in misogyny." (Morris, 1993:29) Golding's *Lord of the Flies* is centred on male narrators, and attempts to capture the dangerous, exciting, terror-gripping experiences of a group of marooned schoolboys struggling to survive on an island. As the protagonists' battle with forces of nature and their fellow colleagues, they live out the patriarchal world of power and perpetuate dichotomies of masculinity. One may speculate that females are excluded from this novel because the stereotypical female is not capable of power, adventure and conquest. This exclusion of the feminine principle may be viewed as largely problematic when the novel is prescribed for male and female students to study. Baines perceives stereotypes as "belittling", "especially if they are the only representations present: books

solely about boys [or girls] do *not* give "full credence" to the "seriousness" of girls' [or boys'] "predicaments"; and consequently their confidence in themselves and their futures is not promoted." (in The Working Party on Language & Gender, 1985:52) Although this is a largely generalised assumption, this analysis views Golding's *Lord of the Flies* as "belittling" and stereotypical. This perspective is debatable, however, if one adopts a contrasting point of view, arguing that the absence of females requires/allows some male protagonists to be feminised. For example, Simon and Piggy. This perspective will be discussed in chapter six where the portrayal of the male protagonists will be considered.

Alan Paton's *Cry the Beloved Country* is set in an African village called Ndotsheni, then later in Johannesburg, South Africa. The contrasting setting of the village as opposed to the city has an important bearing upon the portrayal of the female protagonists and will be considered later in this analysis. Throughout the novel, the postcolonial/western influence is profound, particularly in Kumalo's adoption of the white man's religion. Postcolonial feminist theory, like First Wave and Second Wave feminist criticism, deals with women's subordination under patriarchy. The difference, however, is the added influence of ethnicity, culture, class and colonial ideologies. Chandra Mohanty terms this the 'Third World Difference'. She argues that the identity and lives of Third World Women are constructed around colonial practices. Their status as cultural/historical subjects enhances their oppression. (Ashcroft et al, 1995:259) *Cry the Beloved Country* effectively captures the plight of coloured, grassroots women who are subjected to several layers of Otherness. "In addition to gender differences, feminist literary critics

have explored and invoked several other categories of difference, including culture, race, sexuality and class. In all of these various categories, feminists may use difference as a tool for analysing literature." (Taylor in Kowaleski-Wollace, 1997:116) These categories of difference may be attributed to social, economic, cultural and political factors that oppress grassroots women. Paton's female protagonists: Kumalo's wife, Mrs Lithebe, Gertrude and Absalom's wife may be theorised in terms of this difference.

Chandra Mohanty questions the general feminist assumption of the 'Third World Woman' as a singular, monolithic subject. "This average Third World Woman leads an essentially truncated life based on her feminine gender (read: sexually constrained) and being 'third world' (read: ignorant, poor, uneducated, tradition bound, domestic, family oriented, victimized etc)." (Ashcroft et al, 1995:261) Kumalo's wife conforms to Mohanty's description of the Third World Woman through her relationship with her husband. In the novel, she is not named and assumes two stereotypes of femininity: mother and wife. She also confirms to aspects of Patmore's 'Angel in the House' stereotype as she dedicates her life to giving to others. In times of difficulty she supports her husband morally and makes financial sacrifices so he can help his sister in Johannesburg. "A Black woman cannot be "female", as opposed to being Black; she is female *and* Black." (Spelman, 1990:120) Outwardly she accepts her struggle as a black woman but inwardly, after a small disagreement with Kumalo, her silent pain is revealed. "Then she sat down at his table, and put her head on it, and was silent, with the patient suffering of black women, with the suffering of any that are mute." (Paton, 1985:12) In

this respect, Kumalo's wife is Spivak's subaltern who is 'mute' and cannot express herself. "Gayatri Spivak complicates the category of the Other, which she defines as the underprivileged and dispossessed Third-World woman who is found beyond the margins of representation." (Kapila in Kowaleski-Wollace, 1997:297) As the Other, her duty is to 'stand by her man' and support him in everything he does. When Kumalo returns from Johannesburg with Absalom's wife, she unquestioningly accepts 'the girl' as her daughter. This concept of motherhood is elaborated on, as Kumalo's wife reflects on the intimate relationship between her body and her child, Absalom. "With shaking hands he gave it [the letter] to her, and she read it also, and sat looking before her, with lost eyes, for this was the child of her womb, of her breasts. Yet she did not sit as long as he had done for she stood up and said, "It is not good to sit idle." (Paton, 1985:204) Although she grieves for Absalom in her own way, she remains stronger than Kumalo.

Mrs Lithebe is portrayed as religious, pure, angelic, sympathetic and loving as she possesses 'external feminine virtues' and provides for Kumalo and his 'lost family'. "Social historians have fully explored its part in the creation of those 'external feminine' virtues of modesty, gracefulness, purity, delicacy, compliancy, reticence, chastity, affability, politeness..." (Gilbert & Gubar, 1979:23) Mrs Lithebe's attempts to convert Gertrude and Absalom's wife into good women, highlight her perpetuation of the above virtues. "The girl is helpful and clean, though there is a certain carelessness about her, and she talks too easily to strangers, especially if they are men. For Mrs Lithebe knows that she is a married woman, and Gertrude knows that the old woman is strict with her

house, and she understands and is obedient." (Paton, 1985:104) Mrs Lithebe's rigid view highlights her adherence to stereotypical ideologies of femininity. For her, there are certain types of behaviours that females should not display. A type of loose, uncontrolled laughter is one such behaviour. "Mrs Lithebe does not like this laughter, it is the careless laughter that she does not like. She calls the girl to the kitchen to help her, and says she does not like it." (Paton, 1985:106) This process of moulding and shaping females highlights specific characteristics of their marginal roles and reminds them of their subordinate status. It also reflects how Mrs Lithebe colludes in processes of gender socialisation. Through her dialogue, Mrs Lithebe contributes to the internalisation and perpetuation of gender stereotypes. This is illustrated when Kumalo thanks her for making space for the girl. "Mother, I am grateful. Indeed you are a mother to me - Why else do we live? She said." (Paton, 1985:105) Kumalo's use of the term 'mother', to address Mrs Lithebe and several other women in the novel emphasises the rigid relationship between femininity and motherhood. Mrs Lithebe's reply, 'Why else do we live?' intensifies this relationship and reinforces the phallocentric belief that females are born to be mothers and only mothers. Their sole purpose in life is to care and provide for others. Such stereotypical ideologies accentuate the role of motherhood as the major cause of women's oppression. "Feminists are not against women having children. But we do not consider motherhood to be every woman's destiny, nor do we equate womanhood with motherhood." (Bhasin & Khan, 1986:15)

"Black women are stereotyped as having some 'feminine' characteristics to excess, but

also some male characteristics. Thus black women are perceived as being easily available sexual objects who are prone to prostitution. King (1984) calls this the 'depreciated sex object stereotype'." (Weiner & Arnot, 1987:58) Gertrude fits this stereotype. She is the prostitute, alcohol brewer and single mother whom Kumalo and Msimangu try to save. She is the Other. Msimangu tells Kumalo in disapproval, "And that is her work, she makes and sells it [liquor]... These women sleep with the man for their price. A man has been killed at her place. They gamble and drink and stab. She has been in prison more than once." (Paton, 1985:23) Kumalo's opinion of Gertrude presents a hostile male narrative point of view towards female characters that refuse womanly roles. Her portrayal as such is intensified through socio-economic factors such as employment, poverty and poor living conditions that compel her to partake in alcohol brewing and prostitution. The city influence is an important factor that contributes to Gertrude's involvement in the crimes she commits. If she had remained in Ndotsheni she may not have become involved in such crimes because of the nature of the village society. Therefore, social, cultural and economic factors play an important role in Gertrude's characterisation as the 'bad woman'.

Despite the fact that Gertrude adheres to the 'depreciated sex object stereotype', she nevertheless deconstructs the good, pure, feminine stereotype. She is not innocent, caring and nurturing but is in fact a rebel. The manner in which she neglects her son intensifies her 'uncharacteristic' portrayal and brands her as an incapable mother. When Kumalo attempts to rescue her from her current situation, she appears willing to renounce her old

life and become reinstated to her 'correct' subject position within the patriarchal order. However, on false pretenses of becoming a nun, she makes the necessary arrangements for her son and disappears the night before they are to leave for Ndoteshi. She cannot be the good woman and mother that society expects her to be and reverts to the life she used to live. This action is a liberating one because Gertrude remains outside the realm of femininity. She refuses to be a typecast and runs away to live as she likes.

Absalom's wife is the young Third World Woman bound to patriarchy. Her portrayal is complicated by a succession of hardships she is subjected to early in life. Kumalo recalls, "They were greeted by a young girl who herself seemed no more than a child." (Paton, 1985:61) Her fragile, innocent and uneducated status is intensified through her pregnancy. "Momsen and Townsend (1987), designate fertility issues as one of the most significant aspects of "women's worlds" in third world countries." (Mohanty et al, 1991:6) Absalom's wife's ignorance and insufficient knowledge about her body leads to her unplanned pregnancy and makes her dependent on man for survival. This vulnerability is evident when Kumalo asks her a question, " 'I do not know,' she said. She said it tonelessly, hopelessly, as one who expects nothing from her seventeen years upon earth. No rebellion will come out of her at all, save all the children of the men who will use her, leave her, forget her." (Paton, 1985:62) After her third husband, Absalom, is jailed, Kumalo and his wife provide her with the love that she has been deprived of and condition her to behave appropriately. Unlike Gertrude, she genuinely wants to be a good woman and allows herself to be 'recuperated' back into society. Michelle Barrett defines

recuperation as "the ideological effort that goes into negating and defusing challenges to the historically dominant meaning of gender in particular periods". (1980:111)

Cry the Beloved Country captures the helpless and oppressed state of African women through Paton's portrayal of Kumalo's wife, Mrs Lithebe and Absalom's wife. These women are suppressed by patriarchal modes of thought that put traditions/culture on a pedestal and silence them. Either they assume the stereotypical position of the 'good woman' and adhere to stereotypical constructs of femininity, or they deconstruct these and are looked down upon, then are recuperated back into society. Whatever status they assume is a subordinate one. However, there is one exception. There is one female protagonist in Paton's novel that despite her negative portrayal may be perceived in a positive light. Gertrude is this rebel who deconstructs ideologies of femininity as prescribed by her society. She is condemned for being different, yet she remains steadfast in her values and lives life on the margins, not the life that society wants her to live. Her non-conformist attitude makes her different from Paton's other protagonists. In this respect, Gertrude's portrayal may be seen as deconstructive, while that of the other portagonists is conventional.

A feminist critique of *Animal Farm* reveals that patriarchy exists within Orwell's animal kingdom. This extensive replication of gender ideologies highlights the overwhelming impact of sex-role stereotyping in the construction of Orwell's female and male protagonists. The very qualities and personality traits inherent in each animal are

stereotypically masculine and feminine, as they each conform to heirachised binary oppositions within the realm of patriarchy. This characterization is underlined as the female animals are subjected to the powers of Snowball and Napoleon, and conform to stereotypical notions of femininity as defined by western culture. They are the Other, even in the animal kingdom of this fable. Although Orwell's female characters are not fully developed in their characterisation, "it is worth considering what sort of minor female characters there are when they do appear in books otherwise male dominated." (Baines in The Working Party on Language & Gender, 1985:49) This analysis will help uncover hidden ideologies of gender and assist in an understanding of the construction of binary oppositions.

Orwell's novel is set in England, in a farmyard that the animals call "Animal Farm". As a result, one may speculate that the animals in the novel assume a working class status. Thus conforming to Marxist notions about the alienation of labour and the dehumanisation of the proletariat. They are the Other to man (human beings). Upon a closer analysis of the female protagonists (animals), it is possible to stipulate that there is second level of Otherness based on gender distinctions of femininity and masculinity. Therefore, the female animals are discriminated against because they are animals and also because they are female. Mollie is one such minor character who exists among Napoleon's world of power and domination. She is portrayed as immature, childish and waif-like and adheres to stereotypical views of femininity as defined by Wearing in Appendix 1. This is reflected through her value systems and behaviour. "At the last

moment, Mollie the foolish, pretty white mare who drew Mr Jones's trap, came mincing

daintily in, chewing a lump of sugar. She took her place near the front and began flirting

her white mane, hoping to draw attention to the red ribbons it was plaited with." (Orwell,

1951:3) Mollie's obsession with ribbons and beauty perpetuate her delicate image. This

image is elaborated on through the use of the terms 'foolish', 'pretty', 'daintily' and

'flirting' that stereotypically signify femininity. Such terms are emblems of Otherness

and contribute to the perpetuation of beauty as an ideological construct. "Aesthetic

evaluation objectifies; women seen as beautiful or ugly by others [and by themselves]

cannot subjectify themselves as anything else, cannot define themselves in other terms, or

by other categories, such as personal achievement." (Isikoff in Kowaleski-Wollace,

1997:40) Mollie's shallow character portrayal is heightened by her largely illiterate

status. "Mollie refused to learn any but the five letters that spelt her name. She would

form these very neatly out of pieces of twig and would decorate them with a flower or

two and walk around admiring them." (Orwell, 1951:21) It is this vanity that exempts her

from partaking in daily chores on the farm and contribute to her weak, lazy, beauty

conscious and self-centred portrayal.

The conditions under which Mollie leaves the farm (and the novel) heighten her

submissive portrayal and exemplify male control over her. These conditions also

intensify the intricate relationship between physical beauty and personal satisfaction.

> For some weeks nothing was known of her whereabouts,
> then the pigeons reported they had seen her on the other
> side of Willingdon. She was between the shafts of a smart
> dogcart painted red and black, which was standing outside

> a public-house. A fat red-faced man in check breeches and
> gaiters, who looked like a publican, was stroking her nose
> and feeding her with sugar. Her coat was newly clipped and
> she wore a scarlet ribbon around her forelock. She
> appeared to be enjoying herself, so the pigeons said. None
> of the animals ever mentioned Mollie again.
>
> (Orwell, 1951: 31)

The above incident illustrates how Mollie commodifies her body to man for sugar and ribbons. She is dependent on someone else for the provision of her basic needs and ultimately her happiness. In this way, she colludes in her own oppression and allows herself to be aesthetically evaluated and objectified. Her hasty exit from the novel completes her portrayal as the weak, gullible Other.

Clover is first described as "a stout, motherly mare approaching middle life, who never got her figure back after her fourth foal." (Orwell, 1951:2) The focus on beauty and the figure of the female animal prescribes oppressive physical traits associated with gender. Immediately a relationship between femininity, the body and motherhood is established. Adrienne Rich in *Of Woman Born* argued that "motherhood is at once both an intensely female experience and an institution defined and controlled by patriarchy." (Bowers in Kowaleski-Wollace, 1997:272) This is true of Clover, as well as of Muriel and the hens. Their bodies are merely vessels of reproduction as determined and controlled by their male counterparts. Clover's oppression is intensified as she assumes the role of nurse, mother, nurturer and caregiver to Mollie, Boxer and the other animals. Despite her adherence to some stereotypical constructs of femininity, she is not portrayed as weak and dependent. Her intelligence and strength are captured through her thoughts and

actions, for instance when she tries to prevent Boxer's death. "Clover tried to stir her stout limbs to a gallop that achieved a canter. 'Boxer!' she cried... 'Boxer! Get out quickly! They are taking you to your death." (Orwell, 1951:82) Although she does not succeed in rescuing him, her attempt is an act of bravery in itself.

As Clover reflects on the past, she is presented as the silent, voiceless female. Like one who has been doubly colonised, she is subjected to two layers of Otherness as an animal and as a female.

> As Clover looked down the hillside, her eyes filled with tears. If she could have spoken her thoughts, it would have been to say that this was not what they had aimed at when they had set themselves years ago to work for the over throw of the human race... She did not know why - they had come to a time when no one dared speak his mind, when fierce growling dogs roamed everywhere, and when you had to watch your comrades torn to pieces after confessing to shocking crimes... Such were her thoughts though she lacked the words to express them.
>
> (Orwell, 1951:59)

Regardless of Clover's categorisation as different, she does not sit ignorantly and passively accept Napoleon's dictatorship. Although she is governed by patriarchal powers, she is nevertheless capable of intellectual thought. When she realises that the rules on the farm have been altered, she asks Muriel to read the commandments to her. "Now there was only one commandment left: "All animals are equal but some are more equal than others." (Orwell, 1951:90) In this way, she is not deceived by Napoleon, but is aware of the political corruption on Animal Farm. Her insight and courage are heightened

in the last chapter. "At the gate they paused, half frightened to go on, but Clover led the way in." (Orwell, 1951:91) She survives to tell the story of their oppression.

"All of these are good books in their own ways, but girls are scarce on their pages except in the occasional supporting role of sister or mother - even in *Animal Farm* the animals are almost solely male except for a couple of mares, one of whom defects to the capitalist farmers, lured with sugar and the promise of ribbons in her mane." (Baines in The Working Party on Language and Gender, 1985:47) Therefore, as with the previous novels discussed, this analysis does not aim to label such literature as 'bad'. It acknowledges the value of each book in its own right but condemns the misogynistic and one-dimensional portrayal of females. Orwell's *Animal Farm* is one such novel that perpetuates stereotypical constructs of femininity, particularly in its portrayal of Mollie. It also establishes a profound relationship between the male gender and politics. Females, although they are strong like Clover, are exempted from this arena of power and leadership. They are the Other. In the light of this analysis, perhaps Orwell's final commandment should read, 'All animals are equal, but some are more equal than others, particularly if they are male'.

"Male-authored texts tend to construct female characters as passive objects of the masculine gaze, which is frequently voyeuristic and almost invariably judgmental." (Morris, 1993:64) The female protagonists in Braithwaite's *To Sir With Love* are objectified in the role that they play in representation. They conform to stereotypical

ideologies of femininity that stress the importance of beauty and physical appearance. Their subordination is intensified through the manner in which they are subjected to the scrutinising gaze of the male narrator. Ann Kaplan describes the 'male gaze' as the way that women are 'looked at' in the cinema. She distinguishes between three types of looks. They include: within the film text itself, the way the spectator is made to identify with the gaze; and the camera's original gaze." (Kaplan, 1983:15) This theory may be used to analyse the portrayal of the women in *To Sir With Love*. In the text of the novel, the females become the objects of Rick's gaze. The reader in turn is made to identify with this male gaze and objectify the women on the screen [in the text] through the narrator's descriptions of them. Then during the act of the writing, the intended gaze of the author is revealed. In this way, the women are subjected to the gaze of the author, the main protagonist and the reader. As it is difficult to establish the actual gaze of the author, the focus of this analysis will be on the gaze of the main protagonist as interpreted by the reader.

Braithwaite uses a highly analytical and descriptive style to characterise his female protagonists. Minor characters such as Mrs Dale Evans, Miss Josy Dawes, and Miss Euphemia Phillips are physically objectified to a large extent. Whenever they are described, Rick's emphasis is on their physical appearance; their clothes, and their bodies, particularly their breasts. This makes the reader focus on the breasts that make the woman, and not on the woman herself. For instance, Miss Josy Dawes is described in the following way; "She wore an open-necked short sleeved man's shirt, against which

her prominent breasts clamoured for attention." (Braithwaite, 1959:19) Later, Rick

comments again, "Those large round breasts seemed completely out of character with the

brogue shoes, the ankle socks and the severe naked lips; it was as though they were on

the wrong person." (Braithwaite, 1959:59) A similar style is used to describe the other

female characters. Vivienne Clintridge, Clinty, is portrayed as the flirtatious and

provocative, art and drama teacher. She is "a chubby, well-formed thirtyish brunette who

exuded a certain brash animal charm. As we shook hands I was amazed to see myself

reflected in her large smiling brown eyes. Her voice in greeting was silvery with

acceptance and immediate friendliness." (Braithwaite, 1959:20) The 'brash animal

charm' that Clinty exudes suggests that Rick is aware of her sexual assertiveness and that

she is attracted to him. Throughout the novel Clinty assumes the 'man eater' or

seductress stereotype. Rick's emphasis on the female body is highly problematic and

contributes to the casting of woman as man's Other. It also emphasises the female's

objectification as a maternal being, and as a sexualised object. More positive aspects of

her character are not discussed.

Gillian Blanchard is portrayed as educated, of an upper class and financially independent.

From the moment he first sees her, Gillian fits Rick's stereotypical image of beauty and

is extensively subjected to the voyeuristic male gaze.

> Every man has his own idea of beauty. Many years ago I
> visited the Caribbean island of Martinique and there saw
> what I still believe to be the world's most beautiful women;
> tall willowy, graceful creatures with soft wavy raven hair
> and skin the colour of honey. Gillian Blanchard was lovely
> in the same kind of way: tall, her hair cut in a black neat

> skull-cap, full-figured, elegant. Her skin had a rich olive
> tint which hinted at Jewish or Italian parentage. Dark eyes,
> nearly black in the depths of them. Lovely.
> (Braithwaite, 1959:20)

In this respect, Gillian is described in terms of her skin, hair, figure and eyes. Beauvoir argues that the beautiful body "must present the inert and passive qualities of an object, 'suppressing its own objectivity in order to reflect that of a possessor.'" (Isikoff, in Kowaleski-Wallace, 1997:39) From an alternative perspective, the strength of Gillian's character is highlighted through her refusal to tolerate racial discrimination. On one occasion, she dines with Rick at an expensive restaurant and is subjected to poor service and discrimination. When the waiter spills soup on Rick and sneers at him, "Gillian reacted suddenly. With swift movement, she gathered up her gloves and handbag. 'Let's go Rick.' Head high she walked ahead of me towards the doorway through a gauntlet of inquiring eyes." (Braithwaite, 1959:140) In this way, Gillian stands up for herself and speaks out for Rick. Furthermore, the way that she commits herself to a black man, despite society's disapproval makes her a strong woman. She does not care what anybody thinks and chooses to love Rick.

Pamela Dare is a working class female who is subjected to social and economic inequalities. These hardships contribute to her portrayal as intelligent, beautiful and outspoken. Many a time she stands up for Rick and protects him from discrimination. One occasion where she challenges stares of disapproval is during their class trip to the museum. "Suddenly she turned to face them, her eyes blazing with anger. 'He is our teacher. Do you mind?'" (Braithwaite, 1959:89) Like Gillian, Pamela's physical beauty

enchants Rick and subjects her to the fetish male gaze. "Pamela was especially striking in a pleated red skirt set off by high-heeled red shoes and a saucy red ribbon worn on her auburn hair. Looking at her I could see that in a few years she would really blossom into something splendid." (Braithwaite, 1959:90) Although Rick is in a relationship with Gillian, he is captivated by Pamela's beauty and enjoys the attention he receives from her. When Potter and Denham comment that Rick has 'red blood', she verbally attacks them for being racist as Rick enjoys her defense. "She was wonderful, tremendous in her scorn and towering anger: Boadicea revivified, flame-haired, majestic." (Braithwaite, 1959:107)

The manner in which Braithwaite's female protagonists compete for the attention of one man highlights how the narrative has been built around an underlying conflict. Clinty, Pamela and Gillian are locked in a competition. They each desire Rick and contest the women that are in their way. This is reflected through Clinty's perception of Gillian. She tells Rick, "Oh, I don't mind her at all, but I've met her superior type before. I can't say I would exactly miss her." (Braithwaite, 1959:177) Pamela displays a similar attitude towards Gillian. "The girls began to discuss Gillian's hair, clothes and shoes, and the conversation was steered into smoother water. Pamela said nothing; I had the feeling she did not share their enthusiasm for Gillian." (Braithwaite, 1959:177) Like Clinty, she is jealous of Gillian. Gillian in turn, acts as a victim of these patriarchal modes of thought and is threatened by Pamela. She warns Rick, "You be careful, especially with that Dare girl; that's no schoolgirl crush she has on you. I've watched her and I know. She's a

woman and the sooner you realize it the better." (Braithwaite, 1959:125) Her girlish charm and beauty is envied by Gillian. This is highlighted at the end of the novel when Pamela enters the auditorium for the school ball. Gillian whispers to Rick, "Thank heaven I got to you first, Rick." (Braithwaite, 1959:181) Their competition over Rick weakens their portrayal and makes the male desirable physically and sexually. Rick complicates this 'competition game' as he reveals mixed sentiments through his narration. Although he chooses Gillian, he continues to objectify Pamela's beauty. This is evident as they dance at the ball. "There was no hesitation, no pause to synchronise our steps; the music and the magic of the moment took us and wove us together in smooth movement. I was aware of her, of her soft breathing, her firm roundness, and the rhythmic moving of her thighs. She was a woman, there was no doubt about it, and she invaded my body and mind." (Braithwaite, 1959:184) The manner in which Rick is attracted to the women in his 'love triangle' makes the novel almost polygamous. They have each surrendered themselves to him and he delights in being their object of prey.

Braithwaite's *To Sir With Love* glorifies the physical and sexual desire of the male Self through submission by the female Other. Rick's role as the narrator of the novel is coloured by his limited perceptions of masculinity and femininity. The manner in which he objectifies the female characters and subjects them to the 'male gaze' highlights his perpetuation of Cixous' masculine/feminine dichotomy. His women are defined according to man's perception of them and not to the way they really are. They are victims of the 'male gaze' and contribute to the elaboration of the feminine metaphor as

a symbol of weakness and discontent. Furthermore, through the negative relationship between Pamela, Clinty and Gillian, differences between 'patriarchy' and 'feminism' are evident. Patriarchy contributes to making women jealous of each other. Feminism seeks to build solidarity among women. The lack of female solidarity in Braithwaite's *To Sir With Love* makes it a highly misogynistic novel.

In an essay titled "Feminist Criticism in the Wilderness", Elaine Showalter proposes "gynocritics" as an alternative to male-dominated, misogynist literary texts. Showalter defines gynocritics as "the study of women as writers; its subjects, she says, 'are the history, styles, themes, genres and structures of writing by women; the psychodynamics of female creativity; the trajectory of the individual or collective female career; and the evolution and laws of a female literary tradition.'" (in Stevens & Stewarts, 1996:87) Harper Lee's *To Kill A Mockingbird* forms an important part of this 'female literary tradition' and is a liberating text for secondary school students to study. The novel is concerned with a complete displacement of fixed gender identities and questions phallocentric modes of thought. "It would appear that every female being is not necessarily a woman; to be so considered she must share in that mysterious and threatened reality known as femininity. Is this attribute something secreted by the ovaries? Or is it a Platonic essence, a product of the philosophic imagination? Is a rustling petticoat enough to bring it down to earth?" (Beauvoir in Nicholson, 1997:12) Through the thoughts and actions of Jean Louise Finch, Lee is outstanding in her exploration of the above mysterious and threatened reality known as femininity.

Jean Louise Finch's nickname, Scout, marks the beginning of her portrayal as a 'tom-boy'. Throughout the novel she challenges stereotypical behaviours deemed 'feminine' by engaging in masculine activities. Her characterization is based on an androgynous dispersal of gender identities. "What is needed is a new conceptualization of personality that both allows and accounts for behavioural inconsistency. An answer may lie in the concept of androgyny, a term put forth by Sandra Ben, denoting the integration of masculine and feminine traits within a single individual." (Basow, 1992:10) One may argue that Scout is androgynous because she is pre-pubescent. Patriarchy can indulge "girls" occasionally, but once girls become women, they must be suppressed. This is debatable because it is a generalised assumption and does not take into account individual portrayals. Scout is an intelligent, tough, outspoken, six-year old girl who defends herself in every way. Through her behaviour and relationship with her brother Jem, her androgynous characterisation is accentuated. The two have similar adventures and experiences and their sibling relationship is not discriminative on the basis of gender. Scout's inclusion in Dill and Jem's games allows her to become part of their male circle, on the condition that she renounces traits of femininity. "I was not so sure, but Jem told me that I was being a girl, that girls always imagined things, that's why other people hated them so, and that if I started behaving like one I could just go off and find some to play with." (Lee, 1971:46) In an attempt to resist this threat, Scout adopts traits of masculinity and openly declares that she does not want to become a 'lady' because she understands that to be 'feminine' means to be excluded. "Scout I'm telling you for the last time, shut your trap or go home - I declare to the Lord you're getting more like a girl

everyday! With that I had no option but to join them." (Lee, 1971:57) These comments support the beliefs that ideals of femininity are socially constructed and not biologically present among females; in Beauvoir's terms "One is not born a woman but becomes one." (Selden & Widdowson, 1993:210) Scout's refusal to comply with preconceived notions of femininity reflects her personal attempts to resist patriarchal modes of thought and action. Age is no barrier to liberation.

Scout's physical strength and outspoken nature challenge the weak, passive, feminine stereotype and prevents anyone from physically and verbally abusing her. "You can just take that back boy! This order given by me to Cecil Jacobs, was the beginning of a rather thin time for Jem and me. My fists were clenched and I was ready to fly." (Lee, 1971:80) This incident and many others, illustrate how Scout stands up for herself and protects her family members. She will not tolerate abuse from anybody. The height of her portrayal is when she protects Jem and Atticus from a group of men at Maycomb County Jail. "'Don't you touch him!' I kicked the man swiftly. Barefooted, I was surprised to see him fall back in real pain. I intended to kick his shin, but aimed too high...'Ain't nobody gonna do Jem that way,' I said." (Lee, 1971:156) Apart from her physical strength, Scout's inner courage and intelligence are illustrated during the same incident when she questions Mr Cunningham about entailments.

> 'Entailments are bad,' I was advising him, when I slowly awoke to the fact that I was addressing the entire congregation. The men were all looking at me, some had their mouths half-open. Atticus had stopped poking Jem: they were standing together beside Dill. Their attention amounted to fascination.

> Atticus mouth, even was half- open, an attitude he
> had once described as uncouth.
>
> (Lee,1971:157)

In this way, Scout stands up to man and challenges his actions. More importantly, she does not submit to his power but asserts her influence over him instead.

Through Scout's description of Maycomb, the fragile and delicate nature of the 'ideal lady' (Patmore's 'Angel in the House' stereotype) is presented. "Maycomb was an old town, but it was a tired old town when I first knew it… Ladies bathed before noon, after their three o'clock naps, and by nightfall they were like soft tea-cakes with frostings of sweat and talcum." (Lee, 1971:11) This description highlights the essence of femininity in a stereotypical sense. Although Scout does not adhere to this stereotype, there are moments when she attends her Aunt Alexander's tea parties and tries to act feminine. "The ladies were cool in fragile pastel prints: most of them were heavily powdered but unrouged; the only lipstick in the room was Tangee Natural. Cutex Natural sparkled on their fingernails, but some of the younger ladies wore Rose. They smelled heavenly." (Lee, 1971:233) In an attempt to enter their realm, Scout conforms to their codes of conduct and dress. "I was wearing my pink Sunday dress, shoes and petticoat." (Lee, 1971:232) An amusing aspect about this attempt is that she continues to wear her breeches under her dress. Hence she does not succeed in completely renouncing the masculine traits that she possesses. Scout's love for the masculine principle is highlighted when she confesses,

> There was no doubt about it, I must soon enter this world,
> where in its surface fragrant ladies rocked slowly, fanned

gently and drank cool water. But I was more at home in my father's world...Ladies seemed to live in faint horror of men, seemed unwilling to approve wholeheartedly of them. But I liked them [men]. There was something about them, no matter how much they cussed and drank and gambled and chewed; no matter how undelectable they were, there was something about them that I instinctively liked... they weren't-...' 'Hipocrites,' Mrs Merriweather was saying...

(Lee, 1971:238)

This shallow, limiting and hypocritical world of femininity does not appeal to Scout. She is more comfortable in Jem and Dill's masculine world. In this respect, one may argue that Scout is not a feminist character; she identifies with "the father", and is therefore patriarchal or she matriarchalises patriarchy in her decision to enter it.

"Dramatizations of imprisonment and escape are so all-pervasive in nineteenth-century literature by women that we believe they represent a uniquely female tradition in this period... Works in this tradition generally begin by using houses as primary symbols of female imprisonment." (Gilbert & Gubar, 1979:85) This imagery of imprisonment and monstrosity is evident in Lee's portrayal of Arthur Radley. Although Arthur is male, he may be analysed as Lee's 'double' and ultimately as Scout's 'double'. "Through her double, the female author enacts her own repressed desire to escape male houses and male texts." (Gilbert & Gubar, 1979:85) In this respect, Arthur may be perceived as Gilbert and Gubar's 'Madwoman in the Attic'. He is the repressed feminine principle. "For Gilbert and Gubar, "the female textual strategy, as they see it, consists in assaulting and revising, deconstructing and reconstructing those images of women inherited from male literature, especially the paradigmatic polarities of the angel and monster." (Moi,

1985:60) Lee's female textual strategy is evident as she creates a male monstrous figure. Arthur Radley, commonly known as Boo, is the outcast, monster figure, in the novel. He is ostracised by Maycomb society and hidden away in his father's house. "Inside the house lived a malevolent phantom. People said he existed, but Jem and I had never seen him. People said he went out at night when the moon was down, and peeped in windows. When people's azaleas froze in a cold snap, it was because he had breathed on them...." (Lee, 1971:15) When Arthur's father, the patriarch, dies his brother moves in and Arthur's imprisonment as an Other continues. His situation bears comparison to women's subjection to male authority as his life is controlled and manipulated by other men. Furthermore, Arthur's innocent and caring attitude is symbolic of the feminine principle within him. The presents he leaves for Scout and Jem, and the way that he prevents Scout from freezing to death shows that he is not the monster that society perceives him to be, but is in fact very gentle. His horrific portrayal is deconstructed at the end of the novel as he risks his life to save Jem and Scout. Although he gets credit for this, after it is over, he is shut away again and his confinement continues. Gilbert and Gubar highlight the emergence of doubles in literary texts, "as time passes, this figure concealed behind what corresponds to the facade of the patriarchal text becomes clearer and clearer... Eventually it becomes obvious to both reader and narrator that the figure creeping through and behind the wallpaper is both the narrator and the narrator's double." (1979:91) This interpretation suggests that Arthur Radley is Scout's double. The author's use of doubles signifies complementary signs of female victimisation and functions as an "escape from the stifling enclosures of patriarchy". (Gilbert & Gubar, 1979:91)

"Authored by a male God and by a Godlike male, killed into a "perfect" image of herself, the woman writer's self-contemplation may be said to have begun a searching glance into the mirror of the male-inscribed literary text... But looking long enough, looking hard enough, she would see - like the speaker of Mary Elizabeth Coleridge's "The Other Side of the Mirror" - an enraged prisoner: herself." (Gilbert & Gubar, 1979:15) Harper Lee's *To Kill A Mockingbird* may be perceived as this novel of doubles, of reflections in the 'mirror'. Arthur Radley is the 'enraged prisoner', the feminine principle caught in the mirror. However, through Scout's story her double is revealed, as he steps out of the mirror for a moment, then is shut away again. "From a female perspective... women themselves have the power to create themselves as characters, even perhaps the power to reach toward the woman trapped on the other side of the mirror/text and help her to climb out." (Gilbert & Gubar, 1979:16) As the novel progresses Scout eventually helps Arthur to climb out of the mirror. But alas, patriarchy continues and he is shut away again, almost as soon as he gets out. Arthur's helplessness may be paralleled to Scout's confinement as a female protagonist who is eventually expected to become a 'lady', as well as Lee's confinement as a female writer. Hence Arthur's "paraphernalia of confinement" (Gilbert & Gubar, 1979:90) in the Radley house is symbolic of instruments that indicate women's imprisonment under patriarchal regimes. On the surface level, the novel is deconstructive through Scout's portrayal, but when students learn to "find" "the madwoman" that is when the female writer's story is really told.

Chapter Four

Theorising Femininity: Shaffer, Shakespeare and Shaw

> *Throughout the history of western culture, male engendered female figures as superficially disparate as Milton's Sin, Swift's Chloe and Yeats' Crazy Jane, have incarnated men's ambivalence not only toward female sexuality but toward their own (male) physicality.*
>
> (Gilbert & Gubar, 1979:12)

"In a literary text where the main character is male the plot is often structured as a quest which traces the hero's active engagement with the world, whether the adventure ends in success or failure or death." (Morris, 1993:32)[1] The focus on the male character and total or partial exclusion of females from the above quest is predominant in Peter Shaffer's *The Royal Hunt of the Sun* and William Shakespeare's *The Tragedy of Julius Caesar.* Both the plays focus on men, power and history. "None the less, beginning in the late sixties, there was substantial evidence of new approaches to issues of gender in the theatre, and this evidence suggested the emergence of a distinct drama that we might appropriately call 'feminist'... The plays created in this context of a new and profound acknowledgment of the meanings of gender do not just mirror social change but assert an aesthetic based on the transformation rather than the recognition of persons." (Keyssar in Coyle et al, 1990:398) Bernard Shaw's *Androcles and the Lion* contrasts with the first two plays prescribed for students in Fiji and may be perceived as 'feminist' in aspects of its portrayal of Lavinia and deconstructive in its portrayal of Androcles.

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[1] One may also argue that the quest is part of the female narrative.

Peter Shaffer's *The Royal Hunt of the Sun* focuses on the conquest of Peru by Francisco Pizarro where one hundred and sixty seven Spanish conquistadors subdued an empire of twenty four million. The action in the play revolves around the acquisition of gold through massacre and force. All the characters who speak (contribute to the dialogue) are male. There are only two non-speaking female characters in the entire play, both of which could have been easily excluded. This may be attributed to the function of power in patriarchal discourse. According to Basow, "power is important since, as a number of writers have noted (for example, Blumberg 1979), it is differential power that underlies all inequality." (1992:271) Five forms of power at work in *The Royal Hunt of the Sun* are economic, political, legal, historical and military power. The play is about proving one's masculinity and making fame in the name of God, King and Country, all of which glorify patriarchy. The feminine principle assumes a marginal position in this play and is only spoken of in passing conversations between the male characters. Francisco Pizarro's conversations with Hernando De Sotto highlight his conceptions of females. He tells De Sotto, "It would have been good to have a son." (Shaffer, 1991:30) His choice of the male principle over the female perpetuates the Self/Other dichotomy and presents the female as an inferior version of the male. This sense of Otherness is reinforced as Pizarro offers his one dimensional, generalised view of women.

> You were talking women. I loved them with all the juice in
> me - but oh, the cheat in that tenderness. What is it but to
> lust to own their beauty, not them, which you never can;
> like trying to own the beauty of a goblet by praying for it.
> And even if you could it would become you and get
> soiled...I was dandled on time's knee and made to gurgle,
> then put to my sleep. I've been cheated from the moment I
> was born because there's death in everything.

(Shaffer, 1991:32)

Pizarro's experiences highlight his perception of the female as an object of beauty, a fantasy that appears and disappears. She is objectified but not real.

During a conversation about their mothers, Pizarro and Atahuallpa discuss their perceptions of motherhood. Pizarro tells Atahuallpa, "I did not know my mother. She was not my father's wife. She left me at the church for anyone to find." (Shaffer, 1991:53) Atahuallpa's only memory of his mother reinforces the stereotypical image of women as objects of beauty. Through Pizarro's dialogue, the intricate relationship between the female body and motherhood is established. "Every year its piglet time, carving time, time for children in a gush of blood and water. Women dote on this. A birth, any birth fills them with love. They clap with love, and my soul shrugs. Round and round is all I see: an endless sky of birds, flying, ripping and nursing their young to fly and rip and nurse their young - for what?" (Shaffer, 1991:63) The above reflection on motherhood and childbearing is questionable. Do women really dote on this process or are they expected to dote on it?

The two non-speaking female characters in Shaffer's play are Inti Coussi, the step-sister of Atahuallpa and Oello, the wife of Atahuallpa. The former appears on stage but is not part of the events and dialogue. She is not even mentioned in the play apart from the character list. Oello, however, is portrayed waiting upon Atahuallpa on several occasions. "The food is served to the Inca in this manner. Oello takes meat out of a bowl, places it in her hands and Atahuallpa lowers his face to it, while she turns her face away from him out of respect." (Shaffer, 1991:46) These actions are a reflector of her subordinate status.

She is the subaltern who is a victim of patriarchy, polygamy and a male dominated culture. This practice of polygamy increases Atahuallpa's power and Oello's submission to him within the private sphere. She is just one of Atahuallpa's wives while he is her God and master. The objectification of her body and her status as man's Other is accentuated by Felipillo's attitude towards her. "Oello rises and quietly removes the dish. Suddenly Felipillo rushes and knocks it violently out of her hand... He grabs her and flings her to the ground... Then he laughs and kisses the girl on the throat. As she screams and struggles, Young Martin rushes in." (Shaffer, 1991:50) This type of behaviour diminishes the worth of women and presents them as objects of sexual fulfillment for men.

Shaffer's *The Royal Hunt of the Sun* may be perceived as a male oriented play as the action and characters revolve around the masculine principle. A group of soldiers, officers, priests and explorers go on an adventure to a part of the world they want to conquer and claim. The play is based on their story. The female principle assumes a minor or almost non-existent position in the play that is also largely stereotypical. The three main categories of women presented in *The Royal Hunt of the Sun* are 'women as whores', 'women as objects of beauty', and 'women as mothers'. This categorisation confirms man's limited perception of them and internalises their subordinate positions according to heirarchised binary oppositions.

William Shakespeare's *The Tragedy of Julius Caesar* is similar to Shaffer's *The Royal Hunt of the Sun* in that they are both about men and power politics. "In Julius Caesar,

Shakespeare continues to explore the drama of power politics and personal conscience; only now he moves the setting to a more distant time." (Rosen & Rosen in Shakespeare, 1987:xxii) The two women in the play, Portia and Calpurnia, will be analysed using a feminist approach to Shakespearean drama. "Feminist criticism of Shakespeare addresses the role of gender in Shakespearean drama... The feminist reevaluation of Shakespeare may be conveniently divided into two phases, the first formative (1832-1975), the second institutional (1975-present)." (Bretzius in Kowaleski-Wollace, 1997:367) My analysis focuses on the later phase.

Within the institutional, more recent phase, Geraldine Jardine identifies two main lines of approach to Shakespeare's drama from a feminist perspective. "The first one assumes that Shakespeare has earned his position at the heart of the traditional canon of English literature by creating characters who reflect every possible nuance of that richness and variety which is to be found in the world around us. His female characters according to this view, reflect accurately the whole range of specifically female qualities (which qualities are supposed to be fixed and immutable from Shakespeare's days to our own." (Jardine, 1983:2) This approach maintains that Shakespeare's women are a true reflection of how women were and are in societies today. The second line of approach assumes a contrary opinion. It sees Shakespeare's writing and portrayal of his women as misogynistic and limiting. "Shakespeare's society is taken to be oppressively chauvinistic - a chauvinism whose trace is to be found in innumerable passing comments on women in the plays..." (Jardine, 1983:3) This thesis adopts the second line of approach in its analysis of Shakespeare's women in *The Tragedy of Julius Caesar*. Within this second

perspective, there is the aggressive strand and the non-aggressive strand. This critique assumes the later strand. "The non-aggressive approach takes it that Shakespeare did his best to be a true reflecting glass, but that contemporary society's limited understanding of women combined with his own male viewpoint skewed the resulting picture." (Jardine, 1983:3)

As in all Shakespeare's plays the female characters feature last on the 'Dramatis Personae' list. Portia and Calpurnia are no exception. Their positions in this hierarchy mark the beginning of their subordinate portrayal. Calpurnia is Caesar's wife and is portrayed as such, merely an accessory to his power. She appears only in the first part of the play when Caesar is alive. Here she is constantly beside her husband in processions and public places. She is his 'puppet', put on show for the world to see. Her function is to act as a monument of beauty beside Caesar. Through Caesar's speech to Antony, Calpurnia's inability to bear children is highlighted.

> Forget not in your speed, Antonius,
> To touch Calpurnia; for our elders say
> The barren, touched in this hold chase,
> Shake off their sterile curse.

> (Shakespeare, 1987:36)

Almost immediately a relationship between femininity and child bearing is established. Calpurnia's failure to bear a child is looked down upon as a curse because traditionally motherhood was the essence of womanhood.

In Act II, scene II, Calpurnia attempts to speak out and protect her husband. She tells Caesar of a dream she has had and pleads with him not to go to the Capitol. "Do not go

forth today. Call it my fear/ That keeps you in the house and not your own."

(Shakespeare, 1987:70) After some persuasion, Caesar follows her advice. However,

when Decius hears of this, the masculine principle assumes control and convinces Caesar

to disregard the pleas of his female counterpart.

> And know it now, the senate have concluded
> To give this day a crown to mighty Caesar.
> If you shall send them world you will not come,
> Their minds may change. Besides it were a mock
> Apt to be rendered, for someone to say
> "Break up the senate till another time,
> When Caesar's wife shall meet with better dreams."

(Shakespeare, 1987:71)

Decius' words challenge Caesar's masculinity and make him change his mind for fear of

looking weak. Immediately he scolds Calpurnia for her over protective nature. "How

foolish do your fears seem now, Calpurnia! I am ashamed I did yield to them."

(Shakespeare, 1987:72) Here Calpurnia is portrayed as a foolish, fearful woman. The

irony, however, is that she is right and as a result Caesar loses his life. After Caesar's

death, she is no longer mentioned in the play because she is defined in relation to her

husband. The Other cannot exist without the Self and therefore, when he dies, she

figuratively dies with him.

Portia, Brutus' wife, constantly questions her husband and tries hard to be included in his

world. Brutus, however, sees her as weak and fragile, in a protective way though, not a

dismissive one. When the conspirators leave his house, he says to Portia, "Wherefore rise

you now? It is not for your health to commit/ Your weak condition to the raw, cold

morning." (Shakespeare, 1987:64) Although he perceives her as the obedient, proper lady

and wife, she challenges this portrayal through her powerful dialogue.

> You have some sick offense within your mind,
> Which by the right and virtue of my place
> I ought to know of; and upon my knees
> I charm you, by my once commended beauty,
> By all your vows of love, and that great vow
> Which did incorporate and make us one,
> That you unfold to me, your self, your half,
> Why you are heavy, what men tonight
> Have had resort to you; for here have been
> Some six or seven, who did hide their faces
> Even from darkness.
>
> (Shakespeare, 1987:65)

Through her speeches Portia is depicted as the concerned, caring, loving and protective

wife. She will not rest until Brutus confides in her and continues to plead with him to tell

her his secret.

> Think you I am no stronger than my sex,
> Being so fathered and husbanded?
> Tell me your counsels, I will not disclose 'em.
> I have made strong proof of my constancy,
> Giving myself a voluntary wound,
> Here on the thigh; Can bear with patience,
> And not my husband's secrets?
>
> (Shakespeare, 1987:66)

Here her persistent portrayal presents her as a strong, uncompromising woman. On the

other hand, however, Portia's status as a female, highlights her limited and restricted

position. She has to justify to her husband that she is capable of intellectual thought and

knows how to keep a secret. She later perpetuates the limitations of her sex when she

sends Lucius to the senate house to check on Brutus. She confesses, "I have a man's

mind, but a woman's might." (Shakespeare, 1987:74) This statement implies that Portia

thinks like a man and is intelligent but is powerless because she is a woman. Her helplessness is attributed to the limited perception of the ideal ancient Roman woman.

Portia's attempts to become Brutus' equal and not his Other eventually fail and result in her suicide. Brutus provides an account of her death.

> ... Impatient of my absence,
> And grief that young Octavius with Mark Antony
> Have made themselves so strong - for with her death
> That tidings came - with this she fell distract,
> And (her attendants absent) swallowed fire.
> (Shakespeare, 1987:111)

Therefore, Portia commits suicide because she is neglected and confused about the fate of her husband. However, unlike Caesar's death, and its eliminating effect on Calpurnia as a character, Portia's death does not eliminate Brutus from the play. In fact, it places him in the centre of the action. This may be because he is the patriarch and she is the oppressed female. When the female is destroyed, the patriarch can continue to function, but when the patriarch is destroyed the female cannot exist. Therefore, after Caesar's death, Calpurnia is eliminated from the play, but when Portia dies, Brutus lives on. Although *The Tragedy of Julius Caesar* is a superbly crafted play, it suppresses the female principle and focuses on the male principle. Calpurnia and Portia each possess some strong points, but they nevertheless assume marginal roles and conform to ideologies of femininity. They do not belong within the periphery of action but are outside, along the borders, trying to get into the circle of male power.

Bernard Shaw's *Androcles and the Lion* challenges traditional stereotypes of masculinity and femininity. This could be because "Shaw was greatly influenced in his writing by the

Norwegian playwright, Henrik Ibsen. Ibsen introduced important social themes in his plays about life at that time." (Ian in Shaw, 1997:v) One social theme that concerned Ibsen was the changing role of women. These feminist sentiments are highlighted in *A Doll's House* and similar social issues are evident in *Androcles and the Lion.* Through propaganda, Shaw's purpose was to change the world. His portrayal of a weak little man like Androcles and a strong female character like Lavinia marks the beginning of this deconstruction process.

Androcles is an interesting character because he is the total opposite of the tough, masculine western stereotype. He stands out from the Captain and the other men in the play because of this difference. His characterization is heightened through Shaw's description of Megaera. *"His wife is a rather handsome pampered slattern, well fed and in the prime of her life. She has nothing to carry, and has a stout stick to help her along."* (Shaw, 1997:1) Her portrayal as 'handsome' and physically strong contrasts with Androcles' characterization and forms a binary opposition. In many respects she is the Self and Androcles the Other. Through dialogue, Shaw explores the institution of marriage from the female's perspective. Megaera condemns the subordination of women as wives as she tells Androcles, "...you glory in it." (Shaw, 1997:2) When Androcles asks her, "In what?" she continues,

> In everything. In making me a slave, and making yourself a laughing-stock. It's not fair. You get me the name of being a shrew with your meek ways, always talking as if butter would melt in your mouth. And just because I'm goodhearted and a bit hasty, and because you're always driving me to do things I'm sorry for afterwards, people say, "Poor man: what a life his wife leads him!" Oh, if only they knew! And you think I don't know. But I do, I do.

Although she is portrayed as outspoken, her bravery and sense of courage are diminished as she encounters the sleeping lion and Androcles takes charge of the situation.

Lavinia is first described as "*a good looking resolute young woman apparently of higher social standing than her fellow prisoners.*" (Shaw, 1997:8) Throughout the play, she stands up for what she believes in and will not succumb to offers that are contrary to her will. The Captain tells her, "I call to the female prisoners' attention specially to the fact that four comfortable homes have been offered to her by officers of this regiment, of which she can have the choice the moment she chooses to sacrifice as wellbred Roman ladies do." (Shaw, 1997:13) Her refusal to drop a pinch of incense on the altar and renounce her Christianity contributes to her portrayal as a resolute character. Furthermore, the Captain's reference to "wellbred Roman ladies" emphasises Lavinia's choice not to conform to such categories of femininity, despite her high social ranking.

Throughout the play, Lavinia is portrayed flirting with the Captain. When he asks her if Christians find it easy to love, she wittily replies, "Very easy, Captain, when their enemies are as handsome as you." (Shaw, 1997:14) Unlike the Captain who does not openly display his affection towards her, she displays her love for him. Furthermore, Lavinia is not the quiet, submissive, passive woman, who will let men 'walk all over her'. This is reflected when Lentulus and Metellus admire her body. Lentulus comments, "That woman's got figure." (Shaw, 1997:18) When he asks her if she turns the other cheek when kissed, Lavinia replies, "Don't be foolish...*[Sharply to Lentulus]* Pull

yourself together man. Hold your head up. Keep the corners of your mouth firm; and treat me respectfully. What do you take me for?... Stuff! Go about your business." (Shaw, 1997:18) In this way, Lavinia stands up to verbal abuse and will not be a victim of patriarchy. Although she is freed and united with the Captain at the end of the play, she has not compromised her values to achieve this freedom.

Androcles and the Lion is not misogynistic or gender-biased because Shaw does not adhere to stereotypical constructs of masculinity and femininity, unlike Shaffer and Shakespeare. Shaw's characters are more androgynous, unconventional and balanced in terms of gender. His female characters, however, do not completely enter the realm of femininity but remain along the periphery. The first two plays studied by forms five and six students in Fiji may be categorised as masculine adventure stories that largely discriminate against females. There are very few female role models in Shaffer's *The Royal Hunt of the Sun* and Shakespeare's *The Tragedy of Julius Caesar* that students can identify with or relate to although there are as many female students as male students, maybe even more. The question that needs to be posed is, why are Pacific Island students studying plays by male dramatists that are predominantly about men? One may propose at this point, the inclusion of more feminist dramas to balance the 'gender gap' in the prescribed plays for secondary school students. This may provide students with the scope for understanding the concept of sexual politics. "The goal of this feminist theatre is not increased self-awareness but knowledge of others and of the deep structures of sexual politics as the basis for personal, political and social change." (Keyssar in Coyle et al, 1990:499)

Chapter Five

Theorising Femininity: Shakespeare, Mason and Hereniko

A promising "ingredient" of de Beauvoir's analysis is her attack on the discrepancy between the reality of actual women and a static ideal of "woman".

(Spelman, 1990:69)

From the five plays prescribed for students in Samoa three were written by William Shakespeare. *The Tragedy of Othello, The Tragedy of Romeo and Juliet* and *The Tragedy of Macbeth* may be considered less discriminatory than *The Tragedy of Julius Caesar* (prescribed for students in Fiji), because Desdemona, Juliet and Lady Macbeth hold more prominent roles than Calpurnia and Portia. Their more significant presence in the dialogue and action of the plays is, however, thwarted by their limited portrayal as 'Angel' or 'Witch'. In the light of postcolonial feminist theories, Bruce Mason's *The Pohutukawa Tree* attempts to capture the voice of coloured, Third World Women, but is weakened through the misogyny evident. This of course depends on how one defines misogyny and what interpretation of the play one holds. Comparatively, Vilisoni Hereniko's *Sera's Choice* is the most liberating play studied by students in Samoa. Through Sera's story and her experiences with life and womanhood, Hereniko explores the changing role of Pacific Island women. The play is based on their choices, aspirations and dreams.

In Shakespeare's *The Tragedy of Othello*, "the vision of human nature which the play offers is one of ancient terrors and primal drives, fear of the unknown, pride, greed, lust - underlying smooth, civilised surfaces - the noble senator, the competent and well mannered lieutenant and gentlewoman." (Kernan in Shakespeare, 1963:xxiii) Desdemona and Emilia who conform to the stereotypic notion of the 'gentlewoman' are victims of man's world where they are oppressed and eventually destroyed. The male characters in comparison are tough and masculine, and criticise their female counterparts. Through their chauvinistic judgments the play captures, as Greene points out, "an ideal of womanly character and conduct, with the question of what women are, what they might be and should be." (in Barker & Kamps, 1995:50) For the purpose of this analysis Jardine's second line of approach to studying Shakespearean women (as suggested in chapter four), will be maintained.

Desdemona is first portrayed as the beautiful white maiden who falls in love with a coloured man. Her secret romance with the Moor highlights her inner strength and courage and makes her a rebel in her own special way. This is evident as she boldly defends her actions when publicly questioned by her father.

> That I love the Moor to live with him,
> My downright violence, and storm of fortunes,
> May trumpet to the world. My heart's subdued
> Even to the very quality of my lord...
> Let me go with him.

(Shakespeare 1963, 59)

Race is no barrier to her love and she goes against tradition to marry Othello. Greene rightly argues, "though her love for Othello is touching, bold, wonderful, hers is still that

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romantic illusion of the merging of identity ... The verb 'subdued' is accurate, since, as de Beauvoir notes, it is an ideal that must result in the obliteration of the self: if, as Catherine says, 'I am Heathcliff', that leaves only one of them." (in Barker & Kamps 1995, 53)

Desdemona has struck many critics as an ideal of femininity. "She can do nothing whatever. She cannot retaliate even in speech... She is helpless because her nature is infinitely sweet and her love absolute." (Greene in Barker & Kamps, 1995:53) My analysis supports the view that Desdemona's sweet, silent submission contributes to her victimisation by man and internalises her subject position as the passive, delicate, feminine Other. Segments of her conversation with Brabantio indicate how she is bound to patriarchy and dependent on man.

> ...My noble father,
> I do perceive here a divided duty.
> To you I am bound for life and education;
> How to respect you. You are the lord of duty,
> I am hithero your daughter. But here's my husband.

> (Shakespeare, 1963:57)

Upon marriage, her submission to man does not end. She is now the 'property' of Othello and conforms to the passive, obedient 'woman as wife' stereotype. Kernan highlights aspects of her confirmation to the submissive stereotype. "In Desdemona alone do the heart and the hand go together: she is what she seems to be... Her very openness and honesty make her suspect to a world where few men are what they appear, and their chastity is inevitably brought into question in a world where every other major character is in some degree touched with sexual corruption." (Kernan in Shakespeare, 1963:xxiv)

She is Patmore's 'Angel in the House' and symbolises femininity and purity. Woolf elaborates on the characteristics of this stereotype. "Be sympathetic; be tender... use the arts and wiles of your sex. Never let anybody guess that you have a mind of your own. Above all be pure." (Woolf, 1993:4)

Through Desdemona's language and actions, she is portrayed as innocent, unselfish and concerned about others. When Cassio asks for her help, she willingly complies with his request. "Be thou assured, good Cassio, I will do/ All my abilities in thy behalf..." (Shakespeare, 1963:93) Thus fulfilling her purpose in life which is to serve and please man. This innocent trust Desdemona possesses eventually contributes to her destruction as she becomes caught up in the patriarchal world of revenge. At the end of the play she is disillusioned about men as Othello believes Iago's word over hers.

> O these men, these men.
> Dost thou in conscience think, tell me Emilia,
> That there be women do abuse their husbands
> In such gross kind?
> (Shakespeare, 1963:141)

Here, she admits her oppression to Emilia but like Barbery she is helpless, and is eventually destroyed by Iago and Othello. In this way, "the female figure is first enjoyed as an object of erotic titillation and then punished for precisely that exercise of dangerous seductive charm". (Morris, 1993:29)

Emilia is subjected to similar abuse and is used as the 'go-between' in the play as she carries out commands by Iago and Othello. Her submission to man is important in advancing the action in the play. "Emilia's picking up the handkerchief helps advance the

action by contributing to Iago's deception of Othello, but it is also relevant to her character and to Shakespeare's conception of the modes of wifely devotion and marital relationship (not to mention its relations by contrast with actions of Desdemona and Bianca and Emilia herself later)." (Greene in Barker & Kamps, 1995:55) Instead of giving the handkerchief back to Desdemona, she plays the 'good wife' and gives it to Iago.

> I am glad to have found this napkin;
> My wayward husband hath a hundred times
> Wooed me to steal it; but she loves the token...
> I'll have the work ta'en out
> And give't Iago. What he will do with it,
> Heaven knows, not I;
> I nothing but to please his fantasy.

(Shakespeare, 1963:104)

This act advances Emilia's subordination as she engages in processes of collusion to please man. However, although Emilia appears passive, her strength is highlighted through her loyalty to Desdemona. When asked by Othello if Desdemona is having an affair, Emilia stands up for her and pleads for her innocence.

> I durst, my lord, to wager she is honest,
> Lay down my soul at stake. If you think other,
> Remove your thought. It doth abuse your bosom,
> If any wretch have put this in your head,
> Let heaven requite it with the serpent's curse,
> For if she be not honest, chaste and true,
> There's no man happy. The purest of their wives
> Is foul as slander.

(Shakespeare, 1963:131)

However, Othello is not convinced by this "simple bawd" (Shakespeare, 1963:131) and believes one man (Iago) instead of two women (Emila and Desdemona). When Emila finds out that Othello has murdered Desdemona, she does not fear for her life but

attempts to alert everyone. "Thus it is she who finds the voice Desdemona cannot, which dispels the nightmarish unreality: I am bound to speak'." (Greene in Barker & Kamps, 1995:58) She will not be suppressed or silenced this time and is determined to tell the truth. Although she is killed by Iago, Emilia does not die a silent, passive maiden, but an outspoken and powerful one. Her word is her revenge and compels Othello to kill Iago, then himself. "Shakespeare shows woman at her best, as capable of courage which eludes the men and is acceptant of the challenge which, like Emilia encompasses 'heaven and men and devils'. Though the men do the killing, it is they who are more tragically mutilated." (Greene in Barker & Kamps, 1995:59)

Bianca is the whore or 'strumpet'. From one perspective, she is man's Other. She commodifies her body for men's pleasure. In this way, "prostitution contributes to the casting of woman as object and man as subject." (Smart & Smart, 1978:64) From another perspective, prostitution is a means of financial independence. Davis argues that "it is women's socioeconomic dependence that leads them to 'use' sex as a means to an end rather than an end in itself." (Smart & Smart, 1978:62) Othello describes Bianca as,

> A huswife that by selling her desires
> Buys herself bread and cloth. It is a creature
> That dotes on Cassio, as 'tis the strumpet's plague
> To beguile many and be beguiled by one.
> (Shakespeare, 1963:123)

The terms "it" and "creature" intensify her objectification. Bianca's strength, however, is reflected through her outspoken nature when she challenges Cassio about the handkerchief he gives her. "What did you mean by this handkerchief you gave me even now? I was a fine fool to take it...There! [*She throws down the handkerchief*] Give it to

your hobbyhorse. Wheresoever you had it, I'll take no work on't." (Shakespeare, 1963:125) Furthermore, when Iago calls her a strumpet, she boldly replies, "I am no strumpet, but life as honest/ As you that abuse me." (Shakespeare, 1963:149) Although she admits her oppressed state and acknowledges men's abuse of her body, she cannot completely break free from this oppression.

The female characters in *The Tragedy of Othello* are manipulated for man's ends and are finally reduced to innocent victims of a patriarchal power struggle. Desdemona is helpless, silenced by man and eventually killed for something she does not do. Emilia acts as a symbol of solidarity between women as she defends her mistress and maintains her innocence. In the end, she speaks out and destroys them all, but not before Iago kills her. Bianca is the strumpet, object of pleasure for man. Each woman tries to retaliate in her own way but is further oppressed for this. Desdemona and Emilia have no choice but to lie down and die. Through their helpless portrayal, Greene argues, "Shakespeare is suggesting, in his radical critique of some of society's most cherished notions, that accepted ideals of manly and womanly behaviour are distortive and destructive of the human reality, and that relations be based on saner and more certain ground than 'this you call love'." (in Barker & Kamps, 1995:61)

"*Romeo and Juliet*, even in the mutilated versions that Restoration and eighteenth-century audiences knew, has always been one of Shakespeare's most popular plays." (Bryant, in Shakespeare, 1990:xxiii) In this tragedy, Shakespeare creates a female character of equal importance to his male character, Romeo. Her name is Juliet.

However, as is with Shakespeare's other plays, the female is named after all the male characters on the list of *Dramatis Personae*. This may be perceived as problematic because Juliet is ranked towards the end of the list, even though many of the male characters before her play minor roles. This may be interpreted as a reflector of the subordinate status of women during Shakespeare's time and one can only commend him for daring to create a female character as important and memorable as Juliet.

Unlike Calpurnia, and Portia, Juliet's portrayal is crucial to the movement in the play. She is first presented as a monument of beauty as Romeo declares his love for her,

> It seems she hangs upon the cheek of night
> Like a rich jewel in Ethiop's ear-
> Beauty too rich for use, for earth too dear!

> (Shakespeare, 1990:67)

Although he objectifies her beauty, Juliet feels a similar attraction towards him and deconstructs the belief that women should not pursue men, but should wait to be pursued. She tells her nurse, "Go ask his name. If he be married,/ My grave is like to be my wedding bed." (Shakespeare, 1990:70) This declaration may be interpreted in two ways. From one perspective Juliet may be perceived as uncompromising and persistent. Her strong-will enables her to follow her desire to the ultimate. She will die for Romeo and he will die for her. Thus, their characterisation is of an equal status as they both submit to each other. From an opposing perspective, the fact that Juliet is ready to die for a man she has only met a few hours ago portrays her as weak. When she finds out that Romeo is banished for killing Tybalt, she does not stand up boldly and face the situation, but confesses to her nurse, "Come, cords come Nurse, I'll to my wedding bed,/ And death,

not Romeo, take my maidenhead!" (Shakespeare, 1990:110) Later she perpetuates this weakness as she vows to give up her name and fortune for Romeo. This ultimate submission is problematic.

A strong aspect of Juliet's portrayal is when she outspokenly refuses to marry the wealthy and noble Paris.

> He shall not make me a joyful bride.
> I wonder at this haste, that I must wed
> Ere he that should be husband comes to woo.
> I pray you tell my lord and father, madam,
> I will not marry yet. And when I do, I swear
> It shall be Romeo, whom you know I hate,
> Rather than Paris. These are news indeed.

(Shakespeare, 1990:122)

Juliet's refusal to succumb to the wishes of her parents is admirable for the Elizabethan woman. She will not passively accept decisions made for her, and questions her father's patriarchal reign through her actions and dialogue. This effort appears thwarted as Capulet reminds her of her subordinate status and threatens to disown her.

> Hang, thee, young baggage! Disobedient wretch!
> I tell thee what - Get thee to church o' Thursday
> Or never after look me in the face.
> Speak not, reply not, do not answer me.

(Shakespeare, 1990:124)

In this way, Juliet is expected to obey the orders of man by conforming to what Morris terms 'the two-suitor convention'. "Another persistent structural form has become known in feminist criticism as the two-suitor convention. Whereas the questing male hero has all the world to win - as well as any number of women - the choice for a heroine is usually

between one of two men. Sometimes this takes the form of a forbidden true lover threatened by a suitor insisted on by tyrannous male authority, as in *Romeo and Juliet*, for example." (Morris, 1993:32)

Despite Juliet's adherence to the two-suitor convention, her dangerous undertaking complicates her portrayal. She accepts Friar Lawerence's suggestion to fake her death as a way out of an oppressive marriage, and is fully aware of the consequences of her actions. Her inner strength and faithfulness to Romeo is reflected when she awakes from her 'death sleep' and finds Romeo dead. Immediately she grabs his dagger, "O happy dagger. This is thy sheath. There rust and let me die." (Shakespeare, 1990:154) One interpretation of Juliet's tragic end is that she sacrifices her life for man. Instead of fighting the forces that come between them, she allows them to contribute to her destruction. A second interpretation is that Juliet stands up for what she believes in until her death. She does not let her father or Paris take control of her life and would rather die beside her Romeo, than be dominated by these men. She is in control and makes her own choices, thus dying a free woman, willingly bound to what she perceives as true love. Greene summarises the stages of her characterization; "Juliet begins as a demure girl who is prepared to listen respectfully to the advice of her mother. When she has fallen in love, she becomes suddenly a woman of great courage and resource, who will face even death and fantastic horror to regain her husband." (in Barker & Kamps 1995:472)

Some portions of dialogue and comments by male characters in *The Tragedy of Romeo and Juliet* highlight their misogynistic conception of women. In the opening act,

Sampson and Gregory from the house of Capulet, discuss women in a derogatory way. Sampson says, "Tis true, and therefore women, being the weaker vessels are ever thrust to the wall. Therefore, I will push Montague's men from the wall and thrust his maids to the wall... When I have fought with the men, I will be civil with their maids. I will cut off their heads... Ay, the heads of the maids or their maidenheads. Take it in what sense thou wilt." (Shakespeare, 1990:43) This chauvinistic perception is a reflection of women being the innocent victims of war where they are raped and killed. It also reasserts the notion of Otherness and highlights an abuse of power. Carroll comments on Shakespeare's use of language. "The language which Shakespeare employs to signify virginity thus trades on various forms of paradoxical negation, but the names given to the hymen itself suggest both positive and negative categories... More metaphorically the hymen is a 'maidenhead', a usage which the OED dates from the mid-thirteenth century. Shakespeare uses the term frequently, often in the sense of a commodity, a thing to be acquired or taken, or a trophy of male conquest and possession." (Carroll in Barker & Kamps, 1995:290) Despite the fact that Shakespeare's *The Tragedy of Romeo and Juliet* is misogynistic in the aspects highlighted, it is nevertheless superb in its portrayal of a female character like Juliet. Although she dies for man, he dies for her as well. There is a mutual exchange of death, if one may classify it as such. This final sacrifice confirms that Juliet is Romeo's equal. If she was anything less and assumed a subordinate status to him, he would not kill himself for her.

Macbeth's central role in Shakespeare's *The Tragedy of Macbeth* does not prevent Lady Macbeth and the 'weird sisters' from determining and controlling the sequence of events

in the play. They are the instigators of the tragedy. Although Lady Macbeth later loses her power and degenerates in portrayal, the weird sisters remain in control and are responsible for the destruction of Macbeth. Shakespeare's creation of such female characters is deconstructive in the sense that they dismantle the 'Angel in the House' stereotype that many of his other characters perpetuate. They represent another conventional stereotype, however, which is 'woman as witch/shrew'. Morris, like Gilbert and Gubar, convincingly argues that "behind the angel lurks the monster: the obverse of male idealization of women is the male fear of femininity. The monster woman is the woman who refuses to be selfless, acts on her own initiative, who has a story to tell - in short, a woman who rejects the submissive role patriarchy has reserved for her." (Morris, 1993:58)

Lady Macbeth is this 'monster woman' at the beginning of the play where she is powerful and dominating. Like the three witches, she is tainted with evil and assumes the monstrous or more specifically, woman as witch stereotype. "The witch has autonomous sexuality, and makes demands on men. They do not have power over her." (Haste, 1993:173) Females in this category are the most threatening over man. Macbeth's fear of Lady Macbeth is evident in the first part of the play. Her perpetuation of this stereotype is reflected through her thoughts about Macbeth's new title and encounter with the witches. "Yet I do fear thy nature;/ It is too full o'th milk of human kindness…" (Shakespeare, 1986:50) At this point, Lady Macbeth is the decision-maker. Her portrayal as the 'male figure' may be attributed to the fact that she wishes to eschew the weakness of the female sex.

> ...Come you mortal spirits
> That tend on mortal thoughts, unsex me here,
> And fill me, from crown to the toe, top full
> Of direst cruelty!...Come to my woman's breasts,
> And take my milk for gall, you murd'ring ministers...

(Shakespeare, 1986:51)

In this way, she cuts off all ties with femininity and puts herself in charge of man who remains submissive and obedient to her orders. She is the Self and he is the Other. "Naturally Macbeth is dominated by his wife. He is old Iron pants in the field (as she bitterly reminds him), but at home she has to wear the pants; she has to unsex herself. No "chucks" or "dearests" escape her tightened lips, and yet she is more feeling, more human at bottom than Macbeth" (McCarthy, in Shakespeare, 1986:232). However, after the death of Duncan, a role reversal takes place and Macbeth takes charge while Lady Macbeth is pushed to the background and becomes the Other.

Lady Macbeth perpetuates ideologies of gender by constantly challenging Macbeth's masculinity. She equates the masculine with Macbeth's ability to murder Duncan. "When you durst it, then you were a man..." (Shakespeare, 1986:56) The implication behind this is that if Macbeth were a 'real man' in the stereotypical sense, he would murder Duncan unhesitatingly. After Macbeth finally musters the courage to do this, he returns from Duncan's chamber emotionally severed and is unable to carry out the rest of the commands. Angrily she replies, "Infirm of purpose! Give me those daggers!" (Shakespeare, 1986:63) Although she does not actually kill Duncan, she is responsible for plotting the murder, drugging Duncan's men and smearing them with blood to make them seem guilty of the crime. "As soon as Duncan's murder is public fact, Lady

Macbeth begins to lose her place in society and her position at home. She does so because there is no room for her in the exclusively male world of treason and revenge." (Klein in Shakespeare, 1986:248) This is a natural plot of female destiny and a classic example of Barrett's process of recuperation. Lady Macbeth is given the freedom to act only so far, then she is pulled back into line (recuperated) through her madness and her subsequent death. "One persistent plot pattern is that suffering and death are the inevitable fate of sexually transgressive heroines." (Morris, 1993:31) Lady Macbeth may be classified as this transgressive heroine or a fallen woman who destroys herself. Unlike Macbeth who recovers from his guilt, Lady Macbeth degenerates in her portrayal and assumes the 'woman as waif' stereotype. "Her waif-like qualities render her helpless in relation to man, because she lacks the maturity or stature to compete with his social and sexual power." (Haste, 1993:173) She cannot prevent the emotional turmoil within her from overwhelming her. This is reflected in Act five as the gentlewoman and doctor observe her replaying her actions on the night of the murder.

> Wash your hands; put on your nightgown; look not so
> pale! I tell you again, Banquo's buried. He cannot
> come out on 's gave... There's a knocking at the
> gate. Come, come, come, come, give me your hand!
> What's done cannot be undone. To bed, to bed!

(Shakespeare, 1986:117)

These incidents contribute to Lady Macbeth's final portrayal as weak and emotional. "When we see Lady Macbeth at the end, therefore, she is "womanly" only in that she is sick and weak. All the valor of her tongue is gone, as is her illusion of its power." (Shakespeare, 1986:252) 'Woman as waif' is the most prone to death because she is

helpless and emotionally unstable. Lady Macbeth succumbs to this portrayal as she dies at the end of the play.

Throughout the play, the three witches or weird sisters, determine Macbeth's destiny and he is subjected to their power. They are like 'Eves' who sway man into temptation and lead him to his own destruction. Although they are portrayed as evil, they are nevertheless very powerful. According to Barnet,

> The weird sisters in *Macbeth* are of course part of the inscrutable surrounding...They have the traditional petty malice (and beards) of witches, and they acknowledge masters but also have properties not associated with witches: they vanish like bubbles and speak authoritatively... No English play before *Macbeth* has such imposing witches, and if the weird sisters resemble witches in their ability to sail in a sieve and in their animal-killing, and in their cookery and in their revenge on the sailor's wife, they nevertheless seem also to merit the title Macbeth gives them - 'juggling fiends'.

(Barnet in Shakespeare, 1986:xxviii)

Their physical appearance consists of a combination of both male and female character traits. Their beards and physical strength are characteristics of masculinity while other features brand them as 'feminine'. After Macbeth is destroyed by Macduff the witches' prophecy comes true and they have the last laugh. Although they perpetuate the all too common image of "woman as witch", they are not destroyed like Lady Macbeth, but remain alive and powerful till the end of the play. Man or society cannot destroy them.

Just as Shakespeare's plays were somewhat reflective of the English society at that time, other more recent playwrights also capture distinct societal features in their writing. "The

body of a country's literature reflects the life of its people. It mirrors their tensions, conflicts, creativity, struggles, hopes, aspirations and dreams. Thus is reflected the collective consciousness of a nation, the people's images of themselves." (Kupenga et al in Ihimaera, 1993:313) Bruce Mason's *The Pohutukawa Tree* successfully captures the plight of an oppressed people – the Maori race. "On a deeper level it also addresses the cultural genocide of a colonised people." (Kupenga et al in Ihimaera, 1993:313) Through Mason's portrayal of Queenie and Aroha Mataira, the positions of Maori women subjected to colonial influences are explored. References to Maori beliefs and Maori feminist theories are essential in the context of this analysis. Rangimarie Pere in her article "Taku Taha Maori: My Maoriness", highlights five dimensions which symbolise her Maoritanaga. The first dimension is spirituality. "Within this spirituality I can appreciate the meaning of divine guidance and protection, the meaning of sacredness, the meaning of humility, and above all what it means to be a mortal being with so many weaknesses." (Pere in Ihimaera, 1993:276) The second dimension, ancestral ties, determines ones physical and psychological existence and heritage, while the third dimension is kinship ties (that is, relationships among people with the same ancestral and historical ties). The fourth dimension, humanity, influences a person's life as a social being. The fifth dimension is Papatuanuku (the earth) and one's relationship to it. (Pere in Ihimaera, 1993:276-277) Each of these dimensions is important to consider when considering Aroha's portrayal.

The traditional status of the Maori woman changed drastically following colonisation and ultimately resulted in her 'double colonisation'. Kupenga highlights the impact of this

double colonisation on Maori women. "Changes in the status of Maori woman occurred with the arrival of the Pakeha, who brought with them a new economic system. Inherent in their system, were individualistic and sexist attitudes. It was a system that not only rewarded the individual, but also undervalued women. Economic value become measured through a system of monetary exchange." (Kupenga in Ihimaera, 1993:307) Queenie's character portrayal may be analysed in terms of her 'double colonisation'. She is first described as a *"comely-looking girl of seventeen"*. (Mason, 1978:9) As a young person, she is more receptive to western values as opposed to her mother Aroha. This makes her an easier target for 'double colonisation' and contributes to her "mixed" identity as a Maori woman. Ramsden highlights that "life for all those who come from minority or different cultures is often spent on an emotional and spiritual frontier. Identity is a constant series of borders, of crossings and re-crossings... For some people the border crossings are few... Yet other people in this colonised land find themselves dwelling in the worlds of neither one nor the other. Neither fully comfortable in the tight world of the Pakeha nor in te ao Maori." (Ramsden in Ihimaera, 1998:345) Queenie is one such female protagonist who belongs in neither world. She is Maori through her ancestral heritage but Pakeha through the western values she possesses.

Through her dialogue with the Reverend Sedgwick, she is portrayed as outspoken, intelligent and curious. "She has been circling around him, firing questions and Sedgwick finds her delightful." (Mason, 1978:19) In this respect, she is a strong character and is admirable. However, this aspect of her characterization is weakened by her stereotypical views on beauty and marriage. "I love pretty things and dressing up. Like marriage... all

in white with a crown on my head." (Mason, 1978:18) Throughout the play she fantasizes about her wedding day and desires to be a monument of beauty for the world to see. Her perpetuation of western ideals of femininity illustrates how she colludes in her own victimisation. This is accentuated through her idealised view of motherhood. She tells Sylvia that she wants to have lots of babies, "six of each kind". (Mason, 1978:33) In these ways, Queenie lives in a world of illusion where reality has not yet set in. The way that she marries a widower at Ngati-Raukura and looks after his children, as well as her own, illustrates how she continues to perpetuate ideals of femininity and motherhood. After colonisation, "the Western Judaeo-Christian ideal of demure femininity was introduced, fostered, and also has remained." (Awekotuku, 1991:132) Queenie possesses elements of this western ideal of femininity.

In contrast with central male characters, "central female characters are invariably constructed in a passive relationship to events... Things happen to heroines..." (Morris, 1993:32) Queenie's relationship with Roy is constructed around the above relationship and contributes to her portrayal as man's Other. She is the young, innocent Maori girl who is infatuated by a Pakeha, and becomes a victim of his seductive nature. Roy is the stereotypical, over-confident, charming male who adheres to the 'bad-boy' image. To him Queenie is just an object of desire, an innocent "Sheila" that he can take advantage of. As the play progresses, Roy and Queenie have an intimate relationship that leads to Queenie's pregnancy. The consequence of their affair is detrimental and highlights the stigma that the female is subjected to while the male walks away free. While Queenie is responsible for colluding in her own subordination, her mother, Aroha, intensifies her

daughter's plight by indoctrinating her to be 'the way a Maori woman should be'. She does this through the values she instills in her daughter and the way that she condemns anything that is 'western'.

Aroha strives to uphold important dimensions of Maoriness outlined by Pere. For her spirituality, ancestral ties, kinship ties, humanity and her relationship to the earth are crucial to her existence. It is her failure to live up to such ideals that contributes to her death. She is a woman of high ideals and conformity and will not compromise her beliefs. Throughout the play she is portrayed as one who loathes the modern, western lifestyle. When Queenie is heard singing 'Moonlight Becomes You', "Aroha turns away impatiently." (Mason, 1978:38) She cannot stand the impact of the white man's values and tries to shield her children from these. This is evident at Sylvia's wedding. "Queenie, perfectly self possessed, begins 'I can't give you anything but love baby' with astonishingly accurate command of rhythm and gesture. She has barely got two lines out of it when Aroha steps forward, her eyes flashing. Aroha: Stop that trash!" (Mason, 1978:46) She sings a traditional song instead. Hence, Aroha struggles to mould and shape her daughter into her perception of the ideal, traditional, Maori woman.

Aroha's reaction to Queenie's pregnancy highlights the stigma attached to being a young single mother who has challenged culture and religion. The manner in which she condemns Queenie for her actions highlights how women are considered 'bad' if they deconstruct stereotypical constructs of femininity. "The concept of a double standard of morality refers to our code of sexual mores which persistently encourages or condones

sexual promiscuity in men (and boys) as a display of masculinity and male aggression, whilst condemning it in women (and girls) as a sign of 'unfeminine', shameful or pathological behaviour." (Smart & Smart, 1978:4) Therefore, Queenie is now branded a slut by her mother while Roy retains his cool, macho image. Aroha tells her, "All your life, I've tried to bring you up straight and clean. Teach you honour, respect, pride. You're pretty. You could have had a fine husband when you moved out into the world. But you go and fall for the first no good pakeha that comes along. Weak. Weak. After all my teaching." (Mason, 1978:59) Another 'double standard' is evident as Queenie is condemned and expected to bear the burden of raising a child on her own while Roy makes a hasty exit and gets on with his life. Aroha makes the final decision concerning Queenie's life.

> She goes to Ngati-Raukura, at Tamatea. They will have her, ask no questions, look after the child. She is one of them now. You go tomorrow. After the child is born, you are on your own, understand? Find yourself a job, a husband: what you like. I have finished with you... I made my rules. I lived by those rules. Queenie knew those rules. She breaks them: she goes.
>
> (Mason, 1978:66)

This cold, heartless and unforgiving attitude emphasises Aroha's high ideals. It also stresses her indoctrinated, rigid, perceptions of femininity.

One of the five dimensions of Maoriness highlighted in Pere's analysis is a person's relationship with the earth (Papatuanuku). "The land for me has the same significance as the placenta that surrounds the embryo in the womb – the Maori word 'Whenua' is the term used for both the land and the placenta." (Pere in Ihimaera, 1993:277) In Mason's *The Pohutukawa Tree*, Aroha possesses an almost spiritual bond with her land and

refuses to sell it. On several occasions her relatives write to her asking that she sell her land and move to Tamatea. She will not comply with this request. Throughout the play, Aroha clings to her land as her source of identity, her heritage. In this respect, "women and land are regarded as having a symbiotic relationship, both providing nourishment to mankind." (Kupenga et al in Ihimaera, 1993:305) Aroha's land and subsequently the pohutukawa tree on it, are symbols of her heritage and she will not part with them. Here one may speculate that to a large extent, a Maori conception of the world is liberated from patriarchal constructs. Thus, the relationship to bind spirits etc, that one finds in Polynesian culture, is determined by that culture's patriarchal structures.

Despite Aroha's condemnation of the white man's world, she is nevertheless captured by his religion – Christianity. It is this element that complicates her Maoriness. Her western religion contributes to her portrayal as a monument of two clashing value systems, which oppress and eventually kill her. Her children also become victims in her fight against double colonisation, but eventually manage to establish a degree of balance in their lives. Aroha, however, cannot. "The search for an identity is therefore, usually a search for that lost, pure, true, real, genuine, original self, often situated within a process of elimination of all that is considered other, superfluous, fake, corrupted or westernised." (Minh-ha, 1988:71) Reverend Sedgwick understands this identity crisis that Aroha is facing and sympathises with her. "Poor creature: she's a battlefield. Christ and Whetumarama." (Mason, 1978:89) Aroha tells Sedgwick,

> Then on my honour, I choose if it must be, the humble way
> of pride. I will go proud to my death, for that is all that I
> have left. I will not be humbled, I will die true to my past.

> No not even for Him will I weaken; I will not carve up my
> life, slice by slice from the whale. I go to Whetumarama,
> the gods of my people. That is my choice. That is my
> victory.
>
> (Mason, 1978:97)

The battle within her is between the traditional and the modern: a fight amongst two male-controlled areas in the patriarchal realm - the church and tradition. Although Aroha stands up for what she believes in, the way that she allows this to destroy her brands her as weak. She does not fight and resist these forces but passively lies down to die. She is the Maori woman destroyed by religion, culture (colonialism) and ultimately patriarchy.

Bruce Mason's *The Pohutukawa Tree* may be interpreted from two opposing points of view. One reading suggests that it is misogynistic in its portrayal of women. This is highlighted through Aroha's death and Queenie's submission to motherhood. They allow themselves to become victims of an all-pervasive patriarchy through their direct collusion with male dominated ideologies. However, from an alternative point of view, Queenie and Aroha may be classified as women who have exercised their freedom of choice. Queenie is liberated in the sense that she is happy with life and fulfills her dream to be a wife and mother. Hence, from this perspective, feminism is treated as liberating in that it respects the decisions that a woman makes. If she happily becomes a mother and wife of her own free will, then she cannot really be labelled a victim of patriarchy. Similarly, Aroha is a strong female character, who stands up for what she believes in. Her beliefs may be paralleled to those of Ramsden. "My Maoriness is my choice. My identity is my choice. As I have crossed some borders and have been forced to cross others, I have made a series of decisions about how I shall be to myself and to the world about me. I have

chosen Maori." (Ramsden in Ihimaera, 1993:348) In this respect Aroha is not only a woman to be admired, but also one to be respected. "The force which enables people to understand the legitimacy, the reality of others is aroha. Aroha therefore is of itself a force for freedom. Freedom of the human spirit. Freedom to be without fear." (Ramsden in Ihimaera, 1993:345)

Vilsoni Hereniko's *Sera's Choice* was written in 1987 and was first performed by the Fiji Arts Club in 1981. Compared to the other plays prescribed for students in Samoa, this is the most recent and most liberating one. Although Hereniko writes from a male perspective, this play may be perceived as a 'feminist drama'. *"Sera's Choice* is not just a reworking of *Romeo and Juliet* set in Namadi Heights. It has a meaty script which touches on a whole host of important contemporary problems, both personal and public: the mutual misperceptions of Fiji's two main communities, the widening gap of values between rural and urban Fiji and the changing role of women in society." (Horn in Hereniko, 1987:x) This analysis explores how the female characters in the play resist and/or perpetuate stereotypical constructs of femininity (and ethnicity). It will draw closely on postcolonial feminist theories and Mohanty's concept of the Third World Woman.

Sera is the modern woman who tries to resist cultural perceptions of womanhood. She is a female of clashing ideologies. Her Fijian culture brands her as a Third World Woman, while her education and lifestyle contribute to her western beliefs and value systems. This cultural conflict is accentuated through her relationship with an Indian man, Anil.

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As the play progresses, Sera is confronted with an array of choices that affect her life. Most of the decisions she makes are supported by feminist sentiments. Through these decisions she retains aspects of her traditional culture and discards others that contribute to the subordination of women. She is the new, liberated Pacific Island woman who challenges patriarchy and traditional stereotypes that limit the potential of females.

Sera's relationship with Koto highlights that she will not be harassed and bullied by him and stands up to his verbal abuse. His cheap sense of charm does not tempt her as she wittily replies, "If I remember correctly, every mother in the village warned their daughters about you. But you've never had any luck with me, oh no, but you never give up do you?... I love Anil and there is nothing you can do to stop us." (Hereniko, 1987:78) She is aware that Koto's ulterior motive is sex and keeps well away from him. His womanising ways do not appeal to her. When he physically asserts his power over her in the village and attempts to rape her, Sera fights him off until Buna arrives. Koto's attempt to rape Sera exemplifies how the male sexual organ becomes symbolic of power. Sera tells Buna, "Just because we're from the same village, the same school, go to the same University, he thinks he owns me! He just won't take no for an answer." (Hereniko, 1987:93) However Sera's disapproval of Koto is weakened as she succumbs to his desires and has a one-night-stand with him. Their affair may be interpreted in two ways. It may be considered a weak point in Sera's portrayal because she finally gives in to Koto's desires and has sex with him. The next day, she is the one who is hurt while Koto is satisfied. This incident presents Sera as an object of desire for Koto. Here one may argue that her choice to sleep with Koto was predetermined for her by patriarchy, not by her.

On the other hand, their affair may be interpreted as one of Sera's independent choices, not predetermined by patriarchy. She is attracted to Koto and realises that her relationship with Anil is not working out. Sera chose to have sex with Koto. She is in control of her sexuality and has to deal with the consequences of this action.

Through her relationship with Anil Sera is portrayed as a strong-willed person. She sees beyond cultural disparities and is prepared to go to great lengths to be with the man that she loves. As their relationship becomes more intense, their conflicting values are evident. Anil holds the stereotypical view that 'a woman's place is in the home' and tries to mould Sera into his passive, submissive, domesticated, ideal woman. At one point he questions her, "What do you want from me? Aren't there enough things in the home to occupy your time?... Why can't you be like other women and find things to do in the home?" (Hereniko, 1987:105) Sera, however, believes in equality and sharing of roles. She is ambitious and will not be confined to housework and rearing children. Her job as a teacher contributes to her financial independence and reduces her economic dependence on Anil.

Sera's choice to leave Anil at the end of the play highlights her sense of control over her life. She will not tolerate physical and verbal abuse and frees herself before she becomes trapped in a cycle of domestic violence. When she tries to be honest with Anil and confesses the one-night-stand she has with Koto, he is furious. Anil's reaction emphasises the double standard in gender relations. His affair with Rosie is acceptable, but Sera's affair with Koto is unacceptable. "The 'promiscuous' or simply potentially

'promiscuous' woman or girl becomes the slut, the slag, the whore, the scrubber and so on. There is no comparable derogatory terms for males." (Smart & Smart, 1978:5) Therefore, Sera is classified as the 'whore' and 'bitch' while Anil is not labeled in a derogatory way. However, she does not sit passively and let him undermine her but speaks out. "You just don't understand, do you? Here I am pregnant with your child, beaten up and you stand there wondering why I'm leaving? Why don't you love me a little, show me I'm another human being worthy of respect? Oh, why don't you make me a part of you?" (Hereniko, 1987:152) She remains true to her promise to Buna that she will not be treated like a doormat, frees herself from this 'patriarchal cage' and walks away a free woman. The structure and climax of Sera's Choice draws close parallels to Henrik Ibsen's *A Doll's House*. Like Nora, Sera stood up to patriarchy while Anil is left to contemplate his actions.

Unlike Sera, Buna is the traditional, grassroots woman, who has not been exposed to Western influences. She is a victim of patriarchy and culture, as her father dominates her life and chooses her husband for her. Her views on life and marriage are stereotypical and contribute to her oppression. She tells Sera, "All men are the same, all they want is sex and family. You give them that and they happy." (Hereniko, 1987:96) Her conception of masculinity and marriage reveals how society has indoctrinated her. When Sera questions if her husband-to-be loves her, Buna replies, "I don't know. He never tell me. But maybe that not important. I marry to have a husband and make a family. That's important...I think if I be a good woman, I will be happy." (Hereniko, 1987:96) Marriage is an end for her. Her aim in life is to serve her husband and bear his children. She aspires to be

Patmore's 'Angel in the House', a good woman. This stereotype of the 'good woman' can place impossible demands on females and contribute to their subordination. It is also interesting the way that she equates happiness with 'being good'. Sera's view of marriage is quite the opposite. She tells Buna, "I am a woman. But I don't want to stay home all the time and have babies. I want to have a job, to travel and see something of the world, to meet lots of interesting people. I want to be somebody, not just a doormat." (Hereniko, 1987:96) These views present two contrasting notions of femininity. One is conventional and traditional, while the other is modern and liberated.

Rosie is presented as the promiscuous, Third World Woman who is in control of her sexuality. She chooses to have sex with both Koto and Anil, just as they choose to have sexual relations with more than one woman. In this respect she may be perceived as a strong character who is in control of her life and body. From an opposing perspective, her attitude towards Sera shows how women collude in their own subordination. "You make me laugh Anil! Gosh, you must be blind. What you see in that Fijian cow, I don't know. You must be crazy man! Look Anil, you can't tell me that you find her more attractive than me. What's she got, huh? You're getting all soft these days. Haven't seen you around in ages. I miss you, Anil. What about one last fling, eh?" (Hereniko, 1987:85) Based on this dialogue, Rosie is a victim of patriarchy that holds man up as the prize that women compete over. Although Anil takes advantage of her, she bribes him for some money for an abortion. Later she confesses that the child is Koto's and not Anil's. This incident reflects the superficial nature of her character. At the end of the play, Rosie is a single, pregnant woman, engaged to a man who is unfaithful and unreliable. Koto's

cheap, womanising ways suggest that their engagement will not last long because he usually has an ulterior motive. Her future does not look very promising.

There are other stories of minor female characters that are subordinated in the play. Sera's mother is one such character. Through her portrayal Hereniko explores the issue of domestic violence. Sera's brother Jope tells her, "She fight with Ta. They like that all the time. Ta angry and fight her. Hit her hard on the face. She hurt her eye and cry." (Hereniko, 1987:90) In this way, Sera's mother is subjected to her husband's traditional, patriarchal views and fists. Another character subjected to patriarchy is Mere, Sera's sister-in-law. Mere is a victim of her husband's power and colludes in her subordination. Her husband is threatened by her intelligence and ability to earn a high income. He cannot accept the fact that she is more successful than he is and forces her to quit her job. Unlike Sera, she does not fight back. Sera tells Anil,

> When they got married Mere had a job, she made more money than him. So he made her leave work. She resigned, just to keep him happy. Now she stays at home and her world has grown smaller and smaller until he has become the centre of her life. She's just there to serve him. And then it was one child after another. And where is Big Joe all this time? He's out with his mates drinking away the miserable amount he earns. And Mere still manages to smile.

> (Hereniko, 1987:81)

Mere's story reflects how she passively accepts being a victim of patriarchy and will do anything to please her man, even if it means leaving her job. Her world is centred around him and bearing his children. She is his slave and doormat, shut away in the home while he enjoys his life.

Hereniko's *Sera's Choice* is a very valuable play for secondary school students to study because it captures the voice of traditional and westernised Pacific Island women. Buna, her mother, and Mere are 'grassroots' women. They are trapped by traditional and patriarchal ideologies that oppress them and limit their potential as women. Comparatively, Sera is portrayed as the educated working woman that encounters two stereotypical male characters. Throughout the play she stands up for what she believes in and walks out at the end pregnant, on her own, yet free. She will not tolerate abuse and violence. Hereniko has created a very strong female character and a role model that may act as an inspiration to women in similar, abusive situations. From the five plays prescribed for students in Samoa, this is the most eye-opening and liberating one. It is also very relevant to women in the Pacific as we embark into a new millennium.

Chapter Six

Theorising Masculinity: Achebe, Craven, Golding, Paton, Orwell, Braithwaite and Lee

> *Both emotionally and intellectually the 'hard and tough' character of masculinity is potentially debilitating for the individual man, and it is a measure of the power of this ideology and its ability to intimidate that men are so vulnerable to it.*

(Cranny-Francis, 1992:92)

Research on males as gendered individuals is a relatively recent area of study. Coltrane points out, "as the women's movement was gaining momentum in the 1970's, men began writing about how boys and men were socialized to be tough and competitive and how men had trouble expressing their emotions." (in Brod & Kaufman, 1994:41) These perspectives on masculinity reveal that the impact of gender-stereotyping on men can be as oppressive as it is for women, though in different ways. These differences are evident through a close analysis of physical, cultural and ideological images associated with masculinity. "The masculine is perceived to be analytical, rational, quantitative, authoritarian, direct, aggressive, non contextual, competitive and concerned with 'face'. Not that all of those characteristics are bad in themselves, but that the picture they construct of the masculine is not attractive; it is limiting, repressive and divisive, and is likely to breed insecurity and aggression rather than interactiveness and the ability to work together." (Cranny-Francis, 1992:98) This characterization is internalised by society

and presented to male subjects as desirable traits of manliness. As a result of society's expectations, manhood often entails reaching for the stars and trying to live up to the impossible. Being tough and dominating are not traits inherent at birth, but traits that males acquire through processes of indoctrination. Hence Beauvoir's perspective on femininity may be modified to read, 'One is not born a man, but becomes one'.

The perpetuation of the male stereotype in the home, school and workplace leads to gender limitations in a sexist society. It can also produce a devastating impact upon the male subject who is expected to conform to this stereotype. To succeed in this 'masculine world', a man is taught to disregard experiences and needs such as intimacy, dependence, fear, and caring and nurturing qualities. Such traits must be rejected because they signify weakness and femininity. "Despite all the clenched fists, jutting jaws, and bulging biceps, the masculine image we are urged to adopt is nothing but a shell designed to protect the adult male. But to protect us from what? From being seen to be a girl, a woman, an old woman?" (Williams & Gardener, 1989:46) In this way, the 'masculine shell' is constructed around a growing sense of insecurity and fear of the feminine.

The fifteen novels and plays prescribed for students in Fiji and Samoa contain a variety of male protagonists, some of whom hold stereotypical views of masculinity while others are portrayed as liberating/unconventional. They are all different in race, cultures, values and ideologies. Some put on the mask of masculinity while others attempt to deconstruct this one-dimensional portrayal of manliness. The intention of this analysis is to show that gender-stereotyping is not only confined to females. Males can also become victims of

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socialisation processes. They can become trapped in patriarchal ideologies that prescribe appropriate gender roles and limit their potential as human beings.

Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* encompasses the masculine/feminine paradox in much detail and also captures culture-specific traits of gender. The nature of Achebe's society dictates traits of masculinity necessary for survival, for instance physical strength. Through Okonkwo's stereotypical characterization as a wrestler and man of power, he conforms to the generalised phallocentric order as well as a more culture-specific one. The novel begins with a wrestling match that is about competition, power and victory. Achebe's choice of diction, "fame", "honour", "wrestler", "fight" and "fiercest" (Achebe, 1958:3) prepares the reader for male dominated action. "Words like 'aggression', 'violence', and 'competition' are more readily associated with men... Men are framed in language as 'powerful' and 'in charge', and if they are not they must fight to be so or be labeled as a 'wimp'." (Hunt et al, 1984:107) This overpowering male presence is evident through Achebe's account of Okonkwo's physical appearance and personality traits.

> He was tall and huge, and his eyebrows gave him a severe look. He breathed heavily, and it was said that when he slept, his wives and children in their out-houses could hear him breathe. When he walked his heels hardly touched the ground and he seemed to walk on springs, as if he was going to pounce on somebody. And he did pounce on people quite often. He had a slight stammer and whenever he was angry and could not get his words out quickly enough, he would use his fists.
>
> (Achebe, 1958:3)

Through his portrayal as almighty and powerful, Okonkwo is in control of the world around him and all those in it (particularly women and children, as well as other men). He is the divine and all-powerful force that women and children look up to, 'worship' and most of all fear. This is evident through the way Okonkwo runs his household. "Okonkwo ruled his household with a heavy hand. His wives, especially the youngest, lived in perpetual fear of his fiery temper as did his little children." (Achebe, 1958:9) This Self/Other dichotomy is reinforced by gender ideals in the Ibo society. Man is expected to be strong and provide for his family while woman is relegated to the domestic sphere.

Ambition and thirst for success are the key desires in Okonkwo's life. They also highlight the essence of the generalised masculine ideal, "Okonkwo was clearly cut out for great things. He was still young and had won fame as the greatest wrestler in nine villages. He was a wealthy farmer and had two barns full of yams, and had just married his third wife. To crown it all, he had taken two titles and had shown incredible prowess in two inter-tribal wars." (Achebe, 1958:6) As is with femininity, a crucial factor in the masculinisation process is the role of culture. "The characteristics we define as 'masculine' are culture specific: every aspect of our 'masculine presence' is contradicted in other cultures and societies." (Tolson, 1977:12) In the Ibo culture, the number of wives a man has, his total barns of yams and his ability to acquire titles are important pre-requisites of masculinity. Male sexual dominance is another indicator of the generalised, western male stereotype. To signify a man uses his phallus as a means of power. For this reason, polygamy is associated with male power and sexual conquest over women.

"The most important aspect of the masculinisation process is the rejection from our growing personalities of any features which might be construed as "feminine". (Williams & Gardener, 1989:46) Weakness is one such feature. To counteract this Okonkwo assumes the tough stereotype and is cold and heartless. He conceals his real Self under his masculine shell and does not openly express his emotions. "Okonkwo himself became very fond of the boy [Ikemefuna] - inwardly of course. To show affection was a sign of weakness; the only thing worth demonstrating was strength." (Achebe, 1958:20) Therefore, masculinity is equated with strength and lack of emotions while femininity is associated with emotions and weakness. For this reason, Okonkwo partakes in Ikemefuna's death. "Dazed with fear Okonkwo drew his machet and cut him down. He was afraid of being thought weak." (Achebe, 1958:43) Throughout the novel Okonkwo battles with this quality and goes to lengths to prove that he is not weak.

After the arrival of the missionaries, Okonkwo's extensive condemnation of the 'feminine' principle dominates the novel. When his people decide to ostracise the missionaries instead of killing them, Okonkwo is disgusted with this "womanly clan". (Achebe, 1958:113) He believes in extremities and will not combine traits of masculinity and femininity. Women are women and men are men, and each gender is expected to behave accordingly. "Okonkwo was deeply grieved. And it was not just a personal grief. He mourned for the warlike men of Umuofia, who had unaccountably become soft like women." (Achebe, 1958:129) This association between the feminine and weakness is perpetuated throughout the novel and it is this fear within Okonkwo that leads to his death. After Okonkwo kills a white man who tries to stop their meeting, he realises that

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he is alone. "He knew Umuofia would not go to war." (Achebe, 1958:145) The next day Okonkwo's body is found hanging from a tree.

Okonkwo's death may be analysed from two perspectives. From one point of view it highlights how one man will not succumb to the values of the white man and takes his traditional beliefs to the grave with him. His death marks his desire to die a 'man' and is symbolic of the masculine principle in the novel. It also highlights his resistance and exemplifies his fear of being labelled a woman or a coward. From another point of view, Okonkwo's death is an indicator of his weakness. His masculinity, and sense of Self is threatened by the white man who assumes a superior position to him. He takes the concept of masculinity too far but fails to live up to it in the end. Seidler highlights the increasing vulnerability of the masculine stereotype and the ultimate consequences if it is perpetuated to the maximum. "In the world we appear confident. We are supposed to be able to 'handle' things. But our inner lives, denied so early, are often deeply insecure and weak. If we crack up, we tend to kill ourselves, commit suicide, rather than ask for help." (Seidler, 1991:23) Okonkwo represents this insecure masculine stereotype that is prone to self-destruction. Outwardly he possesses all the prerequisites of masculinity but inwardly he is emotionally deprived and cut off from the rest of the world. His death unmasks his real Self that he cleverly disguises under his masculine shell.

Craven's Mark in *I Heard the Owl Call My Name* does not adhere to stereotypical constructs of masculinity as defined by western society. His role as a vicar and caregiver in Kingcome Village deconstructs binaries between male and female, as he addresses

social problems and tries to make life better for men and women. This is reflected through the caring and nurturing qualities that he displays towards men, women and children. Williams and Gardener comment that "the qualities that have been represented as feminine are inherently positive, life-affirming qualities, such as care, cooperation and empathy." (1989:46) Mark's possession of such qualities highlights his rejection of the western masculine stereotype. Men who reject the patriarchal positioning "are confronted with the possibility of surrendering power that is naturalised as 'mastery' at every sight of our society." (Cranny-Francis, 1992:107) Mark's refusal to comply with ideologies of gender may be perceived as disempowering for the male because he surrenders his "patriarchal power" for some stereotypical images of femininity such as nurturer and care-giver. His behaviour may be interpreted as unconventional because he does not fit the western stereotypical image of masculinity and actively attempts to better the status of women.

Mark's desire to end the subordination of women and children contributes to his liberating character portrayal. This act in itself challenges the phallocentric order and contributes to the destruction of the masculine/feminine dichotomy. When he learns of Ellie's abuse, he helps to free her from the clutches of a violent father. He also sympathises with Sam's wife who is a helpless victim of domestic violence and promises Gordon's mother that he will look after her son as she lies on her deathbed. Similarly, he tries to assist Keetah's sister in Canada, but fails to locate her before her death. His portrayal may lead one to question, 'Is Mark a feminist?' Or more specifically, 'Can a man be a feminist?' The relationship between men and feminism has become an issue of

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debate among feminist critiques and may be answered using numerous different approaches. My analysis is the same as that of Morris, who maintains, "Yes, while at the same time it has to be recognized that a feminist man will be positioned quite differently from a feminist woman in relation to gender based social injustice. He can recognize and deplore the structures of gender inequality, but he cannot experience them as a woman." (Morris, 1993:2) This may be because the Other is a projection of the Self; the Self must know its Other to define its Self. Ordinarily this is a negative process, but it need not be.

One of Mark's most significant attempts to change society is reflected through his relationship with Keetah. She is his equal, and he supports and respects the decisions she makes. His active attempt to deconstruct conceptions of masculinity and femininity is emphasised at the end of the novel when he tells Jim to care for and respect Keetah.

> When I am no longer in the village, take care of Keetah. When you want coffee, don't bang on the table. Say please and thank you... And when you build Keetah a house, let her plan it with you. And don't leave her alone in the village too long. Take her and the children with you sometimes on the fishing, and each year take her outside until it is familiar to her. Someday, when the village is no more, you must cross that bridge too.
>
> (Craven, 1967:128)

His broad-minded and liberated attitude deconstructs the rigid, oversimplified masculine stereotype as he makes Keetah's world a better place to live in before he dies. More importantly it stresses that men are capable of displaying emotions and questioning patriarchal structures. They too can contribute to the betterment of the status of women and dismantle phallocentric structures that construct individuals as gendered subjects. Therefore, as this analysis suggests, "the rejection of this positioning by the male subject

may result in his deconstruction of patriarchy and its discursive practice." (Cranny-Francis, 1992:107) One may argue, however, that Mark's ability to question patriarchal structures in Kingcome Village is attributed to his superior status as a white man. This puts him in a position of power to "teach" the Indian man, Jim, how to look after Keetah. Rather than challenging patriarchy, Mark seems to be reforming it. His goal is a "kinder", "gentler" patriarchy, not the end of patriarchy. This point of view presents a different reading of the novel and suggests that it is not a feminist act for one man to tell another how to look after a woman.

Golding's schoolboys in *Lord of the Flies* each perpetuate varying degrees of the masculine stereotype. Jack conforms to the 'macho' stereotype, Ralph first adheres to this attitude then gradually loses it, and Piggy possesses character traits that are contrary to this stereotype and are reflective of the feminine stereotype. "The foundations of masculinity are laid down in boyhood, in a boy's experience of family, school and his peers." (Tolson, 1977:32) Through the boys' relationships with each other, the impact of peer pressure in identity construction is emphasised as they each struggle to attain a certain image. The foundation of masculinity laid down in *Lord of the Flies* is generally an oppressive and restrictive one that demands the boys' conformity. Deviation from the masculine 'norm' imposed by western culture results in ostracism and ultimately destruction.

As the novel begins, Ralph's sense of mischief and air of arrogance is established. He constantly silences and teases Piggy by rudely remarking, "Sucks to your ass-mar". heart

heart of the masculine stereotype. The pains of being a man and appearing tough are evident through the expeditions he leads, as well as his conquest of virgin territory. When they get to the top of the mountain on their first expedition, "Ralph turned to the others. 'This belongs to us.'" (Golding, 1954:30) Here themes of colonisation and conquest are reflected as the novel assumes a political and historical dimension. Furthermore, the manner in which Ralph calls meetings is orderly and regimental. This military, disciplined mode of authority or 'government' is reinforced through the establishment of rules. If these rules are broken, the guilty party will suffer the consequences. However, as the novel progresses Ralph loses his arrogant, 'macho' image and appreciates Piggy's strengths. He admits to himself, "I can't think. Not like Piggy." (Golding, 1954:84) This reflects his respect and confidence in Piggy. He mocks him to a degree, but really cares about him. In this way, Ralph is portrayed as an androgynous character. His acceptance of Piggy's ideas highlights an almost feminine dimension of his characterisation. His characterization as such is at its peak at the end of the novel.

Piggy is portrayed as intelligent but is victimised, harassed and bullied because he does not fit the masculine stereotype. He is described as a fat schoolboy who has asthma and wears glasses. This deviation makes him different. He is an Other amongst Golding's schoolboys. This may also be attributed to his caring and protective nature towards the 'little uns'. On one occasion, when the conch is blown, a child appears. "He was a boy of perhaps six years, sturdy and fair, his clothes torn, his face covered with a sticky mess of fruit. His trousers had been lowered for an obvious purpose and had been pulled back halfway. He jumped off the palm terrace into the sand and his trousers fell about his

ankles; he stepped out of them and trotted to the platform. Piggy helped him up."
(Golding, 1954:19) As the novel progresses Piggy replaces the 'mother figure' that the
boys lack.

Piggy's exclusion from masculine tasks such as building fires, or embarking on
dangerous expeditions makes him an easy target for the other boys. His lack of physical
strength, competitiveness and heroic qualities brands him as weak, feminine and
different. However, his quick thinking and intellect create an impact on Ralph. Piggy is
the instigator of common sense and values words and thoughts more than actions. He is
the reality principle that tries to bring the others down to earth and reminds them of their
morals and values. When Jack leaves the group and forms his own 'tribe', Piggy becomes
part of Ralph's group. "Piggy was so full of delight and expanding liberty in Jack's
departure, so full of pride in his contribution to the good of society, that he helped to
fetch wood." (Golding, 1954:143) In this way, Jack's departure is a comfort to Piggy
because the overpowering masculine self is no longer a threat to him.

Jack Merridew represents the patriarchal world of discipline, authority and power. His
regimental mode of conduct is reflected in the way his choir is first described. "The
creature was a party of boys, marching approximately in step in two parallel lines and
dressed in strangely eccentric clothing." (Golding, 1954:20) Instant rivalry is established
when Jack sees Ralph. "The boy came close and peered down at Ralph, screwing up his
face as he did so. What he saw of the fair-haired boy with the creamy shell on his knees
did not seem to satisfy him." (Golding, 1954:21) This rivalry and competitiveness later
becomes a force of destruction. "Competition, particularly with other men, is represented

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as the means to achieve security and power, but that competition leads only to further insecurity, an ever escalating round of competition." (Cranny-Francis, 1992:91) As the novel progresses, Jack adheres to the image of man as hunter. He imitates Rousseau's concept of the 'noble savage' and adopts the life of primitive man. This image is extended as he gets ready for 'battle'. "Jack planned his new face. He made one cheek and one eye-socket white, then rubbed red over the other half of his face and slashed a black bar of charcoal across from right ear to left jaw... He began to dance and his laughter became a bloodthirsty snarling." (Golding, 1954:69) As the novel progresses, Ralph becomes the rough, uncouth, primitive man who is self-sufficient and hunts for animals and wild food. His followers are warriors and hunters, and no longer schoolboys. Hence, through Jack's thoughts and actions, his stereotypical perception of the native is evident. "The noble savage therefore represents European man's self image which he knows to be non-existent, or perhaps unattainable. The 'ideal man' personifies morality lacking all the vices and passions which are objects of repression and censure." (Campbell, 1980:59) Throughout the novel Jack tries to imitate this 'non-existent' image.

The split between the two groups of boys is caused by the male's desire to be in control. "Becoming a man involves some very active influences. We must acquire several characteristics if we are to become fully-fledged members: assertiveness, aggression, ambition, competitiveness, physical strength, up-front sexuality, being in control... You learn to dominate members of the other sex - and to compete with the members of your own for supreme dominance." (Williams & Gardener, 1989:44) Jack displays most of these qualities and attempts to exercise supreme dominance over the other boys. The

peak of his savagery is when he is mesmerised in a war dance and brutally murders Simon. Here he pushes the masculine stereotype too far as he uses his power to harm others. He later contributes to Piggy's death and plans to kill Ralph but does not succeed. "Insecurity becomes a primary motivation for continual battle, with others and with himself. It is important to note that this battle is as much with his own self, as with others because it leads to another serious problem for the male subject, which is lack of self-worth." (Cranny-Francis, 1992:91) Jack is this insecure masculine subject constantly in battle with others and ultimately with himself. It is this lack of self-worth that underlies his destructive nature.

Piggy's death towards the end of the novel is symbolic. His exclusion from the masculine world and possession of feminine traits make him an Other. As a result of his non-conformity, he is powerless and must be destroyed. His death and that of the other boys highlight the extent that Jack will go to prove that he is a 'man'. Ralph recounts,

> Simon was dead - and Jack had... The tears began to flow and the sobs shook him.... His voice rose under the black smoke before the burning wreckage of the island; and infected by that emotion, the other boys began to shake and sob too. And in the middle of them, with filthy body, matted hair and unwiped nose, Ralph wept for the end of innocence, the darkness of man's heart and the fall through air of the true, wise friend called Piggy.

(Golding, 1954:223)

Throughout the novel, the boys attempt to make a transition from boyhood to manhood by acting grown-up and self-sufficient. Theories of the 'tough boy' and the 'noble savage' are deconstructed as the novel closes with the schoolboys reduced to sobbing children. Their immaturity highlights their failure to make this transition. One may

further adopt an imperialist theory and argue that the parallels between children and savages (which were inherited from Enlightenment thought) make the novel an allegory of colonialism. In the same way, the fact that the boys need adult males to help them make the transition to manhood successfully, suggests that the "noble savage" needs the white man to help him make the transition to civilisation successfully because the white man represents order and discipline. His world is one that is governed by rules and social norms unlike that of the noble savage. This gives him the power to transform and civilise the child-like noble savage and make him a version of himself. Furthermore, the masculine presence in *Lord of the Flies* is perpetuated through the sex of the author and characters, the action and themes. Most of the protagonists perpetuate stereotypical notions of masculinity and Piggy who attempts to deconstruct it is destroyed. Ralph on the other hand, is portrayed as an intriguing and complex character that initially perpetuates the patriarchal order but later assumes a highly androgynous portrayal as he moves away from stereotypical notions of masculinity. He cannot be the dominant patriarchal figure that he first aspired to be and surrenders his fears to the white man who rescues him and the other boys. Although Ralph and the other boys are tearful at the end of the novel, Jack is not mentioned. He remains a wild, free, uncivilised version of the noble savage, not dependent on the white man for his survival. The destructive, masculine principle continues to lurk in the wilderness as the novel ends.

"Those of us who are to succeed in a man's world must reject many human needs and experiences. Intimacy comes to be regarded as a feminine need. Closeness and dependence are seen as weaknesses. The care and attention and nurturing our mothers

showed us are damned soft." (Williams & Gardener, 1989:46) The main protagonist in Paton's *Cry the Beloved Country* does not conform to prescribed traits of masculinity and possesses traits such as intimacy, dependence and nurturing. Kumalo's status as an "umfundisi", or pastor is an important factor contributing to his androgynous characterization. He is portrayed as kind and gentle towards children, women and men, with a constant desire to help others. As soon as he hears that his sister is sick, he boards the next train to Johannesburg to assist her. Beauvoir's Self/Other dichotomy is reversed as he puts the female Other before the male Self.

Kumalo's relationship with his son Absalom is one of the greatest causes of his distress. He reveals his pain and suffering to Msimangu. "He is a stranger... I cannot touch him, I cannot reach him. I see no shame in him, no pity for those he has hurt. Tears come out of his eyes, but it seems that he weeps only for himself, not for his wickedness, but for his danger." (Paton, 1985:97) The distance between them intensifies as the novel progresses. It is this relationship which brings out feminine qualities such as fear, emotions and confusion from within Kumalo. His humble and courageous characterization is reflected when Jarvis finds him on his doorstep. "The parson was old, and his black clothes were green with age, and his collar was brown with age or dirt. He took off his hat, showing the whiteness of his head, and he looked startled and afraid and he was trembling." (Paton, 1985:153) Kumalo displays no traits of masculinity and fearlessness but is quite the opposite. Upon the confirmation of his son's death sentence, he finds his refuge in nature and isolates himself from the rest of the world. His grief is intense but he battles with his faith and inner courage. The novel ends with the umfundisi mourning his son's

death alone at the top of a mountain. He is not strong and does not pretend to be. This can be read as a successful "deconstruction" of patriarchal masculinity on one level. On a second level, race and gender intersections contribute to Kumalo's position as such. He is helpless because of his status as an Other as a black man. Thus he cannot fight his brother's neo-colonialist attitude because he does not have the power of the white man that his brother possesses.

Animal Farm perpetuates images of masculinity through Orwell's portrayal of Snowball and Napoleon. The two boars are responsible for carrying out the rebellion against Mr Jones. They are symbols of power. "Napoleon was a large, rather fierce-looking Berkshire boar, the only Berkshire on the farm, not much of a talker but with a reputation for getting his own way." (Orwell, 1951:9) His physical strength and persistent character make him very powerful. He is also portrayed as cunning and deceitful as he uses other characters for his personal benefit. "Snowball was a more vivacious pig than Napoleon, quicker in speech and more inventive, but not considered to have the same depth of character." (Orwell, 1951:9) His ferocious nature, physical strength and speaking abilities are the essence of his power. The peak of his portrayal is his heroic performance in the Battle of Cowshed. "He prodded and butted the men from every side... The pellets scored bloody streaks along Snowball's back and a sheep dropped dead. Without halting for an instant Snowball flung his fifteen stone against Jones' legs." (Orwell 1951, 27) However as the novel progresses, the disputes between the two boars intensify as they compete for leadership. This competitive quality emphasised in the male stereotype is

evident through their rivalry for political supremacy. Finally Napoleon banishes Snowball from Animal Farm and eliminates his opposition.

After Snowball's banishment, Napoleon's authority increases as he bestows power upon himself. "When he did emerge it was in a ceremonial manner, with an escort of six dogs who closely surrounded him and growled if anyone came too near. Frequently he did not appear on Sunday mornings, but issued his orders through one of the other pigs, usually Squealer." (Orwell, 1958:50) Here he is portrayed like a God and continually exerts power over the other animals by accentuating his leadership qualities. This is highlighted when he forbids the animals from singing 'Beasts of England' and gradually changes the seven commandments. "Characteristic of patriarchy is that it reinforces competition, insecurity, hardness, non-engagement, and sexual rapacity." (Cranny-Francis, 1992:114) Napoleon is presented as the ultimate being that perpetuates the above characteristics of patriarchy through his reign on Animal Farm.

Napoleon is also described as sexually powerful and dominant over the sows. "In the autumn the four sows had all littered about simultaneously, producing thirty-one young pigs between them. The young pigs were piebald, and as Napoleon was the only boar on the farm it was possible to guess their parentage." (Orwell, 1951:75) The female pigs are merely vessels for reproduction. Napoleon is the master of their bodies. His portrayal as 'man' in the end of the novel collapses distinctions between man and animal. "The creatures outside looked from pig to man, and from man to pig again; but already it was impossible to say which was which." (Orwell, 1951:95) Napoleon's transition from boar

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to man, in terms of stereotypical constructs of masculinity, is completed; boar is man, man is boar.

Braithwaite's *To Sir with Love* captures the relationship between masculinity and race. "So, as with the exploitation of working class and young men, the exploitation of black men is a function of political vulnerability in a white, bourgeois, ageist society, and serves to reinforce not only the exploitable position of blacks, but also by its reflexive attack on white (in)security, the distrust between men of different colour and/or culture." (Cranny-Francis, 1992:113) Rick's failure to acquire the job he wants comes about because he is 'different'. This difference is characteristic of Otherness and in this respect Rick is an Other. "Women and black people have been conceptualised as mindless creatures, to be dealt with externally in society in the same way as the body was dealt with internally as part of the Self. That is, they were to be put under stringent control and kept at a distance. The dualism which helps cause, sustain and explain racism is also a basic cause and explanation of racism." (Knapman, 1986:114) Rick belongs to this minority group that is silenced and discriminated against just as women are. "I am a Negro, and what had happened to me at that interview constituted to my mind, a betrayal of faith. I had believed in freedom, in the freedom to live in the kind of dwelling I wanted, providing I was able and willing to pay the price; and in the freedom to work at the kind of profession for which I was qualified, without reference to my racial or religious origins." (Braithwaite, 1959:40) In this way, Rick is subjected to discrimination and inequality just as many women are. His portrayal reveals the intricate relationship between male power and historical factors. Seidler theorises this relationship by arguing,

"there is no simple equation between 'patriarchal power' and men. In complicated ways, sexual class and racial oppression cut across each other producing subtle layers of relative power and powerlessness." (1991:25)

Unlike the stereotypical male who is powerful, aggressive, competitive, tough and manipulative, Rick possesses a combination of masculine and feminine character traits. Thus supporting the view that black men and women share traits in the eyes of the Self. He cares for his students and nurtures them as a father and mother figure, but is still very strict and firm in the classroom. Through this relationship with his students, he is responsible for dismantling aspects of the tough, 'bad-boy' image amongst males and the over flirtatious 'bad-girl' image among females. By the end of the novel, he has helped create a group of well-mannered, pleasant, and intelligent young women and men. Such attitudes, one may argue are conformist and may result in the perpetuation of the stereotype of the 'good girl' and 'good boy'.

"Women or images of femininity are seen as sites of pleasure for men. This process involves responding to those women (and ultimately all women) as objects and denying them the status of individual subjects with their own needs, wants, attitudes, values and experiences. These women become the gap, literally, which defines patriarchal power of the phallus." (Cranny-Francis, 1992:104) Braithwaite's women in *To Sir with Love* are stereotyped as sites of pleasure for man. The psychological condition, scopophila is described as the love of looking. In this respect the gaze of the narrator in Brathwaite's novel is scopophilic. The three main female protagonists Gillian, Pamela and Clinty are

objects of the male gaze and are kept in control by it. They are presented from the eyes of a male narrator and not in terms of how they perceive themselves.

To Kill A Mockingbird completely unsettles gender ideologies through Lee's characterisation of Jem and Atticus Finch, and Arthur Radley. Although Jem is portrayed as daring and tough, he also possesses a caring and emotional side. When he is with Dill he usually perpetuates the 'tough boy' stereotype. "Dill bet Jem *The Grey Ghost* and two Tom Swift that Jem wouldn't get any further than the Radley gate. In all his life, Jem had never declined a dare. Jem thought about it for three days. I suppose he loved his honour more than his head, for Dill wore him down easily." (Lee, 1971:19) The impact of peer pressure and honour is significant as Jem conceals his fear and carries out the dare. He cannot show Dill that he is weak. However, he does not adhere to this fixed unemotional portrayal and is portrayed as upset and emotional at times. "When we went in the house I saw that he had been crying; his face was dirty in the right places, but I thought it odd that I had not heard him." (Lee, 1971:69) The way that Jem suppresses his crying highlights that he is trying to be strong, but the fact that he cries illustrates that he is human and deconstructs the contention that 'boys do not cry'. "We can call on a whole repertoire of popular phrases and aphorisms - 'take it like a man'; 'big boys don't cry' - by which we continue to define personal experience." (Tolson, 1977:8) In this way, Lee redefines the masculine experience by adding an emotional dimension to her male characters. They feel, become emotional and they cry just as females do.

Atticus is portrayed as the kind, loving father who raises his two children after his wife dies. He is the working man, child-rearer and father. "Jem and I found our father satisfactory; he played with us, read to us, and treated us with courteous detachment." (Lee, 1971:12) The way that he constantly reminds Scout to fight with her head instead of her fists shows that he does not approve of the view that the masculine solution to problems is violence. He believes that words speak louder than actions and puts this into practice. However if one considers the historical and cultural complexity of patriarchy, it is debatable that just because Atticus does not approve of violence, that does not make him less masculine or less invested in patriarchy. Elizabeth Spelman discusses Plato's configuration of the ideal society as gendered and racialised and classed. (1990: 80) Atticus exemplifies a certain type of patriarchal order and may be classified as, for example, warriors of the "guardian class", hence conforming to another level of masculinity.

Atticus' masculinity is challenged by Scout's stereotypical image of a father. "He did not do the things our schoolmates' fathers did: he never went hunting, he did not play poker or fish or drink or smoke. He sat in the living room and read... Everybody's fathers played touch rugby but not Atticus." (Lee, 1971:95) Thus, because he does not play sports or get involved in outdoor activities, he is different from the other men. He lacks the physical strength, vigour, and energy that other men possess. "Sport is seen as an avenue for male identity through task orientation and achievement and male-governed behaviour... For those who are successful in sport it provides an ego boundary, the distancing and sense of achievement necessary for a strong sense of masculinity in our

society... For those who are unsuccessful, it provides only a sense of uncertainty and failure, not one of strong masculinity." (Wearing, 1996:59) However, after Atticus shoots a mad dog Scout learns of his hidden talent and is proud of her father. Jem, however, sees beyond the masculine image and grasps the main point. "Atticus is real old, but I wouldn't care if he couldn't do anything - I wouldn't care if he couldn't do a blessed thing... Atticus is a real gentleman, just like me!" (Lee, 1971:104) Although the term 'gentleman' is a stereotype, it does not promote tough, aggressive and competitive qualities associated with masculinity. Jem's approval of Atticus because he does not fulfill the western masculine stereotype is deconstructive.

My analysis in this chapter is similar to that of Cranny-Francis who argues "for a discursive reconstruction of the common gender representations found in texts. As the significance for women of textual representations has been deconstructed thoroughly over the past twenty years, so we need to examine the significance of these constructions of masculinity. We need to ask not only what a specific image means in itself, but how it positions its male audience to construct themselves as male subjects." (Cranny-Francis, 1992:114) On a general note, the novels studied by students in Fiji and Samoa tend to bestow upon the male protagonists attributes commonly perpetuated in the phallocentric order. Thus the male subject possesses qualities such as competitiveness, toughness, domination and insecurity. This is evident through the works of Achebe, Golding, Orwell and to some extent Braithwaite. Comparatively, Lee, Craven and Paton attempt to deconstruct this limited portrayal of males. They redefine masculinity by adding an emotional, humanistic dimension to their male protagonists.

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Chapter Seven

Theorising Masculinity: Shaffer, Shakespeare, Shaw, Mason, and Hereniko

> *The masculine subject has to be situated in relation*
> *to a number of factors before his relative power and*
> *influence in society can be estimated; even then his*
> *status is defined further according to his particular*
> *skills and abilities.*
>
> (Cranny-Francis, 1992:89)

The perpetuation of male stereotypes is more predominant in the plays than in the novels prescribed for secondary school students. This may be because most of the plays studied by students in Fiji and Samoa were written in the 1500's and 1600's (Shakespearean Era). Western stereotypical images of masculinity are possibly more profound in Shakespeare than in more modern works. *The Royal Hunt of the Sun* is one such play that focuses extensively on images of masculinity and is based on Young Martin's desire to become a hero, and more importantly his desire to become a man. He establishes this in the opening of the play, "If only you could imagine what it was like in the beginning to be allowed to serve him. But boys don't dream like that any more - service! Conquest!" (Shaffer, 1991:1) The implication is that previously masculinity was associated with service and conquest that is glamorous and exciting for young boys, but now the nature of masculinity has changed. Hence, "Manhood means different things at different times to different people... It is neither static or timeless; it is historical." (Brod & Kaufman, 1994:120)

Francisco Pizarro is Young Martin's idol and Commander of the expedition. Shaffer portrays him as, "*tough, commanding, harsh, wasted, secret. The gestures are blunt and often violent: the expression intense and energetic, capable of fury and cruelty, but also of sudden melancholy and sardonic humour.*" (Shaffer, 1991:2) Through his dialogue he emits an air of authority and desire for the dangerous and unpredictable.

> What do you think I'm offering? A walk in the country?
> Jellies and wine in a basket, your hand around a girl? No,
> I'm promising you swamps. A forest like the beard of the
> world. Sitting half buried in earth to escape the mouths of
> insects. You may live for weeks on palm tree buds and
> soap made out of leather straps. And at night you will sleep
> in thick wet darkness with snakes hung over your heads
> like bell ropes - and men in that blackness: men that eat
> each other. And why should you endure all this? Because I
> believe that beyond this terrible place is a kingdom, where
> gold is as common as wood is here!
>
> (Shaffer, 1991:4)

Shaffer's world consists of desperate men striving to fit into the "tight pants of masculinity" (Brod & Kauffman, 1994:56) as they assume an elevated portrayal as Gods. When they arrive in Peru, Pizarro reminds them of their fearless and immortal state, "You are not men any longer, you're Gods now. Eternal Gods, each one of you. Two can play this immortality game, my lads. I want to see you move over this land like figures from a lent procession. He must see Gods walk on earth. Indifferent! Uncrushable! No death to be afraid of... Come on! Fix your eyes! Follow the pig-boy to his glory!... Get up you God-boys - March." (Shaffer, 1991:23) His reference to men as Gods is reinforced as he tells the village Umu, "He is a God. I am a God." (Shaffer, 1991:26) Here the male Self is vested with patriarchal powers and described as indestructible.

Pizarro's authority is at its peak during the great massacre of thousands of Indians where he crowns himself and captures Atahuallpa. However, as the bond between Pizarro and Atahuallpa is strengthened, Pizarro becomes emotional and his stereotypical portrayal as a divine figure deteriorates. His masculinity is put to the ultimate test as he is forced to choose between killing Atahuallpa or letting him go. This affects him drastically. *"Pizarro stumbles in, and during the whole ensuing scene limps to and fro the stage like a caged animal, ignoring everything but its own mental pain."* (Shaffer, 1991:66) Pizarro's shift in portrayal from the powerful commander to the weak, confused and hurt male is deconstructive. More importantly it provides an emotional dimension to his characterization and dismantles the 'tough' stereotype as he becomes defensive, and refuses to kill his friend. He even goes to the extent of binding his arm to Atahuallpa's and declaring, "There. No, no, come here. Now no one will kill you unless they kill me first!" (Shaffer, 1991:72) When Atahuallpa is 'killed' physically (as he claims to be immortal) by Pizarro's men, Martin recalls how Pizarro himself was destroyed. "So fell Peru... And so fell you, General, my master, whom men called the Son of His Own Deeds. He was killed later in a quarrel with a partner who brought up reinforcements. But to speak the truth, he sat down that morning and never really got up again." (Shaffer, 1991:73) Through Pizarro's final portrayal as a weak, broken man, *The Royal Hunt of the Sun* puts patriarchy and masculinity on a pedestal and then questions them through the rise and fall of this great Commander.

Shaffer's description of Atahuallpa as *"sovereign Inca of Peru, masked, crowned, and dressed in gold"* (Shaffer, 1991:11) highlights the previous parallel between man and

God. Thus Atahuallapa is constructed as powerful, immortal and indestructible in the public sphere. He is also dominant in the private sphere through his status as the head of a polygamous household. Cultural and religious factors entitle him to the position of Self, while his many wives are the Other. Through his portrayal he displays an air of authority. *"For the first time we see his face, carved in a mould of serene arrogance. His whole bearing displays the most entire dignity and natural grace. When he moves or speaks, it is always with the consciousness of his divine origin, his sacred function and absolute power."* (Shaffer, 1991:41) The masculine quality of revenge is evident when Atahuallpa refuses to forgive Pizarro's men. "I will kill every man of them! I will make drums of their bodies! I will beat music on them at my great feasts!" (Shaffer, 1991:61) Although he is portrayed as unforgiving and uncompromising, his nurturing qualities are evident when Pizarro is in pain. *"Uncertain what to do, he extends his hands, first to the wound, and then to Pizarro's head, which he holds with a kind of remote tenderness."* (Shaffer, 1991:62) This bond is strengthened through the stories and the memories they share. Atahuallpa's portrayal as God is perpetuated till the end of the play when he reveals to Pizarro, "It is no matter. They cannot kill me... Man who dies cannot kill a God who lives forever." (Shaffer, 1991:73) Unlike Pizarro who is destroyed, Atahuallpa continues to live up to the powerful, immortal male stereotype as the play ends.

Shakespeare's *The Tragedy of Julius Caesar* centres on several groups of men. They are the triumvirs after the death of Julius Caesar, the senators, the tribunes, and the conspirators against Julius Caesar, friends and servants. Julius Caesar is the dominant patriarch that possesses masculine traits such as power, dominance, assertiveness and

competitiveness. Shakespeare's choice of words, "God" (40), "huge legs" (41), "mighty" (71), "Northern star" (78), and "ambitious" (89), contribute to this image of supremacy and greatness. He is feared by all and questioned by none. The conspirators' plot to assassinate him is based on their desire to destroy the superior male Self. Caesar's death leaves an empty position to be filled by the man who qualifies as king. This lack of masculine leadership contributes to the competitiveness and thirst for power evident in the other male characters. "The spirit of Caesar that dominates the play is to be associated, finally with the exercise of supreme power. When Caesar dies, power is without a master, and as such, indiscriminately destructive. Each man in his turn tries to grasp the lightning that has been set free, and it is fearfully transformed until finally it comes to rest upon the man who alone, by gift of personality and legitimate succession, may wield it unscathed." (Rosen et al in Shakespeare, 1987:xxvii)

After Caesar's death, Brutus is swayed towards becoming "power's master". At first, he assumes a marginal role, but as the play progresses the conspirators convince him of his ability to become king and he assumes a leadership role. "Brutus, Octavius, and Antony all become guilty as men. Brutus kills his friend; Octavius joins the others of the triumvirate in condemning innocent men to death; Antony deliberately rouses a mob and turns it loose to do what mischief it will." (Rosen et al in Shakespeare, 1987:xxiv) As they go to battle, the masculine stereotype is at its peak. The division of men into factions advances notions of competitiveness and desire for leadership as Caesar's replacement is determined through warfare. Brutus' death perpetuates the association between the

masculinity and honour. Instead of surrendering to the triumvirates, he chooses to kill himself and 'die a man'. He tells Strato,

> I prithee, Strato, stay thou by thy lord,
> Thou art a fellow of good respect.
> Thy life hath some snatch of honor in it;
> Hold then my sword, and turn away thy face,
> While I do run upon it. Wilt thou, Strato?"

(Shakespeare, 1987:133)

Strato agrees to Brutus' last request and assists him to die an 'honorable' man.

Antony, like the other triumvirs becomes part of the power politics in *The Tragedy of Julius Caesar* through his desire to avenge Caesar's death. He uses the art of public speaking to sway the people against Brutus. Traits such as revenge, warfare and honor are masculine ideals that are dominant in Antony's portrayal. After Brutus's death, the masculine circle is complete. Revenge is taken and the battle fought. Power now has a new master. One who will take up Caesar's position and resume from where he left off. One who will continue the patriarchal reign that Caesar started. Caesar's death, however, does not completely destroy this masculine Self. He continues to influence the action of the play from beyond the grave. "At the close of the play we are meant to feel that the exercise of power necessary for these times has once more been placed in adequate hands. The spirit of Caesar, for good or ill, has not been put to rest." (Rosen et al in Shakespeare, 1987:xxiv) The masculine Self will continue to dominate the world where he previously reigned.

The two main protagonists in Shaw's *Androcles and the Lion* are Androcles and the Captain. Androcles' character portrayal is totally disruptive of the masculine stereotype. "Shaw seemed to have depicted so subtly the weakness and insecurity behind men's power in the outside world..." (Seidler, 1991:202) Androcles is weak, 'unmasculine' passive, romantic and emotional.

> *He is a small, thin, ridiculous little man who might be any*
> *age from thirty to fifty-five. He has sandy hair, watery*
> *compassionate blue eyes, sensitive nostrils, and a very*
> *presentable forehead; but his good points go no further;*
> *his arms and legs and back, though wiry of their kind, look*
> *shrivelled and starved. He carries a bundle, is very poorly*
> *clad and seems tired and hungry.*
>
> (Shaw, 1997:1)

The terms "small", "thin", "ridiculous", "compassionate", "sensitive", "shrivelled", and "starved" contrast with the big, strong, tough male ideal. This is accentuated through his encounter with the lion and his use of baby language. "Oh, poor old man! Did um get an awful thorn in um's tootsums wootsums? Has it made um too sick to eat a nice little Christian man for um's breakfast? Oh, a nice little Christian man will get um's thorn out for um; and then um shall eat the nice Christian man and the nice Christian man's wifey pifey... Now make velvet paws." (Shaw, 1997:5) The way that Androcles speaks to the lion emphasises his caring, nurturing and sensitive qualities. When he is captured by the Romans, he is branded a tearful sorcerer who has parted from his pet leopard. However, like Lavinia, he will not compromise his beliefs and will die a Christian.

Qualities of the passive, feminine Other are highlighted in Androcles as he refuses to fight like a man and chooses to be thrown to the lions instead. In this way, he does not

show qualities associated with a brave and noble soldier. His 'death scene' is an interesting one, as the meek, gentle, little sorcerer becomes a hero for standing up to a lion. *"They recognise each other. They embrace rapturously, finally waltz around the arena amid a sudden burst of deafening applause and out through the passage, the EMPEROR watching them in breathless astonishment until they disappear, when he rushes from his box and descends in frantic excitement."* (Shaw, 1997:49) The dancing and show of affection are deconstructive but also add another dimension to masculinity. Masculinity is power, and although Androcles does not conform to the masculine stereotype he is powerful in his own special way at the end of the play. He is not physically assertive and does not possess stereotypical qualities associated with masculinity but retains the powerful position of the Self through a set of unconventional, (almost stereotypically feminine) behaviour traits. He is in control and may therefore still be perceived as patriarchal.

The Captain is placed in contrast to Androcles. He conforms to the generalised masculine stereotype, although he weakens to a small degree towards the end of the play. He is first described as *"a patrician, handsome, about thirty-five, very cold and distinguished, very superior and authoritative, steps up on a stone seat at the west side of the square behind the CENTURION, so as to dominate the others more effectually."* (Shaw, 1997:9) This description immediately suggests power, authority, and supremacy. When Lavinia tells him "that something stirs, even in the iron breast of a Roman soldier", (Shaw, 1997:16) he denies any form of emotion and replies, "It will soon be iron again. I have seen many women die, and forgotten them in a week." (Shaw, 1997:16) Although he seems tough,

proud and arrogant, the Captain is reduced to lying to the Emperor when Lavinia is about to be thrown to the lions. "(...*suddenly seizing LAVINIA by the wrist and dragging her up the steps to the EMPEROR*) Caesar, this woman is the sister of Ferrovius. If she is thrown to the lions he will fret." (Shaw, 1997:47) The fact that the Captain cannot openly declare his love for Lavinia implies that he conceals his true feelings behind a 'masculine shell'. Any show of affection may be deemed weak by his fellow men.

Shakespeare's *The Tragedy of Othello* "is concerned, as Terence Hawkes suggests, with an ideal and standard of manly behaviour." (Greene in Barker & Kamps, 1995:49) This is evident through a closer analysis of Othello and Iago's portrayal. Othello's subject position as a masculine subject within the phallocentric order is influenced by his status as a black man. His vulnerability in a white-dominated society makes him susceptible to Iago's cunning plot and desirable to Desdemona. "There is at the centre of selfhood an insecurity related to his position as a black man in a white society. Though he is an outsider, this 'extravagant' and 'wheeling stranger' (1.i.135) embodies the essence and extreme of certain qualities that are conventionally 'masculine': a vision that looks without, a nature that expresses itself in action and when threatened, in violence, which has been conditioned by his 'occupation' as a soldier." (Greene in Barker & Kamps, 1995:50) In the opening of the play, aspects of the feminine stereotype are combined with his masculine portrayal as he openly declares his love for Desdemona. "I cannot speak enough of this content;/ It stops me here [*touches his heart*]; it is too much of joy." (Shakespeare, 1963:73)

As the play progresses, Othello's portrayal deteriorates. "Hawkes sees Othello as the epitome of this ideal, an ideal expressed in his splendid rhetoric, 'manly language' which breaks down, becoming abusive and incommunicative under Iago's influence, but which is regained in the end." (Greene in Barker & Kamps, 1995, 49) When Iago tells him that Desdemona has committed adultery, Othello physically and verbally abuses her as the masculine Self. Kernan extends this argument by stating that, "justice becomes a travesty of itself in Othello - using legal terms such as "it is the cause" - assumes the offices of accuser, judge, jury and executioner of his wife. Manners disappear as the Moor strikes his wife publicly and treats her maid as a procuress." (Kernan, in Shakespeare, 1963:xxiv) Almost immediately Othello plans to murder Desdemona.

> Ay let her rot, and perish, and be damned tonight; for she shall not live. No my heart is turned to stone; I strike it, and it hurts my hand. O, the world hath not a sweeter creature! She might lie by an emperor's side and command him tasks... I will chop her into messes.

(Shakespeare, 1963:126)

Here the masculine principle is at its peak as Othello takes Iago's word over Desdemona's. One may argue that as a black man, Othello is insecure of his own sense of masculinity and therefore easily believes that his wife is having an affair with a white man. He also believes a white man over a white woman, thus confirming the universal subordination of the female.

In the last scene, Othello realises that Desdemona is innocent and reveals why he killed her. "An honorable murderer, if you will;/ For naught I did in hate, but all in honour."

(Shakespeare, 1963:161) Hence the belief that a man's honour is the essence of manhood is reaffirmed. The impact of Desdemona's death on Othello, however, proves detrimental and leads to self-destruction. He confesses, "I kissed thee ere I killed thee. No way but this,/ Killing myself, to die upon a kiss." (Shakespeare, 1963:162) In this way, Othello cannot live up to the epitome of the masculine ideal and kills himself to avoid any further emotional turmoil.

In the opening of Shakespeare's *The Tragedy of Romeo and Juliet*, Romeo is portrayed as disturbed and depressed because he is rejected by the woman that he loves. When he first meets Juliet, he does not hide his emotions for fear of appearing weak but is open and honest in his declaration. "Did my heart love till now? Forswear it, sight!/ For I ne'er saw true beauty till this night." (Shakespeare, 1990:482) Romeo's display of affection challenges the cold, unemotional image associated with masculinity and makes him different from the Captain in *Androcles and the Lion*. Like Juliet, Romeo is willing to sacrifice his name for her love.

> I take thee at thy word.
> Call me but love, and I'll be new baptized.
> Henceforth I never will be Romeo.

> (Shakespeare, 1990:484)

In this way, the commitment and sacrifice in their relationship is mutual. After his marriage to Juliet, the masculine traits that are dominant in Romeo include his ability to fight, kill Tybalt and avenge Mercutio's death. The result of this action is banishment and he is separated from Juliet hours after their marriage. The tragedy of the play is due to fate. It is by fate that Romeo did not get the Friar's letter and hear about his plans with

Juliet. It is also by fate that he hears about Juliet's dead body lying in the chapel. Here he is not strong and indestructible, and allows his overpowering love to lead him to his death. In this respect, Romeo and Juliet are portrayed equally in their characterisation, regardless of their gender.

Mason's Roy Mcdowell in *The Pohutukawa Tree* fits the stereotypical 'bad boy' image. He is portrayed as confident, charming, tough, sexually assertive and in control as he charms Queenie and lures her to him. Roy knows what lines to say, when to say them and how to say them to win her heart. When Queenie asks him what he wants, "ROY, *with insolent charm:* I'm lost." (Mason, 1978:10) The descriptions that accompany his dialogue highlight his playboy image. For instance, *"He smiles at her winningly"* (Mason, 1978:10) and "ROY *gives her a practised look; is satisfied with progress."* (Mason, 1978:11) In this way, he is arrogant, self-confident and knows how to charm her to get what he wants. He continues to perpetuate this stereotypical view of women. "Anyone ever tell you what you look like?... Because as Maori Sheila's go, you're pretty hot stuff." (Mason, 1978:13) The term 'Sheila' is derogatory and objectifies women. Queenie is Roy's Other as a woman but also an Other as a Maori woman. These two degrees of Otherness are evident when Roy refuses to marry Queenie. "Queenie's a Maori, don't you understand?... It'd be a mixed marriage. Brown kids! I couldn't have brown kids!... My Dad'd have a fit! And mum: you don't know mum. I just don't know what she'd say: she hates anything like this... And I'm young: I've got my life before me!" (Mason, 1978:64) Double standards of gender relations are prevalent as Roy walks away free of any obligation while Queenie is left to bear the burden of their fleeting pleasure. In this

way, the superior white male Self asserts his power as the dominant patriarch, while the helpless, coloured, female Other is a subordinate victim.

Johnny Mataira possesses similar character attributes that Roy possesses. He is first described as a *"fine-looking lad of eighteen, wearing jeans and an open shirt."* (Mason, 1978:27) He is a rebel and is not the 'good boy' that Aroha wants him to be. *"Johnny stands a moment, then takes from inside his shirt a worn exercise book, covered with drawings... Keeping his eye on door and window, he lifts one of the boards and draws out a gaudy comic and very furtively, a half-bottle whiskey and stares at it."* (Mason, 1978:29) He is portrayed as a young man caught between two cultures. His love for drawing cartoons and drinking liquor makes him western, but his mother's traditional and religious influence reminds him of his roots. To a large extent, he conforms to the coloured, masculine stereotype and is violent and aggressive. This distinguishes him from Roy. Finally Johnny cannot cope with the cultural and religious dilemma that his mother is facing and takes his anger and frustration out on the institution that his mother worships, the church. However, his tearful state after this incident reflects his inner pain. It also reveals how he tries to hide behind a tough 'masculine shell' but cannot cope any longer and unleashes his escalating emotions and inner turmoil. Johnny explains to Aroha, "I had to put out the Light of the World. And I shouted with joy, yes with joy, Ma... You're too big. The world can't hold you. It's too small out there. You tried to make me as big as you. I tried, Ma. But me: I'm not big. I'm just a Maori boy who wants to live his own way, easy, quiet. I had to show you that, Ma." (Mason, 1978:79) Hence, the masculine strategy is dismantled at the end of the play when Johnny admits his

defeat. One may explain Johnny's characterisation in terms of Third World nationalist theories that routinely claim that colonialism emasculates native men. Thus Johnny's violent, aggressive portrayal may be attributed to his status as Other as opposed to the superior white man who is the Self. In this respect, Mason's play perpetuates stereotypical images, where the coloured man is violent and 'uncouth', and is looked down upon for this. Comparatively Roy is not punished for impregnating Queenie, for him it is an act of power. The contrasting consequences of their actions reflect their racial positions as men.

Shakespeare's *The Tragedy of Macbeth* differs largely from Mason's *The Pohutukawa Tree* in its plot, setting and characters. The play was written in approximately 1605 and is set in Scotland. In the first two acts Lady Macbeth is the central figure. She makes decisions for Macbeth and convinces him to murder Duncan. After he listens to Lady Macbeth and kills Duncan, he regrets this almost immediately. "To know my deed, t'were best not to know myself./ Wake Duncan with thy knocking! I would thou couldst!" (Shakespeare, 1986:64) His weakness is covered by Lady Macbeth, the masculine figure. It is she who returns to Duncan's chamber with the daggers. Up to this point, Macbeth is the passive Other while Lady Macbeth is the dominant Self. Gilbert and Gubar theorise how the masculine female is monstrous and dehumanised in literary convention. "For every glowing portrait of submissive women enshrined in domesticity, there exists an equally important negative image that embodies the sacrilegious fiendishness of what William Blake called the "Female Will". (Gilbert & Gubar, 1979:28) Lady Macbeth is

this fiendish, monstrous, female freak that assumes the masculine role in the first part of the play.

After Macbeth has been invested as king he suddenly becomes very powerful and subverts the previous Self/Other dichotomy. "Macbeth, a self-made king, is not kingly, but simply the original Adam, the social animal, and Lady Macbeth is mother Eve." (McCarthy in Shakespeare, 1986:239) His fear of Banquo and the way that he eliminates him without even thinking twice contrasts with his contemplation over Duncan's death. "In reality his courage is frightful. He strides from crime to crime, though his soul never ceases to bar his advance with shapes of terror, or to clamor in his ears that he is murdering peace and casting away his 'eternal jewel'." (Bradley in Shakespeare, 1986:169) Lady Macbeth is no longer needed to assist Macbeth (the patriarch) in acquiring power, as the 'weird sisters' become her substitute.

In Acts IV and V Macbeth is at his most dangerous as he prepares for warfare. This cold and unemotional behaviour is evident when Seyton tells him that Lady Macbeth is dead. He replies, "She should have died hereafter." (Shakespeare, 1986:124) He no longer shows any emotions for the woman he once loved and is indifferent to her death. "At the start of the play she is his "dearest partner of greatness" and his "dearest love". But midway in the play (though she is "dearest chuck") he keeps from her the plot against Banquo, and at the end he seems almost insensible to her death." (Barnet in Shakespeare, 1986:xxxiii) He becomes more stereotypically masculine as the play progresses. In the end, he is portrayed as the cold, heartless, courageous soldier defending his honour.

Macbeth's death signifies the completion of the masculine ideal as he attempts to uphold a standard of manly behaviour. Thus Shakespeare's masculine ideal upholds attributes of honour and courage that are usually signified through death.

Comparatively, the two men in Hereniko's *Sera's Choice*, Anil and Koto may be analysed using a different model of masculinity. Both adhere to stereotypical images of masculinity that are culture specific. Koto is portrayed as the 'bad boy' whose life is based upon sexual conquest and competition. "Masculinity in this model is irrevocably tied to sexuality." (Brod & Kaufman, 1994:127) The relationship between these two variables, culture and sexuality, is perpetuated through Koto's pursuit of Sera. "It's that beautiful figure of yours. It drives me crazy. You know Sera, I think you've got a beautiful body." (Hereniko, 1987:77) Throughout the play he tries to convince Sera to have sex with him and goes to the extent of attempting to rape her. When he finally succeeds and gets what he wants, he is not seen again. Koto's womanising ways do not end here. His engagement to Rosie suggests that he is using her for his personal benefit. Hence Koto displays traits of sexual assertiveness, aggression, and dominance. "Because you have a penis, you must dominate members of the opposite sex." (Williams & Gardener, 1989:44) In this way, the phallus is symbolic of power and is used to dominate women.

In the beginning of the play, Anil is the caring, loving boyfriend who will do anything to marry the woman he loves, regardless of her culture. However, as his character develops, he becomes stereotypical. This is shown in the way that he becomes possessive over Sera

and warns Koto, "Hey, you keep your hands off Sera, o.k.? She's mine." (Hereniko, 1987:87) He also does not approve of her religion. "Why do you always hang out with those church types all the time?" (Hereniko, 1987:83) Thus the cultural and religious disparities in their relationship are evident before their marriage. After their marriage, Anil expects Sera to conform to stereotypical notions of femininity and adopts the masculine self-strategy. Tamsin emphasises that "the masculine self-strategy is based on opposition. The self who maintains himself with a masculine self-strategy must always oppose himself with those around him. He assumes the self of a Self/Other pattern and attempts to translate and transpose this self through the social positions of the symbolic by finding another to play the 'other' in his Self/Other pattern." (Tamsin, 1990:186) This is reflected through Anil's relationship with Sera. When he discovers that she has had an affair with Koto he exerts his authority over Sera as the dominant Self. At this point, the Self/Other dichotomy is dismantled. Sera will not 'play the Other' and tells Anil, "I'm leaving you NOW! Get out of my way." (Hereniko, 1987:150) Here the masculine self-strategy is destroyed.

Despite differences in class, ethnicity and social background, Shaffer, Hereniko, Shakespeare and Mason have created characters that generally adhere to the male stereotype. Their conformity to ideologies of masculinity may be perceived as one dimensional and limiting. What is needed in these plays is more unconventional, deconstructive protagonists to challenge the phallocentric order, as well as other kinds of plays to create a balance in the curriculum. Such 'liberated' protagonists/plays signify

hope for the future. Helene Cixous in her essay, "Sorties", summarises her views on phallocentrism:

> Phallocentrism is. History has never produced, recorded anything but that. Which does not mean that this form is inevitable or natural. Phallocentrism is the enemy. Of everyone. Men stand to lose by it, differently but as seriously as women. And it is time to transform. To invent the other history.
>
> (Cranny-Francis, 1992:116)

Literature is one such tool that can help transform phallocentrism and redefine the male and the female experience by making available a complexity of issues and viewpoints to the reader.

Chapter Eight

Conclusions and Alternatives

*We in the Pacific Islands need to be sure of our goals; we
need to have a vision of the kind of society we would like to
prepare our children for. This is the most difficult task of
all as our cultures have become "compromise cultures"
with political and educational systems which are legacies
of colonial systems of administration. We cannot turn back
but are in a better position now to determine which path to
take. Some of us may decide to continue along the old
road; others may decide to take a new one altogether.*

(Thaman, 1992:164)

This thesis has attempted to show how secondary school literature textbooks perpetuate
common, generalised, ideologies of gender as signified in the fairy-tale. Or more
specifically how the literature curriculum is implicated in the construction of gender
relations, by defining appropriate gender behaviour and/or shaping perceptions of the
appropriate place for females and males. Although the portrayal of each protagonist is
constructed/created under different social, historical and cultural circumstances, the
universal subordination of the female is evident through her recurring image as the Other
in literature textbooks prescribed for forms five and six students in Fiji and Samoa. The
majority of these textbooks contain figurative Passive Princesses and Warrior Princes (of
different race, class and cultural backgrounds) who may in disguised forms but
nevertheless adhere to mentally prescribed/constructed traits of femininity and
masculinity as defined by western culture. Female Otherness and submissiveness are
presented as natural while male strength and dominance are pre-requisites of the Self.

Similarly, character traits such as dependence, weakness, insecurity, fear, excessive display of emotions and passivity are perpetuated in the female protagonists, while the male protagonists possess traits of independence, excessive power, dominance, fearlessness and adventure. Common stereotypical images of femininity perpetuated in these novels and plays are woman as wife, woman as mother, woman as daughter/sister, woman as whore, woman as witch/shrew, and woman as waif. Stereotypical images of masculinity include: man as conqueror, man as warrior, man as explorer, man as father/husband, and man as head of household. Like the female subject, he too is expected to adopt a set of character traits established within the realm of patriarchy. To a large extent the representation of the female and male protagonists perpetuates patriarchal binary thought. Only a small percentage of the texts possess deconstructive elements.

The quantitative analysis strengthens the above argument by highlighting the under-representation of female novelists and playwrights in the secondary school literature curricula in Fiji and Samoa. In Fiji's curriculum, the male novelists and playwrights comprise 80% while the female novelists and playwrights comprise 20%. Similarly the male novelists and playwrights in Samoa comprise 83% while the female novelists and playwrights comprise 17%. These figures statistically confirm the marginal position of women as authors in the literature curriculum. A breakdown of the novelists and playwrights studied in the two countries reveal that while there is an equal balance of male and female novelists studied in Fiji, 71% of the novels studied in Samoa are written by males. Another very interesting observation is that all the plays studied in the two

countries are written by male playwrights. Female playwrights are not studied at all. Furthermore the sex of the main protagonists in the prescribed literature textbooks favour the male. This is particularly evident in Fiji where all the main protagonists in the novels and plays are males. The female protagonists are attributed with lesser roles and their actions do not control or affect the discourse. In Samoa 86% of the main characters in the novels are males while there is a balance of 50% between the male and female characters prescribed in the plays. Overall, the male protagonists (77%) out number the female protagonists (33%) in the novels and plays studied in Fiji and Samoa. Therefore, a majority of the women writers and protagonists are still shut away in the literary attic, although a few have broken free from their oppressed states and are now studied in secondary schools in the Pacific Islands. It is also interesting to note that apart from Achebe, Braithwaite and Hereniko's works, the rest of the novels/plays prescribed are largely Eurocentric (and reflect colonial legacies). Hereniko's *Sera's Choice* is the only literary text prescribed from the region for students in Samoa. There are no texts from the region studied by students in Fiji. This may lead one to question the relevance of novels and plays that comprise the English curricula in Fiji and Samoa and the Pacific at large. However, one question that can be posed at this point is, 'Does the third genre, poetry, contribute in any way to correcting this gender bias?'

Based on the above analysis, it is possible to conclude that the female voice is stifled while the male voice is put on a pedestal and glorified as "the voice" of canonical literature. This pattern may be traced back to the establishment of the literary canon. In chapter one, Morris briefly questions the nature of the literary canon through the values

and ideologies it perpetuates. It is possible to extend this viewpoint by drawing parallels

between the literary canon as a patriarchally dominated site and the literary canon as a

major source for the selection of literature textbooks in Fiji and Samoa. The close

relationship between these two factors shows that the male domination of the literary

canon has been accepted and internalised in the Pacific, so much so that the 'great works

of literature' prescribed in schools are immediately associated with male authors and

playwrights. Such literary works usually offer male dominated perceptions of life and

distorted images of womanhood. Morris provides suggestions on how the literary canon

can be challenged and transformed through her references to the ideas of Adrienne Rich.

> Male control of the canon across every literary activity -
> criticism, reviewing, publishing and teaching - has been
> challenged in two ways by feminist critics... The feminist
> poet and critic Adrienne Rich writes of this essential task in
> positive terms: it is 'Re-vision - the act of looking back, of
> seeing with fresh eyes, of entering an old text from a new
> critical direction - it is for women more than a chapter of
> cultural history: it is an act of survival... Alongside this
> work of re-vision, an enterprise of scholarly research aims
> to establish a woman's tradition of writing that can be set
> beside the male-dominated canon of masterworks.

> (Morris, 1993:51)

Today, women writers and critics have established and are still establishing their position

in the literary canon. Through this process of re-vision, male control of the canon has

been challenged by the work of female writers/critics. Some examples are Toni

Morrison, Harper Lee, Anita Desai, Dorris Lessing, Angela Carter, Adrienne Rich, and

Arundhati Roy. Alongside these female names in literature are writers and critics from

the Pacific, Asia, Africa and other third world countries.[1] For this reason, it is disappointing to see the perpetuation of a male dominated literary tradition in schools in the Pacific when there is a wide range of female alternatives for curriculum developers to select from. These alternatives possess local perspectives, may be easier for students to relate to, and effectively capture the changing nature of societies around the world. Women's liberation features highly on the agenda for the 21st century, but this is not acknowledged in the literature textbooks studied in schools. As Pacific Island people, it is important for us to use our commonalities to stride towards liberation and remove gender discrimination from the school curriculum and society at large. As one feminist critic from the region highlights, "for what we have in common can help to overcome the tyrannies of the physical, socio-cultural and ideological distances that come between us. Our commonalities can empower us to strengthen bonds of horizontal comradeship necessary for a united front against the very real threats that face us and our environment in these closing years of what has been a century of momentous, challenging and yet life-threatening changes." (Griffen in Emberson-Bain, 1994:283) Achebe, Golding, Orwell, Paton and the other male writers that comprise of the literature curriculum have each produced masterpieces and one does not dispute this. But their highly acclaimed position in the secondary school literature curriculum is not a true representation of the literary world today. Lee and Craven form only two voices from a multitudinous sea of women writers.

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[1] Refer to Benson et al (1994), Kirpatrick (1986) and Kirpatrick (1998) for suggestions on postcolonial literatures and contemporary novelists and dramatists.

"In Fiji, as in many other Pacific countries, there is probably a need for an affirmative action mechanism to bring about parity between men and women in the educational arena. Stereotyping and sexist attitudes are often reinforced through school textbooks, and these need to be replaced. There is also a need for education of an informal nature[2] to promote the partnership of men and women in the destruction of stereotypes." (Vakatale, 1992:65) One possible suggestion for an affirmative action mechanism is to choose alternative literature textbooks. Foremost, this new selection will entail prescribing a balance of textbooks by male and female authors. However, one must stress this balance will not automatically decrease/dismantle stereotypes and promote equality. Morris rightly states, "we cannot assume that all writing by women will be necessarily or essentially 'feminine' in its perspectives and values. Even less can we assume that anything and everything written by women will be - somehow - feminist, that it will share the political assumptions and agenda outlined above." (Morris, 1993:2) One may suggest a range of other variables to ensure that the new selection is quantitatively and qualitatively free of gender stereotypes. For instance, the language used by the author and the roles and positions of male and female protagonists should be considered. Sexist language is a crucial factor contributing to gender stereotyping and may promote the male generic pronoun "he" as the Self, while his silent counterpart, "she", is relegated to the position of Other. It would also be deconstructive to include novels/plays with female protagonists/role models who are strong, independent females that do not adhere to rigid ideologies of femininity. Furthermore, there should also be a reasonable quantitative/

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[2] It is important to acknowledge that informal education (for example, discussions) outside the school, or in the home are crucial because correcting stereotypes cannot be left to the curriculum alone.

statistical balance between the number of male and female protagonists. More importantly, these texts should contain strong female and male role models that students can identify with and relate to. Andree's analytical checklist for the identification of sexism, (outlined in chapter one) is useful for assessing the degree of gender-stereotypes in literary texts. It may also assist teachers and educators when selecting and prescribing novels and plays for secondary school students. At this point, it is possible to argue that a text is not a politically correct form and may never be. It is an arena where everything is possible: stereotypes and counter stereotypes, patriarchal and non-patriarchal discourses. Language follows and breaks all rules.[3]

If one were to follow the above approach and choose alternative literature textbooks, the first step would be to include works by female authors/playwrights that possess feminist sentiments and contain androgynous portrayals of males and females. These sentiments may be reflected in the protagonists, their thoughts and actions, their status/positions in society, and the issues explored in the novels and plays. Such novels and plays should be entitled a more significant position in the literature curriculum and the literary canon at large. To quote Morris again, "the strong emotional impact of imaginative writing may be brought into play to increase indignation at gender discrimination and hence help to end it. Positive images of female experience and qualities can be used to raise women's self-esteem and lend authority to their political demands." (Morris, 1993:7) Examples of the above literatures are plentiful and may be selected from a collection of works that were published earlier in literary history and those recently published. This new selection

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[3] To counteract this argument, postcolonial approaches to teaching literature should be adopted. (Page160)

should be entertaining, enjoyable to learn, educational and relevant to issues which students are faced with.

It is not the intention of this thesis to prescribe/select literary texts that I deem appropriate
for secondary school students because I strongly believe that curriculum reform should be carried out by specialists in the area. Such a process is difficult, time consuming, and should take into account a multitude of factors. I would like to suggest however that this selection should attempt to capture contrasting voices that oppose consciously held ideologies of femininity, and promote an awareness of feminism. Morris defines feminism as "a consciously held ideology which opposes consciously held ideologies that maintain the primacy of masculine authority and power." (1993:5) One may also propose a selection of texts that possess wider possibilities for interpretation and not those that merely dictate gender, class, or racial stereotypes. There are strong arguments for including novelists and playwrights from Africa, India, Asia and other Third World countries, as well as those from Pacific Island countries. This new curriculum should not only concern gender issues but also those of race/ethnicity as the two are closely related. Hence, this thesis maintains that gender is a problem in prescribed literary texts, but it is not a problem that can be solved in isolation of other factors. For instance, by prescribing a novel like Virginia Woolf's *To the Lighthouse,* it is possible to promote women's writing and women's issues, but at the same time this would increase the number of Eurocentric texts in the literature curriculum. This example highlights the complexity of problems in curriculum reform.

The second approach has a postcolonial dimension and is probably more practical and economical than the first. One does not dispute that much of the literature materials prescribed can be perceived as misogynistic and needs to be changed. However, this change can be very costly and requires a complete re-selection of the literature curriculum. An alternative way of teaching the present selection of texts for the time being may combat sexism in the primary and secondary school curricula. "Anti-Sexist English[4] aims to challenge the stereotypical views of femininity, masculinity, relationships and sexuality. It is embodied in the practice through which pupils and teachers are encouraged to examine language and literature and gain understanding of their own experiences within a recognisable social context; to see how these experiences have been presented in the past and consider possibilities for change in the future." (Hunt et al, 1984:2) This approach allows the student and teacher to analyze the texts together and then identify stereotypical qualities inherent in them. It also encourages individual thinking in a critical and analytical way. "One of the lessons of postcoloniality, however, is that texts are not simply there to be read: rather, they are actively produced 'here' according to locational determinants...Rather than being commodified as the latest model of 'literit', post-colonialism can become politically transformative at the moment it begins to juxtapose the imperial production of texts with the decolonising process of critically rereading them." (Cavell in Roman & Eyre, 1997:103) As feasible as it seems, the main problem with this approach is that it requires qualified teachers who can effectively guide students to deconstruct texts. This may be one of the limiting factors

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[4] Anti-sexist English should not be taken to apply to the representation of girls and women in literature but should also concern the portrayal of boys and men.

with adopting this approach in the Pacific Islands, particularly in the rural areas. Nevertheless, if teacher training addressed specific gender/race concerns and promoted gender sensitization in the classroom/curriculum, this approach may be very successful in Pacific Island countries. As Brady argues, "it is essential to understand the role that the teacher plays in the initiation and implementation of the curriculum". (in Thaman, 1989:42) Therefore even if a text is gender-biased (or racially-biased), the method of teaching and learning can have a corrective influence. Here it is important to acknowledge that there are teachers in the Pacific region who do adopt deconstructive approaches and encourage students to pursue alternative, unconventional readings of literary texts. In addition to learning how to subvert stereotypes, the postcolonial approach can also provide teachers and students alike, with a more critical outlook to life.

Although one may argue that the impact of sex-role stereotyping is not significant, psychological studies have illustrated that it can affect a student's perception of the world and ultimately her/his future. Barrett suggests that "Anna Davin, in her fascinating account of the parallel imagery used in late nineteenth century textbooks, rightly points out the difficulty of assessing the impact of these stereotypes on the reader, but it is nevertheless likely that they do have some effect on students who are daily exposed to them." (1980:141) This point is debatable if one considers reader reception theory briefly mentioned in chapter one. This theory highlights reading as an unstable process; the reader may subvert the stereotypes that may emerge in a text. For the purpose of this thesis, I argue (in chapter one) that a large percentage of students in Pacific Island

countries are not encouraged to read critically or read against the grain, but passively accept common images of woman and man. This may be attributed to rigid traditional/cultural beliefs, religious/societal factors[5] and poor pedagogy. In this way, discourses are often interpreted for them and they are rarely encouraged to offer contrary ideas and opinions. Nevertheless, the fact remains that whether students in Fiji and Samoa subvert stereotypes or not, the literary texts prescribed for them favour patriarchal discourses and subjects. To even perpetuate this possibility is a serious pedagogical issue because "to ignore sexism in literature is to deny the power of literature to shape and inform our experience." (Hunt et al, 1984:39) This point of view reinforces the important role that literature plays as the staple of English teaching. Therefore, if carefully selected and taught effectively, literature can act as a tool for gender transformation and a mouthpiece for feminist and masculinist sentiments through the ideologies of the authors/playwrights, the thoughts and actions of the main protagonists and the issues addressed in the novels/ plays.

My personal experiences with the secondary school literature curriculum (discussed in chapter one) highlight the realities of patriarchally dominated education systems in the Pacific. It also offers an insight into a student's perspective of this system. Although I tried to adopt a critical point of view when reading the novels/plays at secondary school, this was very hard at the time because of the belief that if a text was prescribed, it was "correct". Therefore, although I had problems with Achebe and Shakespeare's portrayal of women I kept these thoughts to myself. During exams and when writing essays, I

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[5] Refer to the background information on Fiji and Western Samoa provided in chapter one.

would agree with the male textual strategy and not adopt a critical outlook for fear that radical ideas may not be accepted as correct. For many years I played the role of the passive female student and did not dare challenge any male author's work or my teachers' viewpoints. As I developed my thinking and extended my knowledge at university level, I began to see literary texts in a critical light. Exposure to feminist theories and reader reception theories were important during this stage of my life. Today I can look back on the system and openly critique the texts that I was once obligated to study. This reflection has been enlightening on the one hand, but also disturbing on the other. I cannot help but wonder how many other young female and male students accept and internalise gender images in secondary school literary texts instead of openly questioning them.

At this point, it is important to acknowledge that a major limitation of this thesis is that is has not been able to determine the impact of gender stereotyping on Pacific Island students. More specifically it does not address how texts are interpreted by students and teachers. Here several questions may be posed: Do students/teachers openly challenge the system and subvert images of femininity and masculinity, or do they keep their critical opinions to themselves? To what extent do culture/background factors impinge on their acceptance or subversion of stereotypical gender ideologies? Do students in Fiji and Samoa react differently to gender stereotypes? Since a large percentage of the literary texts prescribed are Eurocentric, is it possible for Pacific Island readers to internalise western stereotypes? If they do, to what extent can they occupy/situate themselves within western discourses? These questions may form the basis of an extensive

psychological/cultural study on the impact of gender stereotyping on secondary school students in Pacific Island countries.

The purpose of this thesis is to alert and inform. Although much of the analysis focuses on the application of feminist theories, it is not only about feminism; it is about individualism and humanism. It is about how societies all over the world indoctrinate and condition individuals, consciously or unconsciously, to assume certain positions in their corner of the world. So much so, that the textbooks selected for schools in the Pacific reflect these views. Personally I find this disheartening because "a society defines for itself what knowledge is useful to it." (Thompson & Wilcox, 1989:197) Therefore, by perpetuating stereotypical images in the curriculum, the education systems in Fiji and Samoa reinforce sex role stereotyping and phallocentric modes of thought. I agree with Millard's assertion that "authors pattern out for us what would otherwise be incoherent experience and through their patterns, tacitly grant permission to follow routes mapped out to complement the self assertive adventuring that marked my own first encounters with literature. I want to offer my classes many more womanly patterns to complement the self-assertive adventuring that marked my own first encounters with literature. Such patterns will offer wider possibilities to each member of the class, especially those who feel constrained by a predominantly male perspective." (Millard in The Working Party on Language & Gender, 1985:62)

In an attempt to offer many more womanly patterns and wider possibilities to each student in the class, what is required is a standard of selecting and evaluating literature

for secondary schools. Virginia Woolf highlights one essential quality that may be used for this purpose. "Truly great literature, whether written by a woman or a man must be androgynous, must transcend self-consciousness about gender, must be at calm and at peace." (Stevens & Stewart 1996, 89) Androgyny is crucial to deconstructing patriarchal binary thought as it disturbs stable gender boundaries. Instead of the male possessing stereotypical masculine traits and the female possessing stereotypical feminine traits, androgyny promotes the mixing of such traits so that the female is not portrayed as stereotypically feminine and the male as stereotypically masculine. This leads to the destruction/displacement of the Self/Other dichotomy. Based on the notion of literature as a political site, androgynous literature has the potential to challenge and subvert patriarchal value systems within the school. Furthermore, if taught using a postcolonial approach, such literature can show that binary oppositions and dichotomies of gender are mere 'constructs of the mind'. The birth of the fairy-tale signified an internalisation of gender ideologies of femininity and masculinity. Now society must subvert the conventional image of the passive princess and warrior prince through reading, teaching and learning processes. Androgyny and reader response theories form the sequel to the fairy-tale and to all one-dimensional images of gender. When the reader identifies the 'Warrior Princess' trampling on conventional gender stereotypes to rescue the Passive Prince, the gender-tale will move towards a happy ending.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1

Gender-stereotyping checklist: Stereotypic traits of masculinity and Femininity

Masculine	*Feminine*
Very aggressive	Not at all aggressive
Very independent	Not at all independent
Not at all emotional	Very emotional
Almost always hides emotions	Does not hide emotions at all
Very objective	Very subjective
Not at all easily influenced	Very easily influenced
Very dominant	Very submissive
Not at all excitable in crisis	Very excitable in crisis
Very active	Very passive
Very competitive	Not at all competitive
Very logical	Very illogical
Very worldly	Very home oriented
Very direct	Very sneaky
Knows the way of the world	Does not know the way of the world
Feelings not hurt easily	Feelings easily hurt
Very adventurous	Not at all adventurous
Can make decisions easily	Has difficulties making decisions
Never cries	Cries very easily
Almost always acts as a leader	Almost never acts as a leader
Very self-confident	Not at all self-confident
Not uncomfortable about being aggressive	Very uncomfortable about being aggressive
Very ambitious	Not at all ambitious
Easily able to separate feelings from ideas	Unable to separate feelings from ideas
Not at all independent	Very dependent
Never conceited about appearance	Very conceited about appearance
Thinks men are superior to women	Thinks women are superior to men
Talks freely about sex to men	Does not talk freely about sex to men

(Source: Wearing 1996, 104)

APPENDIX 2

List of prescribed literature texts according to sex of author/ playwright and main protagonist

(A) Fiji

Title of novel/ play	Name of novelist/ Playwright	Sex of novelist/ Playwright	Name of main protagonist	Sex of main protagonist
Things Fall Apart	Chinua Achebe	Male	Okonkwo	Male
I Heard the Owl Call My Name	Margaret Craven	Female	Mark	Male
The Tragedy of Julius Caesar	William Shakespeare	Male	Julius Caesar	Male
The Royal Hunt of the Sun	Peter Shaffer	Male	Pizarro	Male
Androcles and the Lion	Bernard Shaw	Male	Androcles	Male

(B) Samoa

| Title of novel/ play	Name of novelist/ playwright	Sex of Novelist/ playwright	Name of main protagonist	Sex of main protagonist
Things Fall Apart	Chinua Achebe	Male	Okonkwo	Male
I Heard the Owl Call My Name	Margaret Craven	Female	Mark	Male
To Sir With Love	E.R.Braithwaite	Male	Rick	Male
To Kill A Mockingbird	Harper Lee	Female	Scout	Female
Animal Farm	George Orwell	Male	Napoleon	Male
Cry the Beloved Country	Alan Paton	Male	Kumalo	Male
Lord of the Flies	William Golding	Male	Ralph	Male
Sera's Choice	Vilsoni Hereniko	Male	Sera	Female
The Pohutukawa Tree	Bruce Mason	Male	Queenie/ Aroha	Female
The Tragedy of Othello	William Shakespeare	Male	Othello	Male
The Tragedy of Macbeth	William Shakespeare	Male	Macbeth	Male
The Tragedy of Romeo and Juliet	William Shakespeare	Male	Romeo/ Juliet	Male/ Female

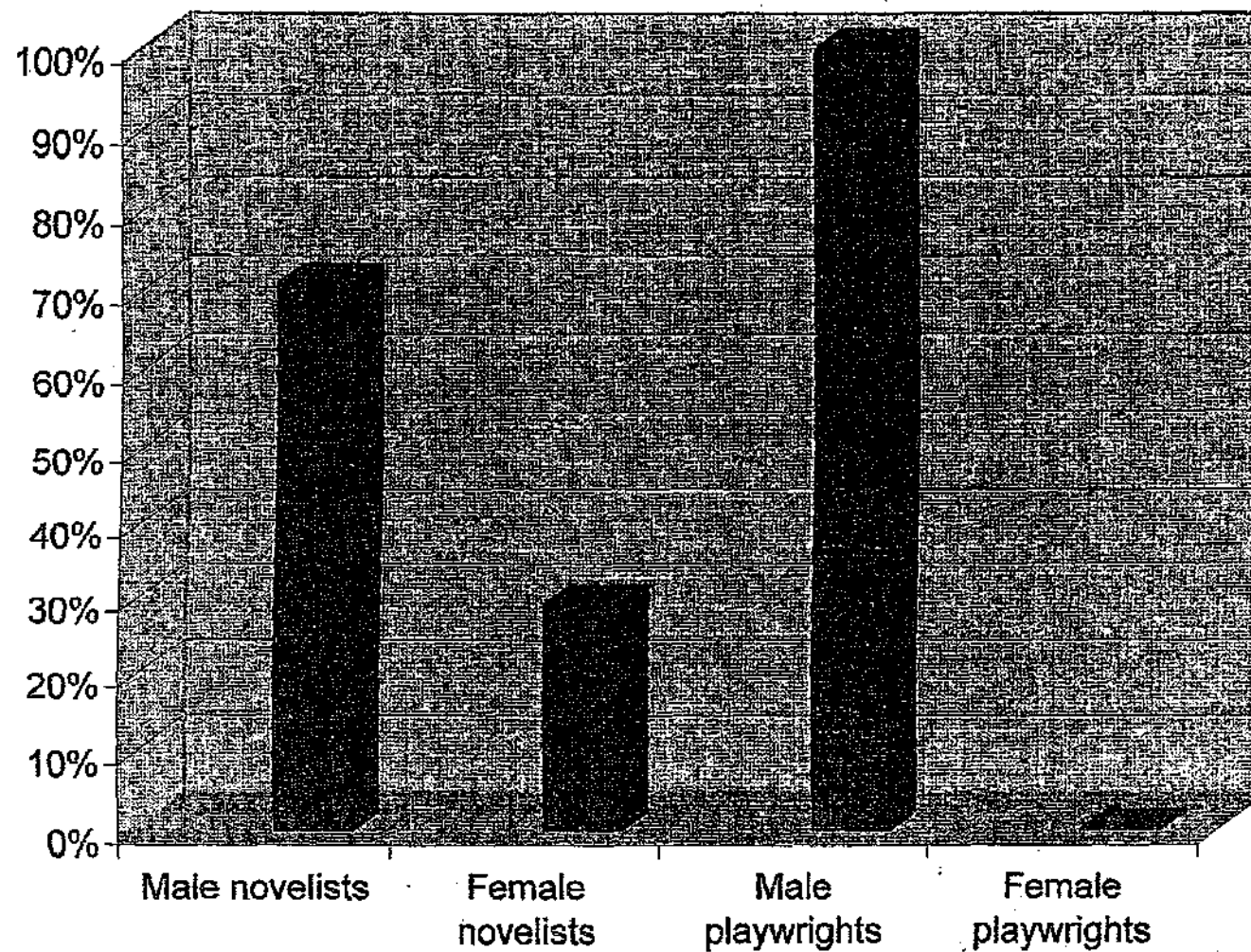# SAMOA - PERCENTAGE OF MALE
AND FEMALE NOVELISTS/PLAYWRIGHTS

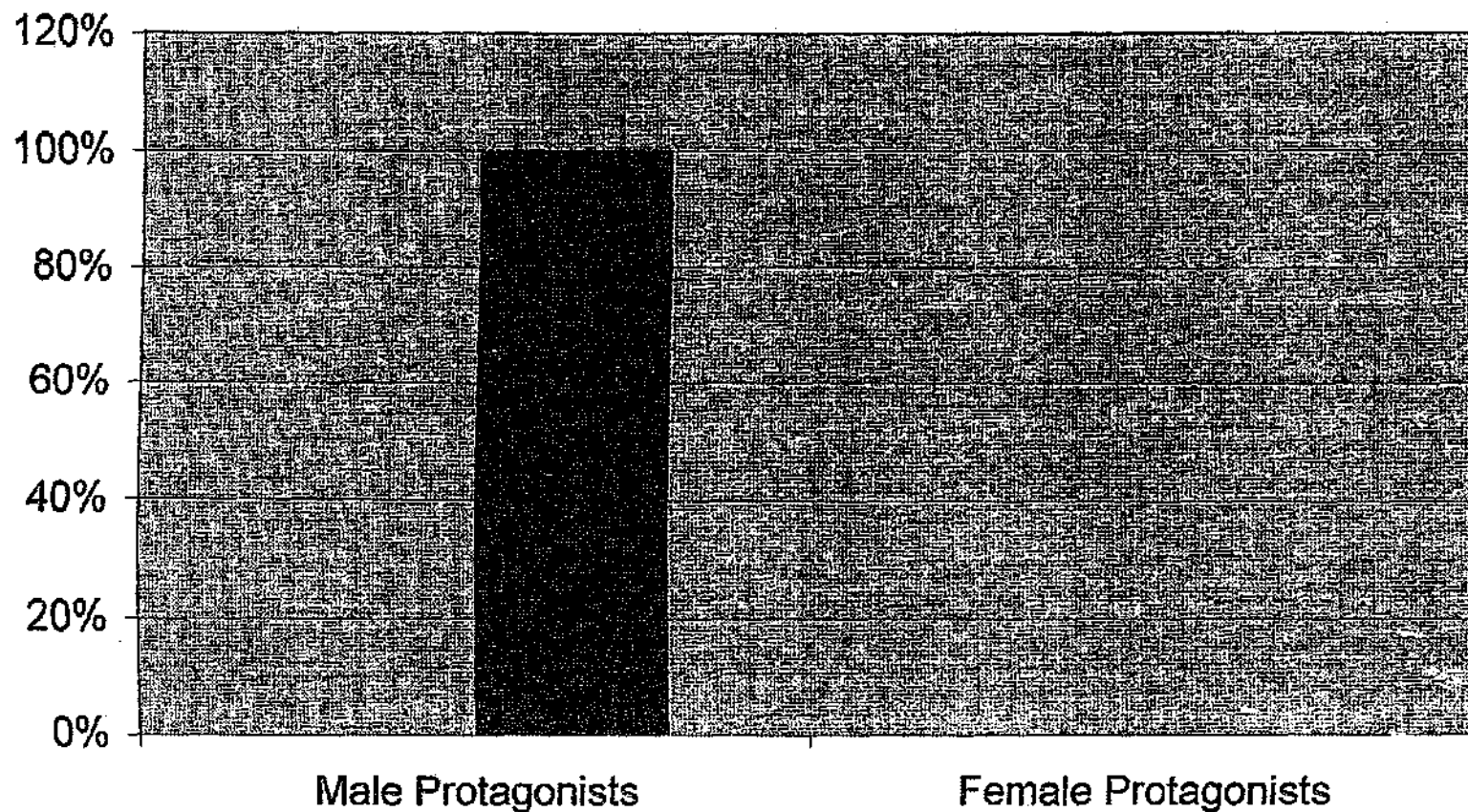|	
90%	
80%	
70%	
60%	
50%	
40%	
30%	
20%	
10%	
0%	

Male novelists & playwrights   Female novelists & playwrights
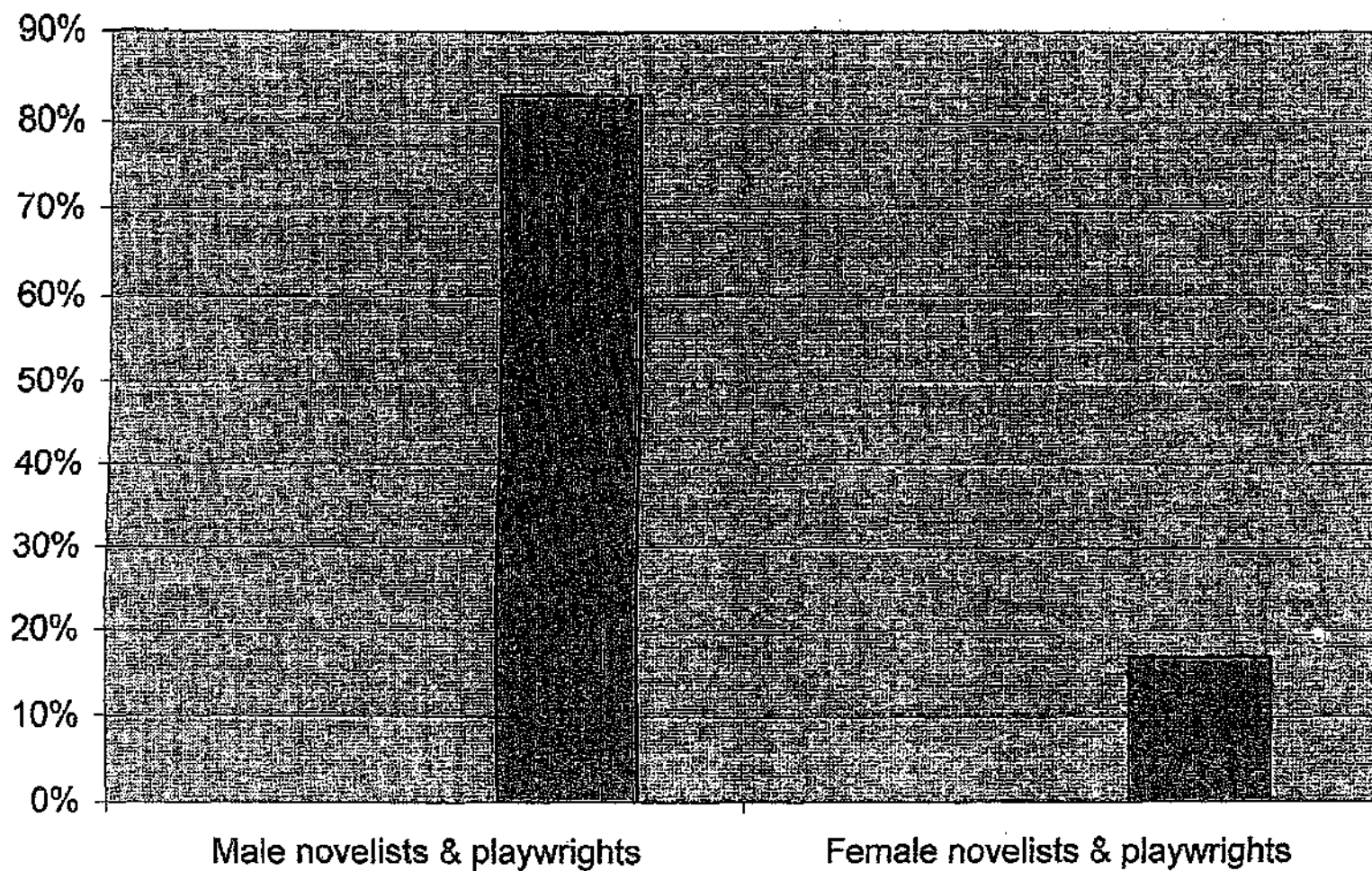
Appendix 4

FIJI - BREAKDOWN OF MALE/FEMALE NOVELISTS/PLAYWRIGHTS

100%	
90%	
80%	
70%	
60%	
50%	
40%	
30%	
20%	
10%	
0%	

Male novelists   Female novelists   Male playwrights   Female playwrights
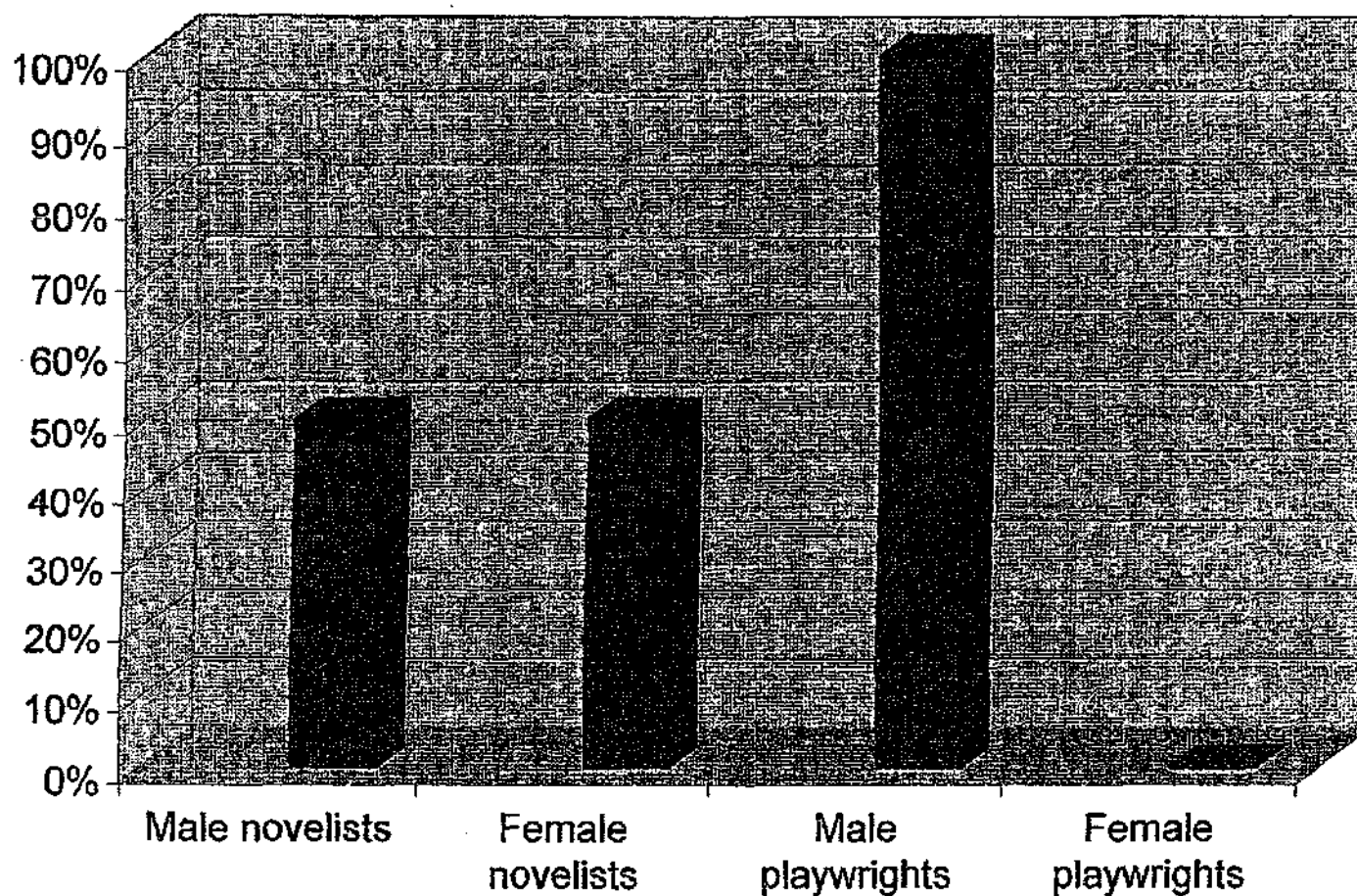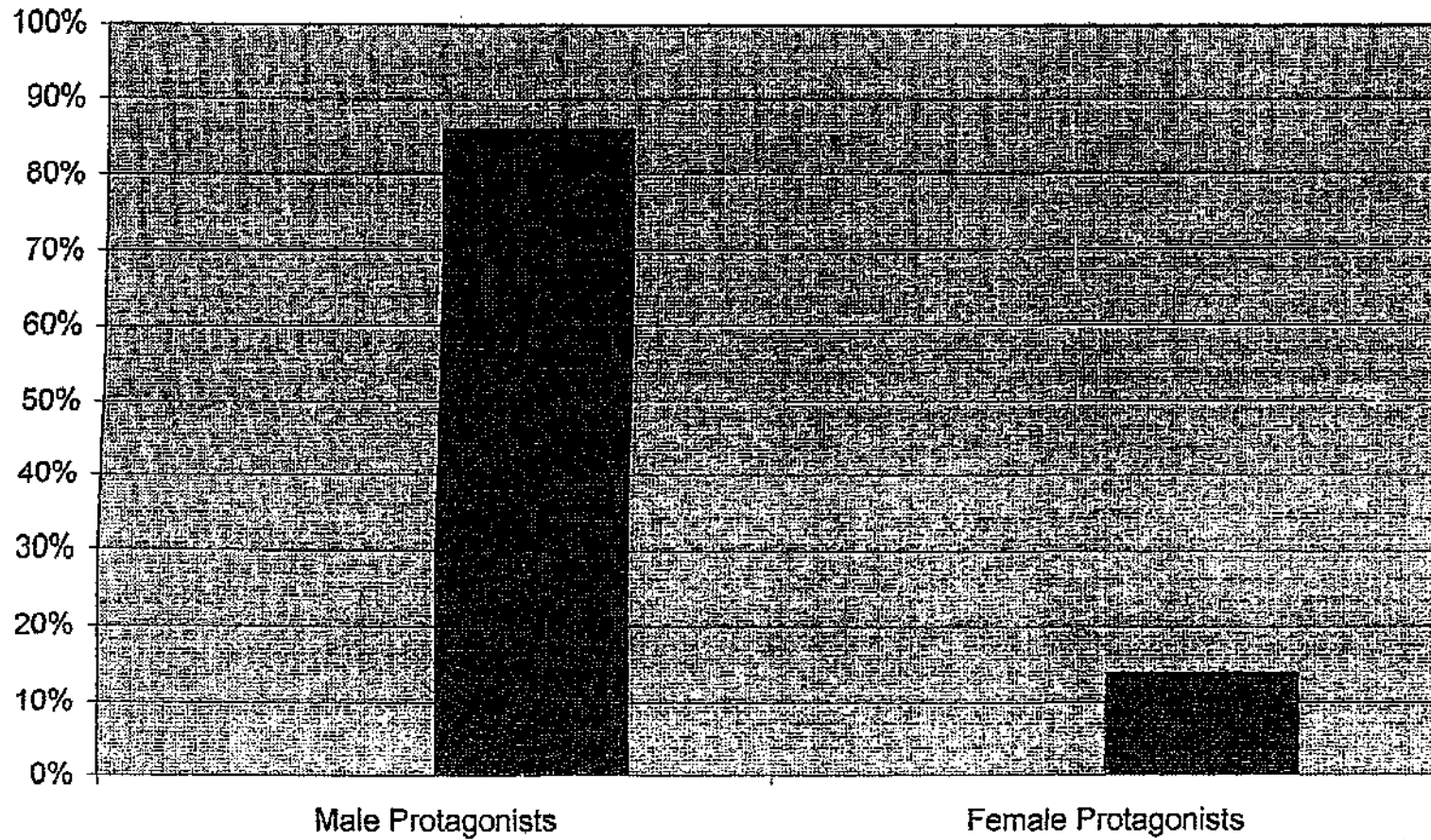
SAMOA - BREAKDOWN OF MALE/FEMALE NOVELISTS/PLAYWRIGHTS

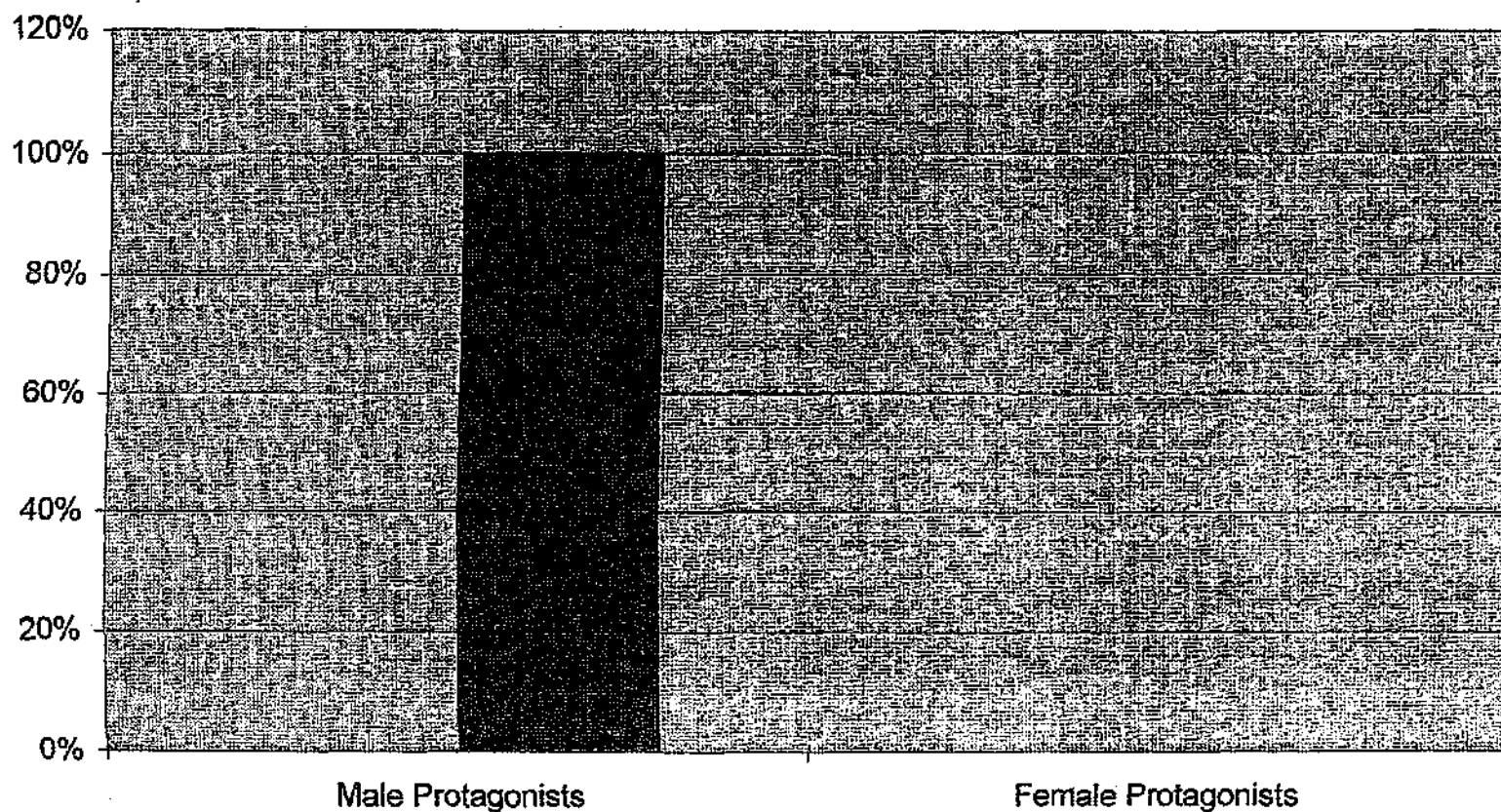# FIJI - PERCENTAGE BREAKDOWN OF SEX OF MAIN PROTAGONISTS IN NOVELS

SAMOA - PERCENTAGE BREAKDOWN OF SEX OF MAIN PROTAGONISTS IN NOVELS

Bar chart showing percentage breakdown. Y-axis ranges from 0% to 100% in 10% increments. "Male Protagonists" bar reaches approximately 85%. "Female Protagonists" bar reaches approximately 13%.

FIJI - PERCENTAGE BREAKDOWN OF SEX OF MAIN PROTAGONISTS IN PLAYS

SAMOA - PERCENTAGE BREAKDOWN
OF SEX OF MAIN PROTAGONISTS IN PLAYS