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THE UNIVERSITY OF CAPE TOWN

“... Like a doll made of old cloth”

A Critical Analysis of the influence of the radio programme
“Khalamdumbadumbane” on Swazi discourses of femininity.

Minor dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the
degree: Master of Philosophy specialising in Applied Language Studies.

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Declaration

This study represents original work by the author and has not been submitted in any form to another University. Where use was made of the work of others it has been duly acknowledged in the text.

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ABSTRACT

This project concerns the way the radio programme “Khalamdumbadumbane” functions as non-formal education and influences discourses of femininity in Swaziland.

I have engaged in critical research in an attempt to show how the media (more specifically radio in this context) influence women’s perceptions of themselves in a way which sustains the inequality between sexes. I also show how the programme “Khalamdumbadumbane” as a popular and topical programme has become a social institution, exerting its hidden power to ensure the dominance of males within the Swazi society.

Women’s experiences have been recorded in transcribed interviews and these have been discussed and analysed for common themes. The following themes are discussed: Power relations, Cultural identity and the Discourse of rights. The first two themes have been further divided into subthemes: Imbalance / inequality between the sexes, patriarchal family system, disregard for women, abusive relationships, Swazi values versus Western values and the religious discourse.

From interviews with the host of the radio programme in question and with Swazi women, I show how this programme has influenced women’s self perceptions through their acceptance of the problem solving as ‘help’ and not as ideological propaganda for patriarchy.

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INTRODUCTION

Mainstream social science and conventional research in the social sciences has historically been the domain of men. Consequently such scholarship has primarily represented the experiences and worldviews of men. In this research I have created an avenue for Swazi women to express their views and experiences. The impetus for this research has been the urge to allow women, particularly black women, to be given the opportunity to explore their own realities.

This research, like all feminist research is concerned with producing emancipatory knowledge and empowering the researched. Women in Swaziland have been psychologically shaped to internalize the idea of their inferiority. Swazi women see male domination as common sense, and as the foundational and unchallengeable norm. I am arguing in this thesis that the host of the radio programme “Khalamdumbadumbane”, Jim Gama, provides a framework within which women are socialized to accept their subordinate role. Therefore, the object of this research is to show how the radio programme “Khalamdumbadumbane” exerts its ‘hidden power’ on women and influence how they understand their role in society.

The study attempts to challenge stereotypes that have locked women to a particular mindset, for instance, the fact that men control public life and women are expected to occupy subordinate positions to those of men. In an attempt to make Swazi women visible and their muted voices heard, I have engaged in qualitative research with Swazi women as the subjects of this research. I have also taken cognizance of the fact that

Swazi women like all Third World Women are subjected to double oppression – from Western forces and the patriarchal system. Therefore, my experience as a Swazi married woman is another driving force for this research. The motivation for this research also comes from my interest in the relationship between the personal and the political.

In Chapter One I will discuss the background to the study by looking closely at the position of women in Swaziland. The way Swazi women are socialized is cited as one of the reasons why women occupy subordinate positions to those of men. The dual-legal system also complicates the issue of women's rights in Swaziland.

Subsequently Chapter 2 discusses the theoretical framework which informs the study. I will give a brief description of feminist research and then proceed to discuss Third World feminism and postmodern feminist thought. The critical approach adopted in this thesis and reasons for choosing to follow this approach will be discussed in Chapter 3. I have also chosen qualitative methods in collecting my data. For this research I have three sets of data:

- (1) Interviews with ten women in Swaziland
- (2) Interviews with the host of the radio programme “Khalamdumbadumbane”
- (3) An analysis of tape recordings of one week's sessions of the radio programme “Khalamdumbadumbane”.

Chapters 4, 5 and 6 provide a discussion and analysis of the experiences of Swazi women as deduced from the interviews and the recordings from the radio programme

“Khalamdumbadumbane”. In these three chapters the data has been analysed for common themes and insights gained from the analysis are also discussed. The following themes are discussed in chapters 4, 5 and 6 in the following order:

1. Power relations

- (a) Imbalance / inequality between the sexes.
- (b) Patriarchal family system
- (c) Disregard for women
- (d) Abusive relationships

2. Cultural Identity

- (a) Swazi values versus Western values
- (b) Religious Discourse

3. Discourse of Rights

Chapter 7 provides an outline of all the chapters and reflections on some of the implications of the thesis are made in the last chapter. Chapter 7 also states the value of this research, its limitations and recommendations for further research.

CHAPTER ONE

1.0. RESEARCH TOPIC

A Critical analysis of the influence of the radio programme “Khalamdumbadumbane” on Swazi discourses of femininity.

1.1. RESEARCH QUESTION

How does the radio programme “Khalamdumbadumbane” function as non-formal education in influencing discourses on femininity and the self-perception of women in Swaziland?

1.2 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

Living in Swaziland, I have observed and to some extent experienced the plight of married and unmarried women. Women face many problems in both the private and public arenas. The status of women is generally low. Rowland and Scannel (1994:169) state the following about the position of women everywhere and it best describes the position of Swazi women: ‘Men have economic, political and cultural power. Women do not. Men control public life while women occupy the resigned marginal spaces of private life and domesticity.’ Scannel (1991:1) observes that ‘broadcasting is an institution – a power, an authority and talk on radio and TV is public institutional talk, an object of intense scrutiny, that gives rise to political, social, cultural and moral concerns’.

This research seeks to show how the radio programme “Khalamdumbadumbane” exerts cultural power, influencing how women in Swaziland understand their role in society.

1.3 RATIONALE AND BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY

The research project has emerged out of both my theoretical interest in feminist issues and from my practical experience of women’s subordinate status to that of men. Living in a patriarchal society, I have observed the media as one of the perpetrators of this state of affairs. I therefore resolved to engage in critical research to show how the media (in this case radio) contributes to the devaluation of women and how it affects women’s self-perception. It is hoped that this research will make both men and women aware of their responsibilities towards uplifting the status of women in all spheres. Women will be more aware of how much their self-perception is influenced by among other things, broadcast.

It is appropriate at this stage to give a brief overview of the position of women in Swaziland as background knowledge to the study.

1.3.1. The Position of Women in Swaziland

The Swazi society, like all African societies, is patriarchal in nature. Traditional and religious customs, beliefs and myths ensure that men should dominate and ‘this acts as a mental block to women’s advancement’ (Taylor and Conradie 1997:82). Taylor and

Conradie's observation that the poor education many women received hampers their leadership capacity and influences their self-confidence (1997:88) holds true for most women in Swaziland. Most women, particularly rural women are disinclined to challenge their male counterparts because of the way they have been socialized into believing that the man is the head of the family and that his authority therefore should not be challenged. An anonymous writer in "The Swazi News" of 18 March 2000, in an article entitled *Gender Equality With Eyes*, commented that 'women in the rural areas would strangle you if you suggested that they should, one morning stay in bed while the man gets busy making breakfast for the wife to enjoy in bed. Sad but true and why? It is because the so-called struggle is concentrated in the urban area.'

To illustrate how women are positioned within the Swazi society, I will discuss the position of women in society, and then concentrate closely on the position of women with regards to the legal system in Swaziland.

1.3.2. Women in Society

The voices of Swazi women, as is the case in most African societies, are muted or silenced. 'In Swaziland women occupy a subordinate role in society' (1999 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices:3). In traditional Swazi society women are not expected to be speakers in public meetings. Women and Law in Southern Africa Research Trust (1998:49) points out that in Swaziland women are not expected to be tough, questioning and competitive outside the home.' They are expected to look to men who dictate what is to be done. It is only recently, with the advent of women's liberation

movements, that women, especially urban-educated women, address men in social gatherings. As mentioned earlier, such brave women are regarded as dissidents in traditional Swazi societies. A considerable section of the rural population of women still cannot move out of the traditional paradigm. Silencing women's voices means there is knowledge and potential which is untapped. This state of affairs has adverse effects on the country's economy. I am arguing here that, as long as Swazi women are not given the opportunity to contribute effectively to the economy of their country, Swaziland will continue to live under the threat of poverty. For women's potential to be unleashed, the self-perception of women must be developed.

Women are under-represented in government and politics in Swaziland. In the 1999 Country Reports on Human Rights, it is reported that there are 4 women in the 65-member house of Assembly formed after October 1998 elections, 4 women in the 30 seat Senate, and 2 women among 16 ministers in the cabinet. There are 3 women on the 30 person Constitutional Review Commission. The report also states that legal and cultural discrimination against women remains a problem in Swaziland.

In Swaziland, there is also a very high rate of sexual harassment of women. Women are raped and abused (sexually and physically). Men just hail abusive language at women, even in streets. Women are expected to take that as a compliment for their feminine qualities. Men whistle at females and even go to the extent of touching their buttocks and that is considered as a norm – a way of showing appreciation for the feminine qualities the women possess. Violence against women, particularly wife beating, is frequent,

despite traditional strictures against this practice. It is only urban women who usually charge their husbands with assault under both Western and traditional legal systems. 'Rural women often have no alternative but to suffer in silence if family intervention does not succeed' (1999 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices :9). Rhonda Copelon (1994 : 121) rightly points out that 'through violence, men seek both to deny and destroy the power of women. They also seek to confirm the devaluation and dehumanization of women.' The UN Report, *Violence Against Women in the Family* (1994:6) concludes '...it is perhaps best to conclude that violence against wives is a function of the belief, fostered in all cultures, that men are superior and that the women they live with are their possessions or chattels that they can treat as they wish and as they consider appropriate.' This attitude is also clearly displayed within the family structure in Swaziland.

1.3.3. Women in the family

The family is a fundamental unit of every society throughout the world. In an article written by Women and Law in Southern Africa Research Trust (WLSA) (1998:3) it is observed that different cultures have different conceptions of family and that family, like culture, is dynamic. It is constantly changing in response to the constantly changing socio-economic conditions in one society. Most societies are patriarchal and support family structures that are heterosexual. Such structures often benefit men and Swaziland is no exception to this. 'In such societies families are central to the reproduction of patriarchal relations and the perspective of women's subordination (Robinson and Richardson 1993:5). Patriarchy and gender relations are therefore rooted in family structures. WLSA (1998:6-7) rightly points out that 'the nature of the Swazi society

determines that for a family to exist, there has to be a male head, otherwise the arrangement is not recognised as a family but a household.'

In Swaziland, women are expected to take stereotypically traditional female roles such as cooking, washing, taking care of the family and the overall management of household chores. It is intriguing to note that even urban educated women are expected to take up all these duties in addition to their professional roles. Swazi women, like most African women, are expected to be 'super women' when it comes to the handling of both household and professional duties. Yet, the contribution of women in the maintenance of the family and nurturing of children is not valued at all. Women and the Law in Southern Africa Research Trust (WLSA) (1998:48) states that 'other than the self-satisfaction women are supposed to derive from these duties, there is very little reward they get. These duties bear little prestige and women are given little status as contributors to the sustenance and well being of their families.' Women are expected to be naturally inclined to carrying out the household chores despite the load of other work they may be doing in their respective professional areas.

The situation is even worse for rural uneducated women who suffer even more than urban women from lack of opportunity to be independent. Most rural women depend solely on men for a living, especially for economic support. In Swaziland, women suffer the worst impacts of poverty, underdevelopment and lack of access to their rights. The issue of women's rights is not taken seriously in Swaziland. Jensen (1992:6) points out that women's rights are trampled upon in contemporary Swaziland. In fact the rights

discourse in Swaziland is not meaningful. The whole rights movement has not been accepted. The anonymous writer of the article *Gender Equality With Eyes* cited earlier, also contends that ‘the fight for equality among the sexes or gender equality as people prefer to say, will never be won in Swaziland, at least.’ He further points out that he can discern that these women are not eager to see gender equality but want to be above men. Women themselves suppress one another; they thrive on social class – not even one wants to be in the same class as the next woman. This he states will be their major undoing in the long run.

A few women’s organizations have been formed to try and conscientise women to their rights and to demand those rights from the relevant people. One organization looking into the issue of Women’s rights in Swaziland is SWAGAA – Swaziland Action Group Against Abuse. All the women who subscribe to this organization, and others like it are regarded as dissidents in the Swazi Society. WLSA (1998:156) takes cognizance of the fact that women’s rights movement in Swaziland has suffered the worst type of negativity. Women’s rights advocates are denied a hearing. In fact, they are dismissed even before they are heard. All the women who attended the Fourth World Conference on Women held in Beijing in 1995 are derogatorily referred to as “*Bafati base Beijing*” the women from Beijing. This shows that the Swazi society disassociates itself from all the women who participated in this conference and those who advocate for women’s rights. In the article cited earlier from “The Swazi News” of 18 March 2000, the anonymous writer comments, ‘they went to Beijing, China and came back with improbable and even unrealistic ideas on how they should be involved in the

development of the country. Opportunistic wives who had been looking for chances to enslave their husbands took up the cry.’ This is an example of how the Swazi society, especially Swazi men, view the women in the struggle for women’s rights. Most Swazi people think there is no right that women should be claiming because after all their entire place is in the kitchen and no where else.

There is an infringement of women’s rights in familial relationships in Swaziland. In marriage, the involvement of the extended family in the relationship often makes women feel uncomfortable. Members of the extended family, usually the mother in law and the sisters in law, make sure that the married woman feels that she does not belong to this family and that she is just in the family to provide ‘the necessary’ services. Yet society and the law require that the woman spends her whole life with this new family which does not appreciate or value the woman’s input to the family. The law also perpetrates this state of affairs by reaffirming the legal status of women as that of minors. In the next section, I will discuss the legal system in Swaziland with regard to women.

1.3.4. The Legal System in Swaziland with regard to women

De koker (1997:14) takes cognizance of the fact that ‘African women are caught up in a legal time warp. They are imprisoned in a system which subordinates them and in which they have no real status.’ Swazi women are no exception to this observation. Swaziland’s dual legal system has been cited on various occasions as one of the main hindrances to the advancement of equal opportunity. Swaziland adheres to the Common

Law derived from Roman Dutch Law, which is administered by magistrates and higher courts. Then there is the Swazi Customary Law, which falls under the jurisdiction of the Swazi Courts Act. The Swazi Customary Law is not coded, therefore is open to manipulation by those who refer to it. 'The dualistic nature of the legal system complicates the issue of women's rights. Since traditional marriage is governed by uncodified law and custom, women's rights often are unclear and change according to where and by whom they are interpreted' (1999 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices : 11). For this reason, in a paper on *Swazi Culture and Custom* presented at a Seminar on 9 December 1999, it was reported that because the culture is not coded it is not uncommon to find Swazis in serious disagreements during ceremonies such as *lobola* "paying of the bride price," *umtsimba* "traditional wedding" and even funerals, though these ceremonies have been occurring from time immemorial. Conflict between the two legal systems is inevitable. Though Common Law may protect women's interests, Swazi law and custom always makes it difficult for women to attain parity with a male.

Swazi law and custom heavily favour males. Marriage in customary law is an example of the unfairness of the Swazi law. A woman who marries in customary law is subject to her husband's marital power. The authority the man has in this marriage allows the man to marry as many wives as he pleases. The women married to this polygamous man are expected to defer to him. The polygamous marriage is an institution working to the detriment of modern Swazi women (Jensen 1992:6). All women are expected to prepare food on a daily basis for this man and he chooses whose food he is going to eat and which of the wives he intends to spend the night with. Swazi women are also expected to

kneel and bend their heads (which must always be covered by a scarf) while talking to their husbands. This in itself shows that according to traditional Swazi culture men and women will never be at par. The men will always occupy superior positions to their subordinates – women.

Vilakati Philisiwe (1996) writes on a customary right which causes concern. It is the *kulamuta* custom. This right gives a brother in law certain “sexual rights” over his sisters in law. These younger sisters are regarded as potential co-wives. This custom can be, and is, abused by most Swazi men. It results in some men thinking that women are their sexual toys. Men enjoy their “sexual rights” with no intention of making such women wives. This is one of the many instances that exemplify how the Swazi culture and tradition favours men.

Chapter one has covered my research question and research topic. I have pointed out that my theoretical interest in feminist issues and my experience of the subordinate status of women in Swaziland has greatly prompted my engagement in this research. I have also surveyed the position of women in society and in the family. It is apparent that the status of women in Swaziland is generally low as they are subjected to all forms of harassment and abuse and their voices are silenced / unheard. I have also observed that the dual legal system in Swaziland contributes largely to women occupying subordinate positions to those of men in Swaziland. This is more so because Swazi Law and Custom is un-coded and therefore is easily manipulated by the dominant group (men) to the detriment of women. Therefore this thesis purports to show how the radio programme

“Khalamdumbadumbane” influences women’s perception of themselves and therefore contributing to maintaining their low status. The next chapter will discuss the feminist theories which inform this research.

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CHAPTER TWO

2.0. THEORETICAL APPROACH

The previous chapter has located the research within the Swazi context by briefly describing the situation of women in Swaziland. This research will be informed by a third World Feminist approach to questions of the construction of femininity, which differs from other branches of feminist theory. In this chapter I will give a brief description of feminist research then go on to discuss third world feminism, African feminism and post modern feminist thought.

2.1.FEMINIST RESEARCH

Feminism comes from the Latin “femina” originally meaning, “to have the qualities of a female”. Humm (1989) suggests that the contemporary usage of the term suggests that in addition to being a doctrine and movement for women’s equal rights, it is also viewed as “an ideology of social transformation aiming to create a world for women beyond simple equality” (pg.74). Shaik (1996:2) also observes that this transformation of relations within society, as distinct from mere empowerment within a given status quo, is a pervading theme within a number of strands of contemporary feminism.

In this section of the thesis, I will outline the various debates in feminism, which are not comprehensive at all. My purpose in discussing these debates is to primarily locate my research within Africa and internationally.

A number of contemporary scholars have defined feminist research in the sense that it will be used in this thesis. Purvis cites Radcliffe-Richards (1980:1) who argues that 'the essence of feminism is the belief that women suffer from systematic social injustices because of their sex. Echoing the same sentiments, Oakley (1981 (a): 335) also cited by Purvis, suggests that 'feminism is about putting women first – about judging their interests to be important and insufficiently represented and accommodated within mainstream politics and academic world.' It is also worth noting that women are not properly represented in mainstream politics and academia because these domains are male dominated. For this reason, some scholars prefer to use the word "malestream politics" instead of "mainstream politics".

It is essential to note that feminism is a political movement and as a political movement it seeks certain changes, in particular the eradication of the injustices that women experience because of their class, sex and colour. Feminist research challenges the claims of traditional research methodology to ideological mentality, arguing that positivist and even most interpretive approaches entrench status quo relationships between the genders. Feminist research is openly ideological in that it openly involves a questioning of the form and content of knowledge in our society. It also seeks to make women visible and to let their voices be heard. It focuses, among other things, on the

power relations between sexes, the sexual division of labour and the way these affect the lives of men and women.

This research aims at helping women understand their situation and in that way contribute to social change.

At this point, I will discuss Third World Feminism, which is a branch of feminist thought.

2.1.2. THIRD WORLD FEMINISM

'Feminism is concerned with redefining the World on the basis of the location and experiences of women, noting their oppression and subordination' (Gordon 1990:37). Gordon's definition of feminism suggests that there will be different forms of feminism since women will define the world on the basis of their different locations and experiences. Stanley (1990:21), however, notes that 'all women share by virtue of being women a set of common experiences not casually from 'biological facts' but women's common experiences of oppression', 'one of the major sites of difference is defining the 'oppressor' and locating the source of the oppression', (Wheelhan 1995:25). Bazilli (1991:29) advises that we have to be sensitive to these different realities, meanings and experiences.

Mohanty (1991) observes that, 'there is a problem involved in setting a common agenda for 'first' and 'third' world feminists. Many Western feminist movements referred to "the" situation of women, presuming a generic "woman" and the notion of a global sisterhood. Their experiences, realities and peculiar needs were presented as normative

and represented as the reference point and defining criteria of the reality of all women. Barret and Phillips (1992:4-7) point out that 'the universalistic conception of sisterhood, was now being challenged by women of the Third World who found that very little of their interests or realities were accurately reflected by Western feminists'. Mohanty further notes that any discussion of the intellectual and political construction of "third world feminism" must address itself to two simultaneous projects, the internal critique of hegemonic "Western feminisms" and the formulation of autonomous, geographically, historically and culturally grounded feminist concerns and strategies. The former she describes as "deconstructing and dismantling" and the latter is viewed as "building and constructing". Odim (1991:314) identifies some conceptual and practical differences between Third World and Euro-American First World Women in relation to feminism.

Odim points out that with Euro-American women, the oppression of impoverished women is linked to gender and class relations whereas with third world women, feminism is linked to race relations and often imperialism. Odim also adds that Western feminism narrows and confines itself to a struggle against gender discrimination. On the one hand Western feminism concentrates on women's issues and politics is left out while on the other hand, with Third World women, 'gender oppression is neither the sole nor perhaps the primary locus of the oppression' (Odim 1991:314).

Third World feminism is concerned with the well being of all people, both male and female. Odim also makes the observation that third world feminism is connected to the struggles of their communities against racism and economic exploitation. From

observations made by Odim and other scholars, it transpires that for third world feminists, racism and imperialism are the major feminist issues. This implies that Western women are not “sisters” in solidarity with African women; they often contribute to black women’s oppression. Landman (1996:52) points out that ‘women of colour suffer a double burden of domination oppression brought by racism as well as sexism. They experience oppression by white males from outside the black communities and black males within them. In addition, they bear the burden of racist oppression from white men and white women, which complicates and intensifies their sense of powerlessness and even worthlessness.’ There is therefore a need, as some scholars have suggested, for third world women to organize separately and to construct a feminist theory relevant to their needs. That is to say, third world feminists need to broaden the feminist agenda so that it is relevant to alleviating the oppression of third world people. As if to support this view, Hooks (1984:14) states that, ‘ (Western) feminists analysis of women’s lot tend to focus exclusively on gender and do not provide a solid foundation on which to construct a feminist theory’. Gordon (1990:22) points out that, ‘feminists also argue for the abolition of the family because it is central in the subordination of women, inequalities are structured within it...’ By contrast, Hooks (1984:107) observes that many black women find the family the least oppressive institution. This again emphasises the need for third world feminists to have their own agenda.

Rowbotham (1992:7) observes that it is not self-evident what people mean by feminism and that within feminist politics there are several differing political perspectives. Third World feminism is different from liberal feminism, which has a long tradition of gender-

based intervention in Western thought. Third World feminist theory is also different from Marxist and Socialist feminism. The former sees class as the ultimate determinant of women's current social and economic status while the latter sees gender and class as equally powerful, oppressive mechanisms. Radical feminists are committed to an attack of the male dominated social system. It was the radical feminists that coined the expression "the personal is political". By this they suggested that "domestic" sphere and intimate relationships between men and women involved power relations and were in fact political. For the radicals, cultural transformation is a dominant aspect. While lesbian feminists identify sexual orientation as a significant factor in their oppression as women. Black feminists are concerned with the well being of both males and females and as such, Alice Walker coined the term "womanist" which signals many black women's concern that feminist politics has the potential of creating divisions between males and females.

From the foregoing discussion, it is quite apparent that there is a need for third world feminists to address the question of the representation of women. However, it is important to state that there is no monolithic third world women \ third world situation for that matter, as Mohanty (1991:4) explains that third world feminists do not posit a generic "third world woman" but rather utilise the term "third world" as an analytic and political category. In Africa, feminist readings are emerging and these will be discussed in the next section.

2.1.3. AFRICAN FEMINISM

Society depends upon women for its sustenance and perpetuation and yet everywhere we find that women are excluded from certain crucial economic and political activities. Austin Bukenya (1994), a contemporary scholar from Uganda, shows some interest in the quest to improve the disadvantaged position of women in Africa. Bukenya observes that the African woman is conspicuously “silenced” and de-oracized. He explicitly states that to him oracy does not only imply the ability to speak but also to manage, marshal and deploy the spoken word efficiently for specific purposes in specific contexts. He further points out that ‘the African woman is consistently and systematically deprived of or denied the facility of oracy ’ (pg. 5). Holding a similar view is Obbo (1981:15) who also points out that a majority of women assume ‘a silence is golden stance’ because they lack the confidence or education to deal with male dominance. As if to affirm this status quo in African societies, Bukenya notes that African women are locked out of the access to foreign languages because they do not have access to education yet languages of media in Africa are foreign languages.

Marie Kruger (1988:5) makes a very important observation that Feminism in the African context reflects the diversity of female experiences and “feminism” has been consistently expanded to address the culture specific situation of African women. The focus of white women on class and gender related issues has been rejected by African and African American women as an inadequate approach to describe their specific living conditions.

Kruger further states that various contemporary scholars, the likes of Cheryl Johnson-Odim (1991), Barbara Smith (1985), Deborah King (1988) and others have expanded feminism to include not only a concern with “sex” and “class” but also with the decisive category of “race”. African feminists like Filomena Steady (1981) and Omolara Ogundipe-Leslie (1993) express the need to understand African women within their respective cultural and historical contexts.

It is evident, therefore, that African women have realised that oppression of women is multi-faceted and therefore they seek a feminist agenda which will address issues relevant to the African situation. Other African feminists, and Black African American feminists, the likes of Chikwende, Alice Walker and Mola Ogundipe-Leslie have coined new words to refer to African feminism. Walker and Chikwende coined the term womanist which Walker defines as ‘a black feminist or a feminist of color who is committed to the survival and wholeness of an entire people, male and female and she feels that this type of feminism caters for the “needs” of both males and females. For Chikwende “Black Womanism” is a philosophy that celebrates black roots, the ideals of black life, while giving a balanced representation of black womandom (1984:72). Ogundipe-Leslie coined the acronym “STIWANISM”. “STIWA” is an acronym for Social Transformation Including Women in Africa. Ogundipe-Leslie is of the view that ‘a feminist agenda everywhere in the world must include men and mobilize men in order for us to attain a more successful completion of the work of humanizing the society’ (1994:229). Filomena Steady (1987) another African feminist, calls for a humanistic feminism which encompasses men and children. Steady states that ‘the African brand of

feminism includes female autonomy and co operation, an emphasis of nature over culture, the centrality of children, multiple mothering and kinship' (Davies 1986:6).

The way African women perceive themselves is an important pre-requisite for a transformation in their lives. Ogundipe-Leslie (1994) makes it clear that the most important challenge to the African woman is her own self-perception, since it is she who will have to define her own freedom. Mamphela Ramphele of South Africa and Dangaremba of Zimbabwe locate feminism within the complexities of race, class and gender, geographical location and the collusion of women within patriarchy. Davies' (1986:8) list of characteristics of a genuine African feminism will suffice to summarise the main features of African feminism. She states that an African feminism

- Recognizes a common struggle with African men for the removal of the yokes of foreign domination and European / American exploitation.
- Recognizes that certain inequities and limitations existed / exist in traditional societies and that colonialism re-inforced some and introduced others. As such it acknowledges its affinities with international feminism.
- Acknowledges that African societies are ancient societies, so logically African women must have addressed the problems of women's position in society historically.
- Examines African societies for institutions which are of value to women and rejects those which work to their detriment, and does not simply import Western Women's agendas.

- Respects African women's self-reliance and the penchant to cooperative work and social organization (networking). African women are seldom financially dependent but instead accept income-generating work as a fact of life.
- Looks at traditional and contemporary avenues of choice for women – How African women can access power.

A lot of feminist works are emerging in Africa. It is even more interesting that there are African men who challenge the traditional, social and political dominance of patriarchy and who support women's issues. Schipper Mineke (1990:21) rightly points out that one does not need to be a woman to deal with women issues. If both men and women see the need of 'transforming' the society, third world feminist work will move to greater heights as far as improving the status quo in third world countries is concerned.

In this section of this thesis, I intend to focus on the theoretical issues of feminism in Southern Africa. I will also discuss implications of feminism to post modern women in Africa.

Meena Ruth (1992:1) observes that feminism in the South African region has been stigmatised and Swaziland is no exception to this. She cites Tsikata (1991) who defines feminism as 'the recognition of the systematic discrimination against women on grounds of gender and a commitment to work towards change'. Meena further points out that feminism is a broad term for a variety of conceptions of the relations between men and women in society. 'Feminists question and challenge the origin of oppressive gender

relations and attempt to develop a variety of strategies that might change these relations for the better' (Meena 1992:71). She also recognises that all feminism pivots on the recognition of existing women's oppression and addresses the prevailing unjust and discriminatory gender relations. Feminism according to Meena also offers a critique of male dominated institutions, values and social practices that are oppressive and destructive. However, she takes cognisance of the fact that 'even though feminists might share same ideas in terms of what gender oppression mean, they differ widely in terms of analysing its origin and what constitutes women's liberation' (pg.71).

'Women studies therefore, is a body of knowledge which analyses the condition of women in society and when such studies are also directed to the changing of women's condition in society, then such a body of knowledge is known as feminist studies' (Ibid: 72). Meena states that feminism is a political movement which aims at transforming gender relations, which are oppressive to women. She also asserts that feminism has its roots in the African condition because women in this continent have always been aware of the prevailing oppressive gender relations and have throughout history, challenged these conditions in many different ways. She warns against the misconception to view feminism as a Western ideology which reflects Western culture simply because feminist theories, like other theories, have been influenced by external pressures resulting from colonialism and imperialism.

Meena is however convinced that 'a culture of oppression can be converted into one of liberation only when the oppressed take some action to create an alternative for

themselves' (Meena 1992:12). She also notes that culture, as all other aspects of our society is a dynamic force, which can positively be used to enhance women's self-confidence and human rights. McFadden's study on "Women in Wage Labour in Swaziland" (1982) highlights how women have been pushed into the labour market of the socio-economic changes within the Swazi society. Women, however, have been marginalised as unskilled labourers because of their educational levels and the existing discriminatory practices. Women hold less power and lower social status. Most of the tasks women do are not defined as work because they are not given monetary value.

2.1.4. Post modern feminists

Christina Landman (1996:51) states that post modernism opens up new possibilities for women of today to move beyond the radical power game played by modernist feminism in addressing the age-old problem of male domination. Landman clearly states that postmodernism does not seek to replace modernism in any way. 'In fact, the paradox of the post modern is that its questioning is totally dependent on that which it questions. It does not deny that there is some system of priorities in life. What it does say, is that there are all kinds of orders and systems in the world, but they do not exist out there, fixed, given and eternal: they are human constructs in history'. (pg.50).

Landman also observes that by resisting all forms of domination, while at the same time celebrating differences among people and honouring tradition, oppressor as well as the oppressed can be empowered to freedom and reconciliation. She also points out that

oppression destroys both the oppressor and the oppressed. The oppressed is deprived of humanity and the oppressor becomes inhumane in the process. 'Both suffer alienation from their true nature' (51). Most men do not favour women empowerment because they think women want to 'overthrow' them. Landman states clearly that 'to empower does not mean the sharing of power, for then both might become powerful and be at loggerheads with each other'. Empowerment in this context means 'diffusion of power, the deactivating of the dynamics of power as a condition for mutual emancipation, the post modern way' (Klopper 1993:17-24).

Postmodern women therefore, do not seek liberation through power in the 'women's lib' sense of the word, but emancipation through the empowerment of all. Post modern women request men to recognise and celebrate their differentness in all its richness and promise. Differences can complement rather than oppose each other. Landman also notes that post modernism suggests a return to tradition since our tradition constitutes who we are, it affects the way we perceive, formulate, analyse and solve the problems facing us. This renewed sense of tradition is certainly not a nostalgia or a call for the same old traditions of the past, it is rather a re-thinking and re-evaluation for our tradition in the light of the here and now.

In this section I have defined feminism in the context of Southern Africa. I have also highlighted the implications of feminism to postmodern women in this continent. Making it clear that post modern feminists do not intend to "take over" from men and that post modern feminists are not against tradition but want tradition to be dynamic.

In sum, this chapter has discussed feminist research and how it differs from positivist approach to social research. Essentially, I have pointed out that feminist researchers make no claims of being objective in their research since they are mostly interested in including women in social research and have those formerly repressed voices speak for themselves. I have also taken cognizance of the fact that Third World femininists have seen the need to address the question of the representation of women since they have realized that Western feminists are not “sisters” in the struggle but often contribute to Third World women’s oppression. I have therefore discussed some of the emerging feminist readings in Africa. I have also highlighted how some contemporary scholars in the context of Southern Africa have defined feminism. I have also drawn attention to the implications of feminism to postmodern women in this continent.

In the next chapter I will look into the methodology adopted in this thesis and some of the literature that has informed this research.

CHAPTER THREE

3.0. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The foregoing chapter has discussed the theoretical issues in which this thesis is grounded. The present chapter will focus on the qualitative method adopted in this research.

'In the second half of the 20th century, much social research moved away from treating natural science as a model or at least from a "positivist" interpretation of it' (Hammersley 2000:1). The core of the positivist paradigm is the quantitative approach. In this context, most of our personal and scientific knowledge codifies men's experiences and ways of being in the world (Yllo and Bograd 1990:20). Women's experiences are not recognised as important. There is therefore no such thing as objectivity or neutrality in the social sciences since as Bograd notes 'we can never function completely independently of dominant ideologies ...and hiding one's values behind the banner of "objectivity" is not the same thing as being unbiased' (Yllo and Bograd 1990:20-21). One therefore needs to tackle the problem of "invisibility" of women in sociological research. These developments are the background to the critical approach, which is adopted in this thesis.

Feminist scholars have been developing a gendered view of social life and social science since the 1960's. Warren (1988:47) explains that Feminist theory seeks to direct social science analysis towards issues and interpretations focused on gender. She further

observes that feminist discourse analysis turns scholarly attention to a number of formerly taken –for– granted androcentric features of scientific writing. Classic sociologists, Marx, Weber and Durkheim all focused their theories around concepts of the division of labour that excluded the spheres particular to women: their reproductive, household and emotional labour. Warren observes that feminist theory and discourse analysis have affected mainstream social science, making it more aware of the historical determinants of both social life and social science.

This thesis is also grounded in the realisation made by Lather (1986a: 67) that ‘once we recognise that just as there is no neutral education, there is no neutral research, we no longer apologise for unabashedly ideological research and its commitment to use research to criticise and change the status quo.’ The task of this research goes beyond producing accounts of how and why things are as they are to making clear what is wrong and what must be done to remedy it.

Bograd in Yllo and Bograd (1990:5) rightly point out that the interests of the dominant class shape ideology and knowledge. When men’s lives, values and attitudes are taken as the norm, the experiences of women are often defined as inferior, distorted or are rendered invisible. One of the aims of this research therefore, is to elucidate the experiences of women from their frames of reference. This includes challenging taken for granted conceptual categories and stereotypes. The ‘emancipatory interest’ of feminist research seeks to free people ‘not only from the domination of others but also

from their domination by forces which they themselves do not understand' (Reason and Rowan 1981:xvii).

Feminists argue that research takes place in a social context that is patriarchal, therefore characterized by the domination of men over women. Roberts (1981:16) rightly points out that we cannot avoid taking sides and this is the background against which this research is carried out. Kelly in Yllo and Bograd (1990) state that feminist research is based on the theoretical premise that women are oppressed. 'It is research with the intention of understanding our oppression in order to end it' (pg.117).

A feminist methodology attempts to do research for women rather than on women. Instead of women being treated as objects of research, women are treated as subjects. Feminist scholarship is woman centred and provides a balance to the majority of theoretical frameworks that exclude / devalue women (Yllo and Bograd 1990:15). I have therefore attempted to adhere to feminist principles on all levels of the implementation of this study. As Angless (1990:3) states that, 'one fundamental feminist principle is the generation of systems of knowledge from women's own experiences as opposed, for example, to that generalised from a purely male perspective'. It is hoped that the information from women themselves will help clarify the position of women in Swaziland and how social institutions like the broadcast media help to maintain the oppressive status quo. However, the transformation of the status quo is not just the ultimate goal of feminist research but also part of the process / manner in which the research is conducted (Reason and Rowan 1981:33-35).

3.1. Methods of collecting data

I used qualitative methods in collecting the data. I also used in-depth semi-structured interviews so that the women will be able to bring in information that they think is helpful. In –depth interviews also ‘allow for reduction in the power imbalance inherent in the research relationship’ (Angless 1990:43). Oakley (1981:41) argues that in most cases, the goal of finding out about people through interviews is best achieved when the relationship of interviewer – interviewee is non-hierachical. Therefore I attempt to make all the respondents feel that their contribution to the pool of knowledge is worthwhile and greatly valued by listening and following up on what they have to tell me, sharing the power between respondent and researcher.

From the interviewees’ responses I want to draw conclusions about how women’s perception of themselves is influenced by the radio programme “Khalamdumbadumbane”. From the interview with the host of the programme, and from the analysis of the recordings of two sessions of the radio programme in question, I want to reach an understanding of how he perceives women and how this affects the way he presents the programme. The interview will require simple, straightforward answers.

For this research, I therefore have three sets of data:

- (1) Interviews with women in Swaziland
- (2) Interviews with the host of the radio programme “Khalamdumbadumbane” and

(3) An analysis of tape recordings of one week's sessions of the radio programme "Khalamdumbadumbane".

I will interview ten women from Swaziland. Five women will be rural, uneducated women and the other five women will be urban, educated women. The reason for having these two different sets is to make sure that my sample is more representative of the female population in Swaziland. I will also interview the host of the radio programme "Khalamdumbadumbane".

All the interviews have been tape recorded (with the consent of the interviewees) so that the interviews flow without being interrupted by the researcher trying to take notes on the important points. Tape recordings will also capture the mood and tone of the interview, which the researcher might overlook while writing. Recordings of the radio programme have been made and a transcription and translation of the recordings will follow. The data has then been organised according to prominent themes, which emerged from the data. The data has been analysed and interpreted and 'these are all inherently political activities' (Bograd in Yllo and Bograd 1990:23).

LITERATURE REVIEW

For the purposes of my research, I will discuss the main ideas on what has been done by other scholars on the media and gender and then discuss non-formal education, as it will be used in this thesis.

3.2. Media and Gender

I would like to start from the premise that I do not believe that the media (particularly broadcasting in the context of this thesis), is an 'innocent' genre. For this reason, I have identified materials which portray the role and influence of the media in society at large.

Gretchen (1984:337) remarks that 'the presence and influence of mass media is often so pervasive in our lives that it has become our lives; incorporated with an unexamined, uncritical acceptance of its role. He also makes the observation that we rely on the mass media for our perception and understanding of the world. He also explains that the mass media, by definition, affect large numbers of people and how they experience the world. His definition of mass media includes radio, TV, newspapers, magazines, books and films. This thesis seeks to show how the radio programme "Khalamdumbadumbane" has reinforced women's perception of themselves and their understanding of the world.

Kellow and Steeves (1998:108) point out that 'the role and influence of the media cannot be divorced from the historical, cultural and political-economic environments in which they function. It is for this reason that in this thesis I want to show how the host of the radio programme influences women to assume their subordinate position in society in the name of culture. My contention is that this programme also influences the way they act politically. Entman and Paletz (1980:154) echo the same sentiments about the effects of the media on people. They point out that, 'however insubstantial or fanciful, the media's depictions of reality influence the way people think and act politically, the messages affect political power relations.'

Gretchen (1994) discusses visual media at length. He states that:

Any examination of visual media can reveal that there may be purposeful distortion or manipulation, particularly if there is a point / profit to be made in supporting a particular view. In today's society we get correct or incorrect perceptions from the media we view. Stereotypes are formed (pg.353)

Gretchen's idea brings us to the realization that the programmes we listen to on radio may be purposefully manipulated in order to maintain the existing status quo from which the presenters of the programmes benefit. For instance, if the presenters of the programmes are ideologically committed to patriarchy and they make women feel that they have to stick to the private domain, men stand to retain for a longer period the power and prestige they are currently enjoying in the public domain.

Mills (1995:226) points out that the discourse of the media in general is an instrument of cultural reproduction, highly implicated within power structures and reflecting values about the world. One of these values is male supremacy. This goes to show that the media is not a 'value free reflection of fact.' Women are a separate category, generally dissociated from power structures and are excluded from the speaking position. Mills (1995) also remarks that:

Men, in general, are represented speaking in their public or professional roles, while women, when they speak, are identified with the private sphere – they are the mothers, the daughters, the wives, the widows ...women are marginalised in terms of public \ ritual speech. The media, particularly radio in our context, handles men and women in terms of different sets of categories or different stereotypes. (pg.226-227)

3.2.1. NON-FORMAL EDUCATION

Language, the family, the educational system, the media, the law and religious organizations are institutions through which we learn what is good or bad, right or wrong, normal or abnormal, beautiful or ugly. It is through these institutions that we come to accept that men are better leaders than women (Jordan and Weedon 1995:5) . Radio programmes such as “Khalamdumbadumbane” have the capacity to influence the Swazi people as to what is the socially acceptable way to behave, for better or for worse.

Jones David (1988:145) defines non-formal education as educational activities provided by voluntary agencies and informal groups. In the NEPI Report (1993), non-formal education is defined as ‘educational activities planned for adults, which take place outside the formal system of schools and tertiary education institutions and which do not lead to formal certification’. In this thesis I will use the term non-formal education to refer to teaching / learning by all age groups, that goes on outside the classroom or even school context and also not done by professional teachers. In the case of the radio

programme, non-formal teaching is done by the radio personality and listeners learn from him.

The issue here is to show through research the effect the radio programme has, as a form of non-formal education, on women's perception of themselves. The Swaziland Broadcasting and Information Service (SBIS) as the radio station in Swaziland is known, runs a write-in programme entitled "Khalamdumbadumbane" (to be defined later in this section) which I want to show provides non-formal education to its listeners.

The media exerts a profound influence on our lives. One cannot define precise details of the many ways in which the media affects social attitudes. Scannel (1991:2) points out that all talk on radio is public discourse; it is meant to be accessible to the audience for whom it is intended. He further states that 'the power of broadcasting like that of any institution, lies in the way it can define the terms of social interaction in its domain by pre-allocating social roles and statuses...' He also observes that the institution of broadcasting has the power to brainwash audiences because it (broadcasting) is treated as a taken-for-granted-and therefore trusted element in the routines of ordinary life.

Though the overt aim of the media may not be to influence people's views and attitudes towards certain things, but one cannot deny that the media has a 'hidden curriculum'. Scannel (1991:11) observes that '...there is nothing in the discourse of radio and TV that is not motivated, that is not intended to generate inferences about what is being said by virtue of how it is being said'. The media provides non-formal education to its listeners.

In the 1999 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices it is reported that in Swaziland, the government owned radio and television stations are the most influential media in reaching the public. Howitt Dennis (1982:5) observes that the media is also thought responsible for good things, contributions to education, information, leisure and culture. He also asserts that 'it is undeniable that people can learn from the mass media.' Howitt points out that some people see the mass media (Radio and TV) as a resource – turning on special programmes of special interest particularly the informative, cultural, challenging and educational. He further states that there is considerable evidence that people claim to use the media as a source of information. A modern failure of the mass media to inform effectively further illustrates the need for caution (pg.143-147).

Rowland and Scannel (1994:39) caution that 'just because the mass media are a vital link between government and people, contributing to both the political life and general character of society, it does not follow that they are neutral conveyors of information, ...the mass media are distinctive participants in the political, economic, social and cultural power dynamics of society.'

Africa possesses both written and unwritten traditions. Finnegan (1970:1) rightly points out that oral traditions are easier to overlook than the corresponding written material. Yet the oral modes of teaching and learning are equally important as the written modes because they also have the effect of shaping and influencing people's lives. This is also true of radio programs like "Khalamdumbadumbane". Ong (1982:41) observes that

'knowledge is hard to come by and precious and society regards highly those wise old men and women who specialize in conserving it'. This is very true of the radio personality, who runs the program under discussion in this thesis. The Swazi society regards the services of this man so highly because of the vast traditional and cultural knowledge he possesses. For this reason, a section of the Swazi nation has suggested that this man becomes an information consultant on traditional issues instead of his taking his due retirement from the radio station.

At this juncture it is appropriate to introduce the radio programme and the personality involved in this programme.

3.2.2.INTRODUCTION TO THE PROGRAMME "KHALAMDUMBADUMBANE"

The name of the programme, "Khalamdumbadumbane", is derived from a popular traditional folk tale about a cannibal who had abducted a child from his own family. This cannibal would go about with this child in a bag. The cannibal would ask for favours from people he came across and in return he would hit the bag and the child would have to sing for the people from inside the bag, to provide some entertainment. Whenever the cannibal was seeking for favours the child in the bag would have to sing after the cannibal's instruction "Khalamdumbadumbane!" "Khalamdumbadumbane" can be literally translated to mean, "cry mystery bag". The phrase "Khalamdumbadumbane" was also traditional story tellers' strategy of catching people's attention, so the audience could listen attentively to the "tales" or issues being deliberated.

Mr. Anson Dlamini pioneered this programme in the mid 1980s. The programme has been running for more than fifteen years to date. The major objective behind the motivation of this programme was to preserve cultural values, customs and beliefs of the Swazi nation, since Swazi customs are not formally coded. People write into this programme about problems in relationships between sexes (both married and unmarried couples), conflicts between parents and children, the role of women, and the changing nature of family life, changes in moral attitudes and behavior and a host of other problems.

In this programme, the host, Jim Gama, affectionately known to his listeners as Mbhokane (which is the extension of his family name), inveighs against women and he uses his tone in a very effective way in the process of delivering the programme. Gama co-hosts the programme with Moses Matsebula who only features in the reading of the problems written by the listeners to Gama. In "Khalamdumbadumbane", Gama presents the Swazi culture as something out there, something so Godly that challenging it is 'blasphemy'. This culture which Mbhokane advocates for, presents men as the dominant group, the leaders of society, and women as entities that only exist to see to it that men get their pleasure. Men can do anything to their wives with impunity.

The way Gama presents culture blinds people to the realization that 'culture is just a way of thinking and acting which people have created for themselves, which embodies beliefs, values and notions of right or wrong' (Crichter 1977:168), and that culture has the

potential of changing because it is socially constructed. Gama is a conservative who insists on preserving the status quo. Many people listen to this programme and this is evident in the number of people who write to this programme. The last listenership survey conducted in October 1996 revealed that this programme was the highest in popularity, with 79% listeners, and it turned out to be the most liked programme by respondents. The resource person at the Swaziland Broadcasting and Information Service has indicated that they receive letters from listeners daily, requesting the extension for the duration of the programme, which runs for thirty minutes, three times a week (Tuesday, Friday and Sunday). It appears that many people who write to this programme believe whatever Gama has to give as solutions to their problems. There is also another section of the population, which feels that Gama is being naïve on certain issues. For instance, he still promotes polygamy at this age when the AIDS pandemic gathers pace.

In this chapter I have indicated that in this research I have adopted the qualitative approach. Qualitative feminist research attempts to redress the historical marginalisation and invisibility of women in the generation of knowledge (Shaikh 1996:145). I therefore make no claims to be unbiased and women are the subjects of this research. I have mentioned that interviews will be conducted with ten women from Swaziland and the host of the radio programme “Khalamdumbadumbane” will also be interviewed. An analysis of tape recordings of one week’s sessions of the programme will be part of my data. Some literature which portrays the role and influence of the media in society at large has been discussed in this chapter.

The next three chapters will focus on the analysis of the research findings derived from the three sets of data. The purpose of this research is to show how this program functions as informal education and how it affects the position and self-perception of women in Swaziland.

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CHAPTER FOUR

4.0. DISCOURSE ANALYSIS

While the preceding chapter concentrated on the methodology followed in this research, the current chapter will provide a description of how the interviews were conducted and a character sketch which provides an introduction to the respondents to the interviews. One of the major thematic categories which emerged from the analysis of the data is that of *power relations*, and this theme will be discussed in this chapter. It is important to note that this theme will further be divided into the following sub themes:

- (a) Imbalance / Inequality between the sexes
- (b) Patriarchal family system
- (c) Disregard for women
- (d) Abusive relationships.

This research is concerned with producing emancipatory knowledge and empowering the researched. In Swaziland, like in all patriarchal societies, women's voices have been 'muted, repressed and unheard' (Lather 1991:71). I have therefore decided to engage in this research to show how the radio programme "Khalamdumbadumbane" influences women's self-perception. As Lather (1991) explains 'the overt ideological goal of feminist research in the human sciences is to correct both the invisibility and distortion of female experience in ways relevant to ending women's unequal social position' (pg. 71). Therefore the aim of this research is to empower Swazi women to come to understand

and change their own oppressive realities and to 'destabilize formerly secure foundations of knowledge' (Lather 1988:576).

The interview was based on open-ended questions from a semi-structured interview schedule (see Appendix). The semi-structured interviews gave women room to explain in detail how they feel about the different issues involved in this research. Therefore, the interviewees were directly involved in the generation of knowledge as Heron (1981) rightly points out: 'if we uphold the moral principle of respect for others, power should be shared not only in the application of knowledge but also in the generation of such knowledge' (cited in Angless 1990:61).

I interviewed ten Swazi women and the host of the radio programme "Khalamdumbadumbane". Five of the women interviewed are rural uneducated women. Uneducated in this context refers to women who either never attended formal schooling or never got to the seventh grade in their schooling. The other five women are urban educated women. 'Educated' embraces those women who completed their formal schooling and did some tertiary education and have formal careers. Some of the interviewees have been given pseudonyms because they did not want to disclose their identities. I met with all the interviewees in advance to explain to them what the research is about and get their consent to carry on with the interviews on a date suitable to them. Each interview lasted for about 30 minutes. All interviews except that with the host of the radio programme, were audiotaped with the consent of the interviewees. The interviews have then been transcribed and translated from SiSwati to English. All the

respondents except Khulile and Gladys were unknown to me until the time I met them to make appointments for the interview.

4.1. CHARACTER SKETCH

Gama is the host of the radio programme “Khalamdumbadumbane”. Jim Gama is an old Swazi traditionalist who is in his early 60’s. He works for the Swaziland Broadcasting and Information Service (SBIS) as host for two programmes. One programme hosted by Gama is concerned with language purity and is called “Nasi, ke SiSwati” (This is the SiSwati) and he also hosts the programme “Khalamdumbadumbane”.

Mrs. Mavuso is one of the not highly educated rural women I interviewed. She is in her early 40’s and to make a living she sells vegetables at the market place in Mbabane. Mrs. Mavuso is a married woman and she married according to Swazi custom and she is in a polygamous marriage. On the day of the interview she was dressed in the traditional dress “sidziya” and also had her head covered with a headscarf.

Mrs. Mabuza this is a pseudonym given to another woman I interviewed who did not like to disclose her identity. Mrs. Mabuza is a married woman in her mid 30’s and she hails from Motshane, one of the rural areas in Swaziland. She also married according to Swazi custom and she also makes a living by selling vegetables at the market place in Mbabane. On the day of the interview she was dressed in a skirt and a shirt and also had a headscarf covering her head.

Faith is a pseudonym I gave to one of my interviewees. She resides at Lubulini a rural area in the Lubombo region. She attended formal school up to grade 5 and she had to drop out of school because her parents could not afford to pay her school fees. I interviewed her at her home in Lubulini and she was dressed in the “sidziya” the traditional dress for married woman and had her head covered.

Jabulile is a young unmarried woman in her late 20’s. She identified herself as Jabulile Fakudze and she stays at Big Bend, one of the rural areas in the Lubombo region of Swaziland. Jabulile is uneducated because her mother died while she was still a toddler and her father did not have money to send her to school. She has a two-year-old son. She sells second hand clothes at the Big Bend Market in order to make a living.

Mrs. Gulwako is a married woman in her late 40’s. She is a housewife at Big Bend. Mrs. Gulwako married the traditional Swazi way. She had a dress on and her head covered on the day of the interview.

Nomsa is a young, unmarried woman in her late 20’s. She is an educated woman and works as a counselor at SWAAGA. She lives in Manzini the city, which is at the center of Swaziland. She was wearing a formal dress on the day of the interview and she did not cover her head.

Dalcy is a pseudonym I have given to a married woman in her mid 30's. I interviewed this woman at the Family Planning offices in Manzini where she works as a nurse. She had her head uncovered and had her nursing uniform on.

Lucy is a middle class unmarried woman in her late 30's. She works in one of the commercial Banks in Mbabane, the capital city of Swaziland. On the day of the interview she was smartly dressed in formal pants and her hair styled fashionably.

Khulile and Gladys are young women in their early 20's. They live in Mbabane and they are Medical Students at UCT. On the day of the interviews, they were working at the Mbabane Government Hospital as student Doctors. Their UCT education and the fact that they knew the interviewer long before the day of the interviews might have influenced their responses.

4.2.0. Analysis

I have done a discourse analysis of the interviews to draw attention to among other things, whose interests are being served within the Swazi society. The framework I used in this analysis was influenced by themes suggested by Janice Peck in an article entitled "Talk about Racism: Framing a Popular Discourse on Race on Oprah Winfrey. The usefulness of discourse analysis is to disrupt what may be seen as taken for granted and natural (De la Rey 1997:196). In this research I will explore what the radio programme "Khalamdumbadumbane" presents as the norm, the natural and therefore common sense. De la Rey (pg.196) explains that '...when the researcher analyses a text dominant

analyses a text dominant conceptions are revealed, taken for granted meanings are disrupted and the ways in which these discourses support / challenge institutions and the distribution of power in society may be exposed’.

The interviews will be thematically analysed. The prominent themes that emerge from the data are:

1. Power relations

- (a) Imbalance / Inequality between the sexes
- (b) Patriarchal family system
- (c) Disregard for women
- (d) Abusive relationships

2. Cultural Identity

- (a) Swazi values versus Western values
- (b) Religious discourse

3. Discourse of Rights

All the above-mentioned themes will be discussed and they will show how power is distributed within the Swazi society. I will also draw on first hand experience with the setting to make sense of the data.

4.2.1. POWER RELATIONS

One of the prominent themes, which emerged from the data, is that of **Power relations**. Writing on how power relations are produced and reproduced, Strebel (1997:109) states that 'some versions of social reality are deemed legitimate "given voice" and reside in the hands of "experts" while others are silenced'. Male dominance is "given voice" in the Swazi society by allowing Gama in 'Khalamdumbadumbane' to dictate what the society expects of women in Swaziland. Cloud (1993:225) rightly points out that 'women are oppressed and male power over women is the most significant axis of power in all cultures'. This best explains the case of Swaziland.

Fairclough (1989:43) states that relations of power are actually exercised through discourse. He further explains that power in discourse has to do with powerful participants controlling and constraining the contributions of non-powerful participants. I therefore argue that the radio programme "Khalamdumbadumbane" with its 'hidden power' controls and constrains the contribution of women living in Swaziland. The host of the radio programme often dictates what should be said and done by whom and when. Most women accept Gama's advice as mere 'common sense' and therefore unchallengeable and foundational and this contributes to sustaining the existing unequal power relations. The following illustrates this point:

Interviewer: If you were to pass judgement on the manner in which Gama handles this programme, would you say he is fair to both sexes (male and female)?

Mrs. Mabuza: You see my sister, **Gama always tells the truth.** The problem is that when you are listening to him you may think he is not fair on females whereas he is saying **the truth.** (My emphasis).

Interviewer: Do you believe Gama practices all what he preaches?

Mrs. Gulwako: Whether he practices what he preaches or not but what he is teaching is **the way to go, there is no other way.** (emphasis added).

In the above extracts, the women see what Gama advocates for as *the truth, the way to go*. Women who see the radio programme as a mirror to reflect the norms of society are likely to be influenced by the ‘norms’ shaped by the programme. These women are not aware that there is a relationship between *the truth* they are referring to and ideology. ‘Ideology is tied to power relations’ (Fairclough 1989:84). Fairclough cautions that we should understand common sense (the truth) as common sense in the service of sustaining unequal relations of power and that common sense may in varying degrees contribute to sustaining unequal power relations. He further states that when a discourse (such as “Khalamdumbadumbane”) has achieved such social dominance that its constraints are almost invisible, it attains the status of “common sense” and will come to be seen as natural and legitimate because it is simply the way of conducting oneself.

To some women, Swazi culture as advocated for by Gama, has become a type of “common sense” or a “regime of truth”. Afshar (1998) rightly points out that

A group of people who are systematically denied power and influence in the dominant society will internalise the messages it receives about its supposed roles and capacities and will come to believe the messages to be true. This 'internalised oppression' is adopted as a survival mechanism, but becomes so well ingrained that the effects are mistaken for reality. (pg.12)

We should also be conscious of the fact that 'ideology is most effective when its workings are least visible'. Therefore, the radio programme 'Khalamdumbadumbane' has the potential of sustaining unequal power relations between men and women in Swaziland because the solutions given in this programme are seen as common sense and not as an ideology which has the power to sustain inequalities. We should also take cognizance of the fact that the radio programme is not dealing with purely personal problems, which one may believe have nothing to do with social power. The problem one listener writes about is not just hers, it is shared by millions and reflects a social problem. In the interviews most of the women indicated that they have never personally written to the programme but they listen to it because the problems other women send in are also their problems. As in the following instance:

Interviewer: Have you ever written to this programme?

Mrs. Gulwako: ey.. (Giggling). I have never written to this programme but I just benefit from other people's problems because I might be going through the same problems which others have written.

This instance clearly shows that solutions are not directed to this one person who has sent his / her problem to be solved, but Gama gives solutions to social problems. Because he holds an ideology that represses women, he solves the problems in a way that favours males and his ideology is truly effective because it is disguised.

Broadcast media as a social institution can be extremely repressive. It may thwart and frustrate agents in the pursuit of many of their strongest desires and still be accepted by the members of the society because they take it to be legitimate because of certain normative beliefs deeply embedded in their world picture (Geus 1981:59). The radio programme “Khalamdumbadumbane” maintains a ‘world picture’ by spelling out to the women, in particular, how they should lead their lives. Therefore, broadcast media in Swaziland ‘operates as a means for the expression and reproduction of the power of the dominant class, this is hidden power because it is not explicit but implicit’ (Fairclough 1989:51).

Media discourse is able to exercise a pervasive and powerful influence in social reproduction because of the very scale of the modern mass media and the extremely high level of exposure of whole populations to a relatively homogenous output. The hidden power of the media is manipulative. (pg.54)

4.2.2. Imbalance / Inequality between sexes.

The host of the radio programme “Khalamdumbadumbane” does not assume a neutral stance when it comes to solving ‘female problems’. Because gender appears to be ‘given’ by nature, gender discrimination or inequality between sexes is one of the most ‘naturalized’ of existing ideologies. This is what most scholars refer to as ‘the naturalization’ of the dominance of males.

The only ‘natural’ way of conducting one’s self in Swaziland, as presented by Gama in the programme, is to allow males to be the dominant of the two sexes. All the interviewees point out that in Swaziland, there is visible inequality between sexes. Males dominate in all sectors of society. From the interview with the host of the programme in question, it became apparent that equity is not a popular term. This is evident in the following excerpt from the interview with Gama:

Interviewer: I think women need to be treated equally with men because they are capable of heading families in the absence of their male partners.

Gama: (frowning) Are you talking about what this new generation calls equality? In SiSwati we have the word equality but I will tell you now, **men will never and I repeat never be equal to women. Who wants to be equal to women?** I do not want to talk about this equality because I do not even understand it. (Emphasis added)

Gama is adamant that men will never be equal to women. For him, it is just 'natural' that women assume subordinate positions to that of men both in the public and private domains. The way he asked the question "*Who wants to be equal to women?*" is an indication that women in Swaziland are treated as 'material objects' and men like Gama cannot imagine themselves lowering their status to that of women. In actual fact, it is the status of women which should be upgraded from being treated as material objects to human beings entitled to basic human dignity. The fact that women are treated like things ensures that they are also considered as things in the mental realm.

The imbalance between the sexes is also evident in the manner in which Gama handles problems written to him by women. In one of his Tuesday sessions, a letter from a woman at Kwaluseni was read to Gama by his co-host Moses Matsebula:

(Reading from the letter)

Listener: I've been in this marriage for the past six years. The problem is that my husband never paid lobola. I am a student now and my father is paying my school fees. Should I go back home because my father is now demanding that I go back home because my husband does not afford to maintain me? Do I still have the right to go back home?

Gama gave the following solution:

Gama: There is something that is not clear here. This woman says she is married and again she tells us she is a scholar and the husband cannot pay her fees. First of all, who gave this woman permission to go to that school? I suspect this woman did not get permission from her husband. This is now a serious problem. If you were a responsible

woman, taking care of your family then I would say go back home so that your father can remind this man to pay lobola if he wants you back. But now, I am not sure what I have to tell you because I do not understand who gave you permission to be a scholar? **This is probably one of those women who think they can do whatever they want without the permission of their husbands.** It is not easy for me to solve your problem until you tell me who gave you permission to go to school. (*Emphasis added*).

This is one example of the many problems that Gama does not solve fairly. In the case of the above-mentioned problem, one would think Gama should be giving advice to the woman on whether she should or should not leave her husband because he has not paid lobola. But instead, Gama blows the problem out of proportion and focuses on whether the married woman has a right to education, which Gama thinks this woman does not have. He thinks 'to be a responsible woman' one must be stuck to the domestic sphere. He further shows that women in Swaziland are denied their right to personal independence. He says, "*this is probably one of those women who think they can do whatever they want without the permission of their husbands*". Women are treated like children who have to seek permission from their parents whenever they want to do something.

Most of the women I spoke to were keenly aware that women are not treated equally with men. The issue of the imbalance between the sexes came up in the interview with Faith:

Interviewer: Do you think this programme should continue?

Faith: I really would like to have the programme to continue. But I would appreciate it if Gama would be trained **to treat both males and females equally.**

Interviewer: Do you think the Swazi society as portrayed in this programme values women and their contribution to society?

Faith: ey, in Swaziland. According to Swazi culture **any female is treated like a child. The only adult in the family is the man, the head of the family. A woman according to our culture cannot initiate anything without the consent of her husband.** (*My emphasis*).

Lucy and Khulile, among others, also held the same sentiments about the way women are treated.

Interviewer: If you were to pass judgement on the manner Gama handles this programme would you say he is fair to both sexes?

Lucy: **He is not fair at all. He only concentrates on pleasing males.**

Khulile: **Gama gives men 9 out of 10 of his attention and women 1 out of 10. That is the best way to conclude.**

Women are aware of the inequity between the sexes. However, Swazi women unconsciously sustain the inequity between the sexes by accepting the imbalance as a norm. Jabulile, one the interviewees, held a different view.

Interviewer: Do you think it is the best option to chase your wife out of the house because she had an extra-marital affair but if it is the man doing the same thing Gama says he is right?

Jabulile: Oh Yes! He is right on that score. **Women should not try to behave like males.** (Speaking with a stressing tone) **Men will always be men.** (*My emphasis*).

Interviewer: Men will always be men, what do you mean?

Jabulile: **Women should always submit to what their men want...**(*my emphasis*)

Women like Jabulile view the imbalance between sexes as ‘common sense’ and feel it is unnatural for women to advocate for equity between the sexes.

4.2.3. Patriarchal Family System.

Another sub theme, which emerged from that of power relations, is the patriarchal nature of the Swazi family system. Patriarchy is a sophisticated and pervasive system, which has manifested itself in many communities in different historical periods in various cultural expressions (Lerner 1986:207). ‘ In contemporary feminism, the term patriarchy is used to describe systems of male authority and domination, which oppress women through social, political and economic institutions’ (Humm 1989:159). Swaziland is a male centered society; women have a role separate from men. Men control all sectors of society and women’s voices are silenced / unheard. Deborah Cameron in her study

entitled *Feminism and Linguistic theory*, describes Spender's theory of women's silence and it best explains the case of Swaziland.

It is through their control over meaning that men are able to impose on everyone their own view of the world; women, without the ability to symbolise their experiences in the male language, either internalise male reality (alienation) or find themselves unable to speak at all (silence).

The cultural expression, production and perpetuation of patriarchy trouble me. Gama and one of the respondents still maintain that men should head families. This one woman who agrees to the perpetuation of patriarchy is a representative of the many women who believe the oppressive status quo should be maintained. I completely empathise with these women and understand that they are a product of their society and the restrictions it imposed upon them. The radio programme contributes in perpetuating the status quo and the social perception of women as inferior. As in the following extracts:

Interviewer: As a Swazi elder, do you believe women are capable of heading families?

Gama: **A woman can only head a family on behalf of her husband. A household that is headed by a female does not have dignity in society. A woman can only head a family on behalf of her husband, when he is away or he is dead. Otherwise I cannot imagine a so-called family headed by a female! It's just unheard of. (My emphasis).**

Interviewer: Do you believe Swazi women are capable of heading families?

Mrs. Mavuso: Even if the man dies, women always take care of their families. **In most instances the life in the family becomes even better under the leadership of the woman.** (*My emphasis*).

Interviewer: Do you think then that women should be given the right to head families?

Mrs. Mavuso: When your husband is still alive, **there is no need for women to head families. But I believe we should share roles in the house,** sometimes have men cooking if the women are busy doing something else. (*My emphasis*)

Gama thinks women cannot head families “it’s just unheard of” while Mrs. Mavuso, contradicts herself, because she thinks women head families even better than the males but with the same vein she says “while the husband is still alive, there is no need for women to head families”. Mrs. Mavuso thinks it is ‘common sense’ and ‘natural’ to have men as heads of families and ‘nature’ should not be disrupted. However, a majority of the interviewees believe that women are capable of heading families.

Interviewer: Do you believe women are capable of heading families?

Nomsa: That goes without saying. **Women single-handedly head most families. In other instances the men are there but the women play a crucial role in sustaining the survival of the family.** (*My emphasis*).

Khulile: (speaking with authority) **As we speak now, women are heads of families but the glory is given to men because they are known to be heads of families.** This is

evident in families where the wife passed away, that family is often chaotic. **There is no life without a woman in any family.** (*My emphasis*).

Gladys: **Women have all the potential. We have our families because there are women...** (*Emphasis added*).

Women have all the potential to head families but the Swazi society does not recognise this great potential in women and still insists on male-headed families.

4.2.4. Disregard for Women

It appears that there is a lot of disrespect and disregard for the female gender within the Swazi society. Gama in the radio programme “khalamdumbadumbane” perpetuates this state of affairs. Women’s contribution to the family and society at large is not valued yet responsibility for the family falls largely on the shoulders of women. In addition to the traditional mother roles, most women also occupy important professional positions. Speaking of disregard for the female species, Guillaumin (1995) comments that,

They cannot stand that we have, that we want the same right as they have to live, the same right, as they have to speak to make decisions. It is our similarity to them that they repress in the most decisive way. All they ask is that we be different... If we are ever oppressed / exploited, it is the result of our nature. Or better still, our nature is such that we are oppressed, exploited, appropriated. (pg.223-225)

The attitude of Swazi males towards women is evident from the interviewees' responses to the question: *Do you think Swazi society values women and their contribution to society?*

Mrs. Mavuso: It is necessary that men be taught how to treat women. **Most Swazi men treat women like something useless like a doll made of old cloth...** (*My emphasis*)

Interviewer: Would you say the importance of women in Swaziland is valued as portrayed by the radio programme 'Khalamdumbadumbane'?

Dalcy: (pauses for seconds as if thinking) mmh... As far as I know, **there is nowhere I know where women are valued for their contribution to society.** For instance, you can find that if a woman is performing excellent duties in society there is a Swazi saying that states, you do not have to appreciate a person's works while (s)he is still alive...

Interviewer: Looking at the Swazi society at large, do you think this society values women and their contribution to society?

Lucy: **Not in Swaziland my dear. I spoke to one woman who is a parliamentarian; she also complained that even in parliament, the female voice is not heard...** (*My emphasis*).

Khulile: (*seeming confused*) maybe yes. **But men do not appreciate women's contribution as homemakers.** Whatever a woman does is taken as her responsibility and men never take a second to appreciate the sacrifice women make to keep the family together. (*my emphasis*).

In the radio programme “khalamdumbadumbane” there is an obvious disregard for women’s feelings. Gama often encourages men to prove their virility by having multiple relationships without considering the women’s feelings. In Swaziland, a husband’s adultery is perceived as a harmless indiscretion. If the wife decides to challenge her husband’s behaviour, she risks losing her status as a wife. Thus Foucault (1986:175) concludes that a wife, (and by implication the female listener of ‘khalamdumbadumbane’) is obliged to privately concede to forgive or tolerate her husband’s indiscretions because it saves her social / sexual honour as a wife and it proves her continuing love and affection for him.

In one session of the problem-solving programme, the co-host of the programme read a letter from Mankayane written by a woman to Gama.

(reading from the letter): My husband has an affair with a certain girl. This girl also has a child with another man. The problem is that this girl often tells my children to remind their father that she has an appointment with him. I am so upset what can I do?

Gama gave the following as a solution to the problem:

Gama: According to Swazi culture, a man can have as many wives as he wishes. It does not matter if your husband loves a woman who has a child with another man, as long as he loves her. What is your problem? This other girl also needs love and she wants to be married like you... (*my emphasis*).

Gama shows that he is not concerned about the woman's feelings, instead of discouraging the husband from having extra-marital affairs, he approves of it. Gama seems to be encouraging promiscuity in males. In one problem written to the programme by woman from Mbabane, the co-host of the programme read:

(reading from the letter) I am a young Swazi girl and I am in love with a certain man. Whenever I visit this man I find him with a girl in his room. Everyday I see a different face and yet he still insists that he loves me and wants to marry me. I do not know what I should do.

Gama gave the following response:

This is a proper Swazi man, "Inganwa" (one who has multiple relationships). The girls you find in that room are also in love with your man. If you are too jealous to share your man with other women, just leave him alone, there are women out there who will love him. *(My emphasis)*

This shows a total disregard for women's feelings, since as we noted earlier, these problems are not individual problems but social problems. In effect Gama is encouraging Swazi men to be promiscuous and not be concerned about how the women feel about the men's behaviour.

4.2.5. Abusive relationships

In Swaziland, women are generally subjected to abuse by men. 'This factual reality stems from the traditional Swazi culture which defines gender relations in terms of male supremacy and female subordination' (Nonhlanhla Vilakati in The Times of Swaziland dated 26 March 2000). In Swaziland, some women have been, and continue to be, caught up in abusive relationships. As Cloud (1993:225) pointed out 'women's oppression is primarily rooted in private sphere relations of family, sexuality and sexual violence'. In the article written to the Times Of Swaziland, Vilakati states that there is a complex range of reasons that keep abused women chained in dysfunctional relationships: fear of the abuser, financial constraints, emotional dependence on the abuser, concern for the children, social and cultural expectations and religious beliefs.

When women submit to being defined by men, they are made to conform to male views, needs and aspirations. Ultimately men find leeway to add insult to the injuries and pain they inflict on women. Gama in the radio programme 'Khalamdumbadumbane' uses a lot of abusive language against women. I find it intriguing that Swazi women have different views about Gama's abusive language and women abuse in general.

Interviewer: Do you think the choice of words used by Gama in this programme is the best choice, particularly when he refers to females who get children outside wedlock?

Jabulile: **Yes, it is true he is not selective in his vocabulary but he is right because he uses SiSwati words.** (*my emphasis*)

Interviewer: Do you think he it is right for him to use this vulgar language when referring to females?

Jabulile: **He is quite ritght because he calls the people by the names they deserve at that particular stage depending on how they described themselves when writing the problem.**

However, the other respondents did not feel that Gama is right in using this vulgar language against females.

Interviewer: You think this programme gives you insights into things you might not have been aware of?

Faith: (seeming confused) In a way yes, because there is no other forum in which we **can** discuss and preserve our culture. **It is true that sometimes Gama uses very strong words, which sound like insults. More especially when he refers to women who bear children outside wedlock as “lijikamlente” (one who throws her legs apart) (my emphasis).**

Interviewer: But you just said those are the words you want to preserve.

Faith: **No! the problem is that he only has these ‘harsh’ words to refer to females only. He never uses these words to refer to males. He does not have a word for a male who makes a girl pregnant before he is married. (my emphasis).**

A complex web of ideological and power relations informs the phenomenon of violence against wives. Swazi women live in a culture that traditionally approves of inequalities in power relationships between men and women. It is the culturally accepted subordination of women to men that makes men do as they please with women in clear defiance of known cultural channels of action. Unless and until Swazi culture does away with the social perception of male supremacy and female subservience, it will continue to open itself to inner contradictions that ultimately overshadow its capacity to ensure the welfare of women.

Most of the respondents spoke very strongly against abusive marriages;

Interviewer: Don't you think there is a problem in the Swazi marriage "kuteka" because women can not divorce when they have problems in their marriage. Don't you think that our culture needs change?

Mrs Mavuso: **We really need the intervention of the law in our marriages because it is now common practice for men to kill their wives because they have found better lovers.** (my emphasis)

Still talking about marriages, Mrs Mabuza and Nomsa had this to say:

Interviewer: It is frustrating?

Mrs Mabuza: **It is actually killing us, had it not been for this marriage my sister, then women would not be suffering under ruthless men.** (my emphasis)

Interviewer: What do you mean it is the main source of problems?

Nomsa: **For instance, a woman may be abused by her husband but because she was married according to this custom she is expected to tolerate whatever is happening because there will be no divorce granted.** You find these women end up developing serious illnesses. (*emphasis added*).

It is worth noting that abused women are the most submissive, they will accept anything their abusers say, even going to the extent of covering up for them. One of the respondents was quick to point out that to some women, abuse has become a part of their life – a norm. To these women, their definition of the world is incomplete without abuse. It looks like women want to be in relationships no matter what, even when they see that there is virtually nothing in it for them, they will insist on it. This is more so because Swazi culture encourages women to tolerate anything that their husbands do just to protect their marriage and unmarried women are viewed with a sense of pity. Unmarried or divorced women have a sense of incompleteness. Khulile had this to say about abused women:

Interviewer: How come I often hear Gama saying his listeners want to have the time of the programme extended?

Khulile: I think he is referring to his male listeners and **the females who are used to being abused by males and they think life is just about being abused by males at the expense of your life.**

Gama does not discourage abuse, especially physical abuse. He often defends why it is necessary for men to beat their wives. He often blames the victim and states that women are deceptive and therefore deserve to be abused. In one Sunday session, the co-host of the programme read the following problem written by an old man from Dreekopees:

Co-host: (reading from the letter) My girl is married. She often comes home to visit us as her parents because her mother is not well. Whenever she wants to come home, she seeks permission from her husband who always does not want to accompany her but allows her to come home. The problem is that when she goes back to her husband, the husband always assaults her. What am I supposed to do as the father of this woman?

Gama gave the following response:

I do not believe this. A man would not do that. As I see it, this woman tells the husband that she is going to her parental home and she goes her own ways, that is why this man beats her up. Dear old man, **your girl is not telling the truth**, that is not the reason why this man hits her, she knows the truth. **If you also want to know the truth of the matter go and find out from the husband.** (*my emphasis*).

In this chapter I have observed that the radio programme “Khalamdumbadumbane” with its ‘hidden power’, controls and constrains the contribution of women living in Swaziland. The data has also revealed that most Swazi women view Gama’s solutions as mere common sense that is foundational and unchallengeable and this contributes to sustaining the unequal power relations. It has also transpired that from the manner in

which Gama handles female problems in the programme ensures the imbalance between the sexes. The patriarchal nature of the family system has been identified as one of the systems he promotes which perpetuates women's subordination within the Swazi society. From the data, it has also transpired that he perpetuates the practices in Swaziland that treat women as material objects and subjects them to all forms of abuse by men. The radio programme "Khalamdumbadumbane" guides and disciplines women to accept this state of affairs.

The next theme to be discussed in the next chapter is that of cultural identity.

University of Cape Town

CHAPTER FIVE

5.0. Cultural Identity

In the previous chapter I have discussed the issue of power relations as reflected in the data. The next broad theme, which recurs throughout the data, is that of cultural identity. This theme will be discussed in this chapter, which is further divided into the following subthemes:

- (a) Swazi values versus Western values
- (b) Religious discourse

R. Hulualani (1998), in an article titled “Seeing through the screen: A struggle of “culture” defines culture as:

The larger discursive template that individuals and groups with particular ideologies use to chisel out a specific way of living within a society that encompasses all the meanings of that social experience. The chiseling occurs for several reasons: to massively produce a culture product that sells and ensures dominant power relations. . . (page 265).

It is therefore evident that culture consists of social meanings and practices. In this thesis, I am arguing that the broadcast media as represented by the radio programme “Khalamdumbadumbane”, is used to influence people’s identities, behaviour and world views. Culture is therefore not created in a vacuum but is tied to the surrounding social, political and economic structures. By contrast, Gama in the radio programme

“Khalamdumbadumbane” makes people believe that culture is a ‘natural’ phenomenon endowed to people by God and it should therefore be maintained. This was picked up in the interview with Gama.

Interviewer: Do you believe that Swazi culture needs overhauling?

Gama: (sitting upright as if to make sure I get all he wants to say). Do you know what you are talking about when you talk about culture? **Culture is one thing that will never change. Culture is naturally endowed on people by God.** There is a difference between culture and habits. Habits can be changed because it is the way people choose to behave and these habits can either be good or bad but **culture will always be there, it does not change.** (*my emphasis*).

Any change to culture is deemed threatening to the the dominant system. That is why Gama emphasises that culture should be static. However, the fact of the matter is that culture does not just surface, certain individuals, the likes of Gama in “Khalamdumbadumbane” work hard to designate what “culture” is to be used. As he points out in the following extract:

Interviewer: But personally, do you think the listeners apply what they learn from this programme?

Gama: (smiling) Oh yes! Listeners benefit from this programme...the aim of this programme **is to teach people how Swazi culture expects them to react to certain problems. People must be told what they ought to do ...**(*emphasis added*).

'People are born into societies which have established cultural norms' (Richardson 1981:63). These cultural norms are taken to be right, appropriate and the desirable way of doing things. This is evident from what some of the Swazi women said about the cultural norms that Gama advocates for in "Khalamdumbadumbane".

Interviewer: Why do you listen to the radio programme "Khalamdumbadumbane?"

Jabulile: This programme addresses issues that affect us in our everyday life. It also gives us **lot of useful advice about what is right to do according to Swazi culture.** (*emphasis added*).

Interviewer: Do you believe Gama practices all what he preaches on radio?

Gulwako: **Whether he practices what he preaches or not, but what he is teaching is the way to go, there is no other way.** (*emphasis added*).

In contrast, other women are aware that the Swazi cultural norms and practices purport to serve men's interests and therefore do not benefit women in any way. This was picked up in the interview with Dalcy.

Interviewer: You think he is biased? What do you think is the aim of this programme?

Dalcy: I believe Gama should be working towards healing the person who has the problem instead of clinging to culture. **He always says, according to Swazi culture,**

according to Swazi culture, without looking at the consequences of the culture on the person who has the problem...(*emphasis added*).

It is important to note that culture is political. The dominant group reproduces their ideologies by generating and circulating meanings as culture via the media (among other social institutions), which ultimately serves to establish and maintain their power position. Therefore, the radio programme, “Khalamdumbadumbane” contributes to the stereotyping of females and therefore their low self esteem by advocating for a culture that will keep women in the domestic sphere and men in the public realm. This programme contributes in confirming and sustaining the status quo.

5.1. Swazi values versus Western values

The host of the radio programme in question is a strict traditionalist who believes that all the ‘bad’ habits that the Swazis may have are a result of the Western influence on Swazi values. Gama and some of the women interviewed are resisting change. ‘Resistance is a word for the fear, dislike, hesitance most people have about turning their lives upside down and watching everything they have ever learned disintegrating into lies’ (Kathy Kea Feminist Scholarship class, October 1985). Most Swazis view their culture as the ideal and refer to the influence from the West as disrupting the ‘right way to go’, which would be to maintain Swazi culture without assimilating anything from the West.

Swazi men fear Western influence because they are wary of possible domination by people from the West and they probably also fear that their power will be eroded. Women are probably sceptical of adopting Western values for fear of the 'double oppression' which they might experience. They also possibly fear their men's reaction to them should they adopt Western values. Swazi women, like most Third World Women, are oppressed by their male counterparts and they also fear oppression from the West because of their colour / race difference . This is what Hooks (1981) refers to as the complex layering of oppression for women of colour as white supremacy and sexism work together to oppress them.

The following extracts exemplify what Gama and Swazi women think about Western influence on Swazi culture.

Interviewer: In your own opinion, how do you think things going on in the West affect the Swazi way of life?

Gama: (nodding his head in agreement) **There are so many influences from the West and they really affect our culture. One thing I can tell you, bad things are more easily adopted by people than good ones. (emphasis added).**

Interviewer: What can you say is your message to women on this programme?

Gama: **Proper Swazi women do not have problems. It is only outside influences mainly Western influences which create problems for Swazi women.** For instance, I do not understand why women need to put on slacks. Why do you need to wear trousers?

Is it because they want to be like men? This subject irritates me; I do not want to talk further about it. (*my emphasis*).

In his introduction to one Sunday session, Gama spoke against the use of Western foods instead of the traditional Swazi food. This goes to show how much he fears Western domination and wants to avoid anything that has to do with the West. This is evident in the following excerpt from his introduction:

Gama:...before we read people's problems today I want to talk about something very important. The reason why there are so many diseases these days is because we have abandoned our traditional diet and we are very much into Western foods. This food we are eating is rotten, we do not even know when this food was canned, we just buy and eat. **Let us go back to the traditional food and forget about Western foods and we will live longer. God created trees and herbs and that is what we should be eating and not these rotten tin stuffs.** (*my emphasis*).

Some of the women interviewed believe the Western influence on Swazi culture is the source of conflict. This is what Faith had to say:

Interviewer: But still you believe in him because he solved your problem?

Faith: Yes. Most of the time he helps because if we go for the Western way of solving problems we usually fail and find ourselves in conflict with most people. But

Gama tells us of the best way in which we can confront our problems as Swazis. (*my emphasis*).

The above mentioned excerpt also shows that 'Khalamdumbadumbane' influences women's perception of what is 'morally correct'. Faith is probably against Western influence because Gama said the Western way is not the right way to go.

Other women find themselves at cross roads because they are not sure whether to accept or deny Western influence. Such a contradiction in the women's lives is demonstrated by what Jabulile has to say in the following extract:

Interviewer: Does not that in itself show that it is mostly females who have problems and men live in a comfort zone?

Jabulile: Maybe that could be true. Men do not usually fail to solve their problems. What is creating problems mostly is the different ways in which women are married. **I think those who marry the Western way live better lives because they can own things yet if you are married the Swazi way everything belongs to the man.** (*my emphasis*).

Some Swazis see education as posing a threat to Swazi culture. This was picked up in the interview with Gama.

Interviewer: I mean how Swazi culture expects men and women to treat each other in the 21st century?

Gama: It does not matter which century we live in, we are still Swazis. I hope the aim of education is not to change people from being Swazis. We Swazis were very excited when our University came into being because we thought our children would now learn what is the Swazi way of life, instead of them going to Lesotho and other Universities to learn other people's culture. **It is disgusting to note that when our children go to the University of Swaziland, they lose respect for anything that is Swazi. I have since realised that it is this University education that is working towards destroying what we are – our culture.** (*my emphasis*).

5.2. Religious Discourse

The religious discourse prevalent in Gama's programme draws on values from traditional biblical religion to imbue discussion of public issues with a moral authority (Peck 1993:94). This discourse in Swaziland is strongly influenced by Christianity, the dominant religious orientation. Peck rightly points out that the bible employs imperative language, "ought to / should" to express vested authority. In the radio programme 'Khalamdumbadumbane' and in the Swazi society at large this discourse is used by males to perpetuate the inequality between sexes. Men often cite the passage of scripture that will allow them to dominate women. Mernissi (1991:8-9) rightly points out that in

patriarchal societies religious discourses are usually manipulated in order to construct and reinforce the unequal status quo. The following excerpt exemplifies this:

Faith: **Men read the lines of scripture that favour them**, for instance they often pick the line which says man is the head of the family. (*my emphasis*).

Talking about equality between the sexes in Swaziland, for instance, is seen as breach of morality. The dominant group uses the scripture as an impetus in their quest to dominate women in all spheres. This is evident in the following excerpt :

Interviewer: Don't you think Swazis use religion to abuse women?

Dalcy: **They often say the bible says men should be heads of families and women should be submissive to their husbands.** For these reasons, many women have developed serious illnesses and most of them have died because they are told to pray about their problems and not do anything towards solving the problems. People should learn to address their problems practically even if you are married to a preacher. I know of a story where one woman was heard shouting "I hope you will do the same at home" as her husband, a preacher was counselling married couples. You see my dear, some abusers are respectful men in society and other women want to protect their husband's status at the expense of their lives. (*my emphasis*).

Interviewer: I have noticed that most Swazis like Christianity. Don't you think Swazi men use this religion to abuse their wives?

Lucy: (laughing) **This is very true. Men abuse Christianity. They think it is only women who should respect men when in actual fact there should be respect for each other.** (*my emphasis*).

It is however, unfortunate that most women accept this version of religion which in the case of Swazi society is used to frustrate women, as a legitimate way of living. One of the interviewees, for instance, pointed out that the inequality between the sexes is part of God's plan.

Mrs Gulwako: ... **God is intelligent and He realised that if we can all be equal there can be no peace. So why do we want to reverse what God made?** (*emphasis added*).

Some women are not aware that Gama co-opts religion to bolster the ideology that he advocates. Other women, mostly the educated urban women are aware that religion is an instrument of women's oppression. Ideology in this instance employs religion to teach people "moral" values and ideology is most effective when it is disguised. The religious discourse reinforces the sexist state of affairs in Swaziland. On the contrary, Swazi men want to adopt only these principles of Christianity which back their superior position to that of women. Gama, for instance, often identifies with Christian values only when he can use it to his (therefore men's) advantage. Otherwise, Swazi men are wary of

accepting Christianity because it is a Western value. This is what Gama had to say about Christianity:

Gama: ...this christianity has also washed away some of the Swazi values. (my emphasis).

In conclusion, I have observed in this chapter that culture is political and that the radio programme “Khalamdumbadumbane” contributes to the stereotyping of females by presenting culture as a ‘natural’ phenomenon given to people by God and therefore not to be questioned. It has also transpired that Swazi men fear Western domination because they fear to lose their power while Swazi women fear ‘the complex layering of oppression’ by both males and forces from the West. I have also observed that Gama uses religion to sanction subordinate positions for women in relation to those of men.

While the present chapter focuses on cultural identity, the center of interest in the next chapter is the discourse of rights.

CHAPTER SIX

6.0 The Discourse of Rights

The foregoing chapter focused on the theme of cultural identity and the present chapter will concentrate on the discourse of rights.

Often times change provokes culture shock and thus becomes difficult to accept. The rights discourse is not a popular phenomenon in Swaziland. Most of the women I spoke to were aware of the negative images the public associated with progressive women who are advocating for women's rights. Narayan (1997:14) observes that terms such as "Westernized" or "Westernization" function as negative epithets in several Third World contexts, and Swaziland is no exception. These epithets are used to castigate not only individuals or political movements, but also to thwart various forms of social change. Women who associate themselves with the rights discourse are frowned upon because their actions contradict 'socially appropriate behaviour'. An insignificant number of the respondents maintained that they do not understand the rights discourse. These women have internalised the male perception of women and they view themselves in terms similar to the patriarchal definition of women's role in society. One of the interviewees, Mrs Gulwako, spoke strongly against these women.

Interviewer: What then do you think of post modern women who are advocating for change in women's roles in the Swazi society?

Mrs Gulwako: I hate these women! I fail to understand what they mean by women's rights. What right does a woman need? (emphasis added).

In Swaziland, like in most Third World contexts, women who are not urban and middle class think that the struggle for women's rights is an issue for urban educated women. They disassociate themselves from the struggle. Therefore, progressive women are seen as disloyal citizens, who are adopting Western ways and values. This is evident in the following extract from the interview with Jabulile.

Interviewer: What do you think of the progressive women who are advocating for change in women's roles in Swazi society?

Jabulile: I do not quite understand the agenda of these women. I only hear them speak over the radio. I do not know exactly what they want. But honestly the life we are leading now is different from that of our great-grandparents. Our grandparents would stay in polygamous relationships but the present generation does not tolerate sharing a husband. That is exactly what Gama does not want. I think it would be best if we try and stick to the old traditions. (my emphasis).

Some Swazi women are not even aware that they are entitled to the right to human dignity and they think women do not need rights, they should allow men to tramp on them. Such women can not transcend the paradigm of oppression as they do not realise the need to have rights. Some of the respondents acknowledged that they were ignorant

of the discourse of rights but are not even prepared to make an effort to understand what progressive women advocate. This is evident in the following extract:

Interviewer: What then do you think of the progressive women who are advocating for change in women's roles in Swazi society?

Mrs Mabuza: **Are you talking about these women who want women's rights? I do not even want to talk about that because I do not know what this rights discourse is all about...** (*my emphasis*).

Most Swazi women grew up with the awareness that the problems that women go through, such as tolerating men's infidelity, are fairly common place and should not be challenged. As in the following excerpt:

Interviewer: In short you are saying our life should not improve, we should stick to traditon.

Jabulile: **Oh yes, our lives would be better that way instead of us trying to adopt changes we do not quite know about ...**(*emphasis added*).

I am therefore arguing that the radio programme "*khalamdumbadumbane*", influences these women's perception of the emancipated women who are advocating for their rights. In the programme, Gama often inveighs on the woman who are advocating for change in women's roles within the Swazi society. This is what Gama had to say in the interview:

Interviewer: What then do you think about Swazi married woman who go with their heads uncovered and of late we even have women advocating for women's rights?

Gama:(frowning and raising his voice) Everyone is under the head of state. **I absolutely do not understand why women want rights. From whom are they demanding their rights? Why does a woman need rights because even if she needs to borrow money from the bank I am there as a husband?** Everything that my wife does is for the Gama family, so what does she need rights for?... (my emphasis).

In his introduction to one session of the programme Gama had this to say about women who subscribe to women's organisations:

Gama: I am happy that I married my wives at the time when women were interested in marriage for the sake of serving in the marriage and not marrying me for wealth. I would not marry nowadays because women are only interested in wealth. **Today's women wear ribbons and they say those ribbons are a sign that they are in conflict with their husbands.** I would not stand a wife who would wear a ribbon in my house. **These women who join organisations are only interested in knowing how much wealth their husbands have accumulated.** I do not think men live long these days because these women will want to get rid of us in order for them to inherit all that we have as men. At least I am happy that my wives do not bother me, the moment they start giving me problems I'll wear a big black ribbon (he giggles). (*emphasis added*).

In this programme, Gama misrepresents what the women's organisations stand for. For instance, the ribbon is worn by all women against abuse but he says it is worn by women who are in conflict with their husbands. Women out there who are ignorant of the rights discourse are likely to be influenced by what Gama says because the media exerts power and has 'hidden authority' to manipulate people's views. As some of the respondents indicated, they view the programme "Khalamdumbadumbane" as an educational programme.

Mrs Mavuso: Of course yes! **Like I said this programme is educational. Married woman learn how best they should treat their husbands because that is what Gama emphasises.** (*my emphasis*).

It is therefore evident that this programme influences Swazi women in particular some people take Gama's advice without thinking about the consequences of their actions. As Nomsa points out in the following extract:

Interviewer: Don't you think there are people out there who listen to Gama and take whatever he suggests as solutions to their problems and end up messing their lives?

Nomsa: **Of course yes! Most people write to this programme because they genuinely believe whatever Gama has to say. Such people are prone to take everything that Gama says without questioning.** (*my emphasis*).

However, there are women who are in favour of the discourse of rights. Gladys is one of the women who believe in women's rights:

Interviewer: What do you think of the women who are advocating for women's rights?

Gladys: (smiling) **Forward ever! These women must go forward. Many women can be enlightened if such women can insist on what they want.** For instance we are often told that we as women should never question men's ideas but we are never told why we should not question them. **Enlightened women will help us uncover all these things which were meant to frustrate women.** (*emphasis added*).

From the interviews, it is evident that the discourse of rights is not popular within the Swazi society and the radio programme "Khalamdumbadumbane" contributes to the unpopularity of this discourse.

It therefore seems that Swazi women are faced with a dilemma of not knowing how they can improve their lives. Their lives seem to be at crossroads between patriarchy and feminism. As much as these women want their society to change from the patriarchal system, they are also sceptical of the consequences of adopting what they refer to as a "Western" notion, the issue of struggling for women's rights. As Narayan (1997:8) points out that, 'women give voice to the hardships and difficulties of being a woman that have marked their lives while also resisting attempts to deviate from these cultural scripts'.

Progressive women are regarded as women who have rejected the lessons they were taught by their mothers such as being submissive and never to question what men say. Swazi women who do not want to adopt the changes recommended by the emancipated women acknowledge that women face mistreatment within their social and cultural contexts, but still they insist that they do not need any changes, as in the following extract from the interview with Mrs Gulwako:

Interviewer: Most women complain that life is not pleasant for married women in Swaziland, what can you say about that?

Mrs Gulwako: Oh yes! The fact that you stay with somebody who is not your relative, he sometimes feels he has seen enough of this stranger and he starts showing signs that he is fed up with you, **but you are expected in this society to be humble and tolerate all that as a married woman** (*my emphasis*).

Interviewer: Don't you think we need changes in our culture so that women may be free to live a happy life?

Mrs. Gulwako: **No! No! the fact that you married in Swazi culture, you made an oath to die at your new home. There is no need for any changes.** (*emphasis added*)

Interviewer: Don't you think there are certain changes that need to be effected in our culture to make life better for everyone including women?

Mrs. Gulwako: **Those who want to change our culture are influenced by whites who have their own culture. Why should we get rid of our own culture and adopt other people's culture?** (*emphasis added*).

This shows that Swazi women are aware of the problems that women encounter but they think of them as personal problems to be dealt with personally without feeling that they must contest them in more formal, public and political ways. Challenging men to them means 'adopting other people's culture' and some women would rather stay with their problems than see their culture threatened by Westernisation.

It is very intriguing to note that it is only certain artifacts that are picked and labelled "Western". For instance, the traditionalist Jim Gama does not talk about the clothes that he wears as a Western phenomenon. Other women retain traditional forms of dress (see the character sketches in Chapter 4) as an articulated resistance to Westernization and as an assertion of national identity and pride.

I therefore argue here that the progressive women advocating for women's rights are not trying to 'copy' what is done in the West but are responding to issues that are specifically confronting many Swazi women. As Narayan (1997) rightly points out:

If there seems to be considerable resemblance, at least at a certain level of abstraction, between the issues addressed by Third World feminists and those addressed by Western feminists, it is a result not of faddish mimicry but of the fact that women's inequality and mistreatment are, unfortunately, ubiquitous features of many "Western" and "non-Western" cultural contexts, even as their manifestations in specific contexts display important differences of detail. (pg.13)

In sum I have observed from the data that the discourse of rights is an unpopular discourse in Swaziland not only among men but also among women, mostly rural women who contend that the struggle belongs to urban educated women who have assimilated Western culture. The data also shows that there are women who are in favour of the discourse of rights.

CHAPTER 7

7.1. Conclusion

In this chapter I will start off by giving a brief overview of all the chapters and then I will reflect on some of the implications of the whole thesis. I will then make a few recommendations for further research.

Summary

In Chapter one I noted that most women, particularly rural women, are disinclined to challenge their male counterparts because of the way they have been socialised into believing that man is the head of the family and therefore his authority should not be questioned. For this reason, women occupy subordinate roles in society. I also noted that in Swaziland, women are also underrepresented in government and in politics. The family as a social institution is central to the reproduction of patriarchal relations and the perpetuation of women's subordination. As Afshar and Dennis (1992:21) rightly point out, women have a multifaceted role in society. They are the producers, managers of household consumption, mothers and care-givers and also active in the community. Swazi women are no exception to this. I also pointed out that women perform a lot of duties and they get no reward for the duties they perform in the private domain.

In chapter one, I also noted that the discourse of rights is not a popular discourse in Swaziland though a few organisations have been formed to conscientise women of their rights. I have also cited Swaziland's dual legal system as one of the main hindrances to

the advancement of equal opportunity. The dualistic nature of the legal system in Swaziland complicates the issue of women's rights.

In chapter two I examined Third World feminist approach to the questions of the construction of femininity. In this chapter I noted that as much as there is no single approach to Third World feminism, there are several differing political perspectives within feminist politics. Yllo and Bograd (1981:7) note that very broadly, "radical feminists" emphasise the primacy of women's subordination to men which they regard as the key to changing society as a whole. "Liberal feminists" argue that women should have equal opportunities within society to jobs and education and oppose discrimination against women. "Socialist feminists" think women are oppressed not only by men but by other forms of subordination, such as class and race inequality.

I therefore took cognisance of the fact that Third World women need to broaden their agenda to be relevant to themselves. As most contemporary scholars pointed out, Western women are not "sisters" in solidarity with African women, but often contribute to black women's oppression. In this chapter I also noted that in Africa various feminist readings are emerging. "Feminism" is being consistently expanded to address the culture specific situation of African women.

In chapter three I discussed the methodology adopted in this thesis. I pointed out that this thesis is grounded in feminist research which is different from positivist social research. I then presented the assumptions of feminist qualitative research. I have also identified

and discussed materials which portray the role and influence of the media in society at large. I have pointed out that the mass media affects large numbers of people and how they perceive the world. Therefore, the object of this thesis has been to show how the radio programme “Khalamdumbadumbane” reinforces women’s perception of themselves and their understanding of the world.

I also argue in this chapter that the radio programme “Khalamdumbadumbane” provides non-formal education to its listeners. I have cited contemporary scholars, the likes of Jordan and Weedon (1995), Jones David (1988), Scannel (1991) and Howitt (1982) among others, who discuss the influence of the media on its listeners. The radio programme “Khalamdumbadumbane” and the personality involved are also introduced in the last section of chapter three.

Chapters four, five and six contain an outline of how the interviews were conducted and also provide a character sketch of the respondents to the interviews. Each of these chapters provides a discussion and analysis of the experiences of Swazi women as derived from the interviews. The women’s experiences as recorded in the transcribed interviews were analysed for common themes. Three broad interrelated themes emerged from this analysis. Two of these themes were further divided into sub themes. The categories were as follows:

1. Power relations

- (a) Imbalance / Inequality between the sexes
- (b) Patriarchal family system

- (c) Disregard for women
- (d) Abusive relationships

2. Cultural Identity

- (a) Swazi values versus Western values
- (b) Religious Discourse

3. The Discourse of Rights

7.2. Concluding Reflections

My concern in this thesis was to show how the radio programme “Khalamdumbadumbane” functions as non-formal education in influencing discourses of femininity and the self-perception of women in Swaziland. From the interviews with Swazi women and the host of the radio programme, it was evident that the advice offered expects women to assume subordinate roles to those of men. “Khalamdumbadumbane” therefore helps to produce unequal power relations between the sexes.

From the women’s responses, one could see how the radio programme “Khalamdumbadumbane” influences women’s perception of themselves. Gama achieves this by presenting Swazi culture as a “natural phenomenon”, “common sense” and therefore a “norm” that is unchallengeable and foundational. It was evident from the interviews that most women believe that what Gama advocates for is a “regime of truth” that should be maintained. I noted that women are not aware that the experiences of

women have been left out in the making of Swazi culture. 'Women have adapted themselves to the wishes of men and feel that this adaptation were their true nature' (Reason and Rowan 1981:461). The radio programme therefore contributes to the stereotyping and role-casting of women and therefore their low self-esteem.

It also became apparent that the radio programme "Khalamdumbadumbane" is a vehicle of an ideology which sustains inequality between sexes. This Gama does by legitimizing the idea of males as the dominant of the two sexes in the way he solves women's problems. From the interviews I also gathered that some women think of male domination as 'natural' and they insist that women should always be submissive, they should not try to behave like males because as one of the respondents puts it "men will always be men".

From this qualitative research, I found that some Swazi women unknowingly agree to the perpetuation of patriarchy. They believe that women are not capable of heading families because Gama, in the radio programme "Khalamdumbadumbane" tells them that a family headed by a female is not recognised as a family but a household. Therefore, the radio programme contributes to perpetuating the oppressive status quo and the social perception of women as inferior.

It is also evident from the interviews with Swazi women that in Swaziland, there is total disrespect and disregard for women. The broadcast media and in the context of this thesis, the radio programme "Khalamdumbadumbane" perpetuates this state of affairs.

From the recordings of the programme, I noted that Gama often encourages men to be promiscuous and openly tells women to be content that they are also loved and not to expect men to be faithful in their relationships.

Furthermore, the interviews revealed that most Swazi women are locked up in unhappy relationships because Swazi culture does not allow them to move out of these relationships. Swazi society defines women in terms of their male partners. An unmarried woman is seen as an object of pity because she lacks one of the 'basics to survival'. This is probably one reason why some women stick to their relationships even when they do not benefit at all from being in those relationships. Moreover, from the interviews it also transpired that women do survive without men in their lives. Some women pointed out that most families are single handedly headed by women and even in instances where the man is still alive; the women do the better part for the survival of the family.

I also explored the impact of Christianity on Swazi women. From the interviews, I found that most women are not aware that Gama co-opts this religion to reinforce the ideology that he advocates. Gama disguises his ideology by referring to what is "moral" and "immoral" according to the Bible. Therefore the religious discourse encourages the sexist state of affairs in Swaziland. It is, however, intriguing to note that though Gama uses Christianity to back up his ideology he is wary of accepting other aspects of Christianity because it is a Western value.

The fear of adopting Western values has also come up as one reason why Swazis do not want to accept progressive women who are advocating for women's rights. From the interviews, I gathered that Swazi women are locked up in a dilemma of not knowing whether to resist the patriarchy which Gama supports or to adopt the changes that the progressive women advocate. Swazi women are caught up in a complex web and they seem not to be sure how they can disentangle themselves from this web. Mohanty in Mohanty (et.al) (1991:56) observed that 'the average Third World woman leads an essentially truncated life based on her feminine gender and her being Third World'. Mohanty further states that Third World feminists run the risk of marginalization from both mainstream cultural discourse and Western feminist discourse and this best explains the position of Swazi women.

It also transpired from the interviews that the reason why most Swazi women do not want to accept the emancipated women advocating for women's rights is because as Hooks observed they cannot identify with these 'knee-jerk feminists who want to act like it's a struggle against men'. This is, unfortunately, the strand of feminism that people most hear about in Swaziland and yet it is the least politically developed. Some of the respondents noted that they would accept progressive women only if they can change their aggressive attitude towards men. It is therefore important that men be included in the struggle for women's rights and in the context of the Third World this often means a broader agenda, as Johnson – Odum (1991:322) rightly points out, 'in Africa, problems of nutrition, infant mortality, illiteracy, health-care delivery, skill training, etc. are of central importance to women's lives'.

In essence, I want to conclude by saying that for women to be liberated, they must realise that they are worth more than the way they are treated in Swaziland, that they are important human beings and not “dolls made of old cloth”.

7.3. Value of this research

This thesis offers a critical feminist engagement with the way the radio programme “Khalamdumbadumbane” influences discourses of femininity in Swaziland. This research is a contribution to qualitative research on Third World feminist issues. It contributes to women’s studies by providing a feminist examination of Swazi society which is based on the expression of the voices of Swazi women reacting to a spokesman for male domination. It is also important in that women have been given the opportunity to speak for themselves. It therefore makes a contribution to feminist literature in that it is a thesis about women, for women.

7.4. Limitations of the research

The major flaw of this research is that all the interviews were conducted in SiSwati and were translated to English. In the process of translating the data, some of the important elements may have been left out because of the limited vocabulary the researcher had in translating some of the indigenous SiSwati words to English.

7.5. Recommendation for further research

- Similar research could be done to find out how Swazi women socialize their children, do they still perpetuate inequity between the sexes by socializing boys differently from girls?
- Another study could be carried out to look into the construction of gender realities through the SiSwati language.
- Further research could be done to find out how Swazi women resist men's domination i.e. what means do women resort to in trying to fight male dominance, particularly in local culturally embedded ways.
- Another study could be carried out to find out if there are identity shifts in the progressive women advocating for women's rights. Do women change face when they get home and allow men to dictate to them, contrary to what they stand for outside the home?
- Workshops to enlighten both urban and rural women about their rights need to be done in Swaziland and also to hear from the women themselves what their problems are and how they think they can be solved.

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APPENDICE (a): INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

Interview with the host of the radio programme

“Khalamdumbadumbane”

1. What is the overall aim of this programme?
2. Is the aim achieved in this programme?
3. Do you get any responses from your listeners about whether they benefit from the programme?
4. Do you believe they benefit from the programme?
5. What would you say to the assertion that modern Swazi women believe they deserve to be treated equally with men?
6. How do you think the Western paradigm influences and affects the Swazi way of living?
7. What do you think of the postmodern women who are advocating for change in women's roles in Swazi society?
8. In your own view, are women capable of heading families?
9. What is the most important message to women in the radio programme “khalamdumbadumbane?”
10. Do you believe that Swazi culture needs overhauling – a shift from the old paradigm that views men as ‘the people’ and women as ‘the other’?.
11. What would the ideal Swazi society look like in terms of relationships between men and women?

Interview with Swazi women.

1. Why do you listen to the radio programme “khalamdumbadumbane”
2. How often do you listen to it?
3. What do you think is the aim of this programme?
4. Have you ever written to this programme?
5. If so, would you like to state briefly what your problem was?
6. Was your problem “solved?”
7. Do you believe what Gama gives as solutions to the problems are the best possible options or are the other possibilities that Gama may not be recommending to women?
8. Does the radio programme give you insights into things you might not have been aware of, such as what you as a woman are expected to do in Swazi society?
9. Do you think Swazi society as portrayed in the radio programme “khalamdumbadumbane” values women and their contribution to society?
10. What do you think of the post modern women who are advocating for change in women’s roles in Swazi society?
11. What do you think Gama would say about these women?
12. Do you believe that Swazi culture needs over-hauling, a shift from the old paradigm that views men as “the people” and women as “the other?”
13. Do you think Gama would like you to think that Swazi culture needs to change?
14. If you were to pass judgement on the manner in which Gama handles this programme, would you say, he is fair to both sexes (male and female)?

SISWATI VERSION OF INTERVIEW QUESTIONS.

INGCOCO NEMETFULI WELUHLELO “KHALAMDUMBADUMBANE”

1. Babe Gama, ngabe yini injongo yaloluhlelo lwamdumbadumbane?
2. Ngekubuka kwakho, loluhlelo luyayifeza yini lenjongo yalo?
3. Balaleli baloluhlelo bayabhala yini kusho kutsi luyabasita loluhlelo?
4. Ngekucabanga kwakho, balaleli bayasitakala yini?
5. Babe Gama, ungatsini ngalabantfu besifazane labakholelwa kutsi bafanele kuphatfwa ngendlela lefanako nebantfu besilisa (emadvodza).
6. Ngekubuka kwakho tintfo letentiwa belungu ngesheya kwetilwandle, titsintsana kanjani nendlela ema Swati laphila ngayo. Tikhona yini tintfo lesetentiwa maSwati ngobe nje batibona tentiwa belungu?
7. Ungatsini ngalabafati labafati lesebafuna emalungelo abo ngobe bacabanga kutsi bafanele kuphatfwa ngekufana nemadvodza ?
8. Ngekwati kwakho njengemuntfu lomdzala, bafati bangakhona yini kuphatsa imiti?
9. Uma ungabeka kafisha ungatsi yini umlayeto webafati lowuniketa kuloluhlelo lwa Mdumbadumbane?
10. Akwenteki yini kube khona bantfu labasebentisa kabi lomlayeto wakho ku khalamdumbadumbane baze balahlekelwe (njenge kuchitseka kwemiti ngobe indvodza ive kutsi utsi umfati uyacoshwa)?
11. Uyakholelwa yini kutsi emasiko nemihambo yemaSwati ifanele igucuke?
12. Ungabeka yini kafisha kutsi sive semaSwati kufanele siphile njani mayelana ne kuphatsana kwebafati nemadvodza?

INGCOCO NABOMAKE

1. Yini sizatfu lesenta ulalele luhlelo lwa Khalamdumbadumbane?
2. Ululalela kanganani loluhlelo?
3. Ngekucabanga kwakho yini injongo yaloluhlelo?
4. Wake walubhalela yini wena loluhlelo?
5. Uma wake walubhalela, ungashoyini kafisha kutsi bekuyini inkinga yakho?
6. Yachacheka yini lenkinga yakho?
7. Ngekucabanga kwakho, letimphendvulo letiniketwa ngu Gama kuloluhlelo
Iwetinkinga, nguyona ndlela letingachacheka ngayo letinkinga nobe kumbe kukhona
letinye timphendvulo letincono langafuni kutiniketa ?
8. Ngabe loluhlelo luyawavula yini emehlo akho kutsi ubone kancono tintfo nobe ubone
indlela lencono yekuphila, njengekutsi kufanele wenteni njenge muntfu wesifazane
lophila lapha e Swatini?
9. Ngekucabanga kwakho, lapha eSwatini buya nakekelwa yini bumcoka bebantfu
besifazane nendlela labasita ngayo lapha eSwatini?
10. Ungatsini wena ngalabomake lasebalwela emalungelo ebafati lapha eSwatini?
11. Ucabanga kutsi Gama angatsini ngalabafati?
12. Tikhona yini tingucuko letidzinga kwentiwa emasikweni nemihambeni yemaSwati?
13. Ucabanga kutsi Gama angatsi tiyadzingeka yini letingucuko?
14. Kube bewungehlulela loluhlelo lwaMbhokane, bewungatsi ubaphatsa ngekufana yini
bonkhe bantfu, besilisa nebesifazane?