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Intertwining National and Female Identity in South African and Mozambican Novels: A Thematic analysis of Paulina Chiziane's "The Joyful Song of the Partridge" and Kopano Matlwa's "Period Pain"

Yusra Tayob

A research report submitted to the Faculty of Humanities, University of the Witwatersrand, Johannesburg, in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts in Portuguese.

Johannesburg

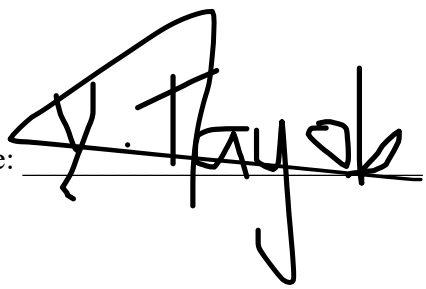
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Date: 30th March 2025

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INTRODUCTION

This research examines the intersection of national and female identity in two contemporary African novels: “The Joyful Song of Partridge” by Mozambican author Paulina Chiziane (2014) and “Period Pain” (2016) by South African author Kopano Matlwa. By centering how women’s lived experiences are narrated in these texts, the study explores how postcolonial literature contributes to debates about identity, power, and nationhood in African societies. Through an African feminist and postcolonial lens, the research argues that these novels offer critical explorations of how national identities are built, challenged and reshaped through gendered experiences (Spivak, 1987; Oyěwùmí, 1997; Akin-Aina, 2010; Boehmer, 2005).

The construction of national identity in postcolonial contexts is often marked by tensions between unity and exclusion and is a concept explored by many postcolonial scholars and theorists (Baines, 1998; Anderson, 1983). In both South Africa and Mozambique, historical narratives have tended to neglect and marginalise the perspectives of women and other subjugated groups.(Hetherington, 1993; Leal & Tavares, 2020). Literature offers a space for the contestation of such national narratives, especially when authored by women who themselves have experienced the burdens and effects of colonialism and patriarchy (Begum, 2006; Da Silva, 2013). These gendered silences within nationalist narratives call attention to the need for a more nuanced understanding of identity itself – particularly in how it is constructed or negotiated in postcolonial societies. In this context, identity is more than just an expression of the personal or cultural. It is a dynamic construct that is shaped by socio-political forces like colonialism, nationalism and patriarchy. It is therefore useful to turn to the theoretical definitions of identity and how national identity emerges through socialisation and collective ideologies.

Identity has been defined as “a social phenomenon which starts with the identity formation process by means of interaction with the ‘other’ or against the ‘other’” (İnaç & Ünal, 2013 p.223). Such identities such as cultural and social identities can be categorised as ‘granted’ or ‘gained’ identities. National identity is a group under the ‘granted’ identity as it is formed as a result of socialisation and through the nationalism ideology (p.225). As described by İnaç & Ünal (2013), nationalism is used to create a national economy, a unified country with a single government and a shared national identity. Rutherford (2007) claims that national identity relies on common culture and community. Thus, national identity is the result of nation

building and national ideology. For instance, Gilroy (1993) points out that traditional ideas of national identity rely on citizenship and patriotism to create a sense of national unity at the expense of ethnic, cultural and linguistic differences. These observations led researchers to examine and question tenets of national identity and its multifaceted nature. One such link to national identity is the historical and temporal space in which nation building occurs.

Colonialism has transformed identities of the colonised people and nationalism can be seen as the subversion of local identity to a national identity (Dirlik, 2002). In postcolonialism, the fight for liberation was accompanied by a hope that the colonial system would be abolished and that former colonies could establish autonomous national identities that are free from colonial input (Dirlik, 2002). However, it is evident that the effects of colonisation may not have been completely eradicated from societies. For instance, the consequences are evident in the poverty of majority of the world's population (Dirlik, 2002). Post-colonialist theories challenge the colonial practices whilst providing a framework through which the colonised can understand the ways in which colonisation has affected their societies and their identities (Nasser, 2019). Postcolonial theories have also provided an approach to the study of identity in its complex and multifaceted nature (Nasser, 2019). More specifically, the study of gender and postcolonialism has been widely researched. This area of study encompasses the impact of colonial rule on women. Feminist theorists, such as Gayatri Spivak's work of 1987 titled "Can the Subaltern speak?' has highlighted the need to consider the specific ways in which women in colonised societies faced a 'double colonisation' as they are oppressed by both the colonial systems and by patriarchal traditions. National identity in the post-colonial world has since become a major field of study. The focus of this research will be centred around the construction of national identity in South Africa and Mozambique, and how the complexities between national identity and female identity present in women's novels.

National identity in the post-colonial context has become a popular field of research, especially regarding the formation of identity in the post-colonial time (Palacios, 2021). Voices of marginalised women have been highlighted to help create a coherent image of what identity looks like in present day (P.B Rodrigues & Sheldon, 2013). The literary world is one such space where this is explored through novels (Patteti & Rao, 2023). Women authors often challenge the idea of a singular and unified identity as it often excludes the experiences of women and marginalised groups (Patetti & Rao, 2023). Through their works, they provide a perspective on the complexity of the female experience within the context of nationhood (P.B

Rodrigues & Sheldon, 2013). These experiences can be linked to colonialism and other oppressive structures (Patetti & Rao, 2023). Literature on this can reflect the gap between reality and idealism (Chapman, 2018). South African and Mozambican women's novels challenge the notion of a unified national identity and offer a more nuanced portrayal of what nationhood (Chapman, 2018). Despite its growing presence in the literary world, South African and Mozambican women's literature often struggles to portray a unified national identity which accounts for the complex female experience. This can be due to tension between national liberation struggles and the diversity of the female experience. Women writers who lived through their nations' liberation struggles navigate these tensions through their works (Owen, 2007). These works could also offer a unique lens to understand female identity and how it intersects with national identity in their unique contexts. Mozambique, for example, is a country that attracted merchants from different parts of the world (Hannaford, 2018). Following over four centuries of Portuguese colonial rule and civil war, Mozambique gained independence in 1975, becoming the People's Republic of Mozambique (Rodrigues, 2019). Literature in Mozambique often played a resistive role during colonial rule, with anti-colonial authors such as Noémia de Sousa, Orlando Mendes, Rui Knopfli, and Paulina Chiziane.

Literature often reflected on the harsh practices and exploitation of the Mozambican people but also reflected the lived reality following the independence. Paulina Chiziane, for example, focused her literature on the concerns of women in Mozambique, having experienced moments of war and their effects on families and societies (Micheletti, 2019). Some of her works focus on the discovery of the Mozambican identity, explore the diverse experiences of women, explore her country's traditions and cultures, as well as critique the structures left behind by colonial rule. In her novel "The Song of the Joyful Partridge" (2008), which was later translated and published in 2024, Chiziane grapples with the tension between the formation of national identity after liberation and the diverse female experience under patriarchal rule as well as the effect of colonialism on the female body (Tavares, 2011). South African author Kopano Matlwa exemplifies this challenge in her novel titled "Period Pain" (2016). Her works focus on the experience of the "Born Free" generation in South Africa, the legacy of the anti-apartheid struggle and the diverse realities of young women navigating their identity within the changing South African context (Ngom, 2019). In South Africa, the colonial era began with the arrival of Dutch settlers in 1652 at Cape Town, establishing the Cape Colony followed by the introduction of the slave trade (Huffman, 2011). By the 18th century, the British settlers

arrived and formed the Union of South Africa in 1910 (McKenna, 2011). South African then gained independence in 1994 from the Apartheid regime (1948-1994) through resistance movements. Thus, the "Rainbow Nation" was born: a nation in which there is unity in diversity, and hope for an equal and peaceful nation (Chapman, 2018). National identity, however, is not a monolithic or unitary concept (Smith, 1991). It is undoubtedly shaped by various factors (Hall, 1996). These include history, social structures, race, sexuality, and cultural representations (Daymond, 2013). Gender roles in literature, especially how they are portrayed, contribute to the construction of national identity in these two countries. This research focuses on the works of two female authors. Paulina Chiziane's novel "The Joyful Song of Partridge" (2024) that has been translated into English and Kopano Matlwa's novel titled "Period Pain" (2016) are the main texts for analysis. By analysing and comparing the two novels, the aim is to exhibit how they articulate female identity against the background of their respective national identities. The research questions that will help guide this research are as follows:

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1) How do female characters navigate their gender identity in these novels?

   This question examines how the protagonists' experiences reflect both personal and structural negotiations of gender roles within postcolonial societies. Its focus is on how characters ascribe, reject or negotiate traditional expectations shaped by patriarchy and colonial legacies. This speaks to African feminist concerns with women's agency and the "humanness" of African women (Goredema, 2010; Akin-Aina, 2010).

2) How do the novels portray the relationship between gender roles and the construction of national identity?

   Here, the study explores how women are positioned in national discourses, and how their roles in the family and community become symbolic sites of nation-building. This derives from theories that explore how women are places as "mothers of the nation" or depository of tradition and values (Boehmer, 2005; Da Silva, 2013).

3) Do the novel's differences or similarities stem from each nation's differing colonial experiences and social structures?

   This comparative question considers the specificities of Portuguese colonialism in Mozambique versus the dual British/Dutch and apartheid legacies in South Africa. It reflects on how distinct colonial legacies influence identity formation and thematic concerns in the novels.

4) Are there any themes regarding gender and its connection to national identity that occur across both novels?

   This question asks whether the novels revealed shared patterns in how national identity is challenged through female experience. It serves as a support for the comparative approach by identifying points of intersection in the novels.

These questions allow for an in-depth and nuanced engagement with the novels and contribute to broader discussions about identity formation, literary resistance, and the gendered dimensions of nationalism in postcolonial Africa. To explore these questions, the study makes use of two approaches. Thematic analysis, following Braun and Clarke's (2006) six-phase framework, is used to identify recurring motifs and patterns related to identity, gender and power in each novel. Comparative literary analysis is then applied to draw connections between the two texts, contextualising them within their respective national histories and cultural frameworks (Sahin, 2016). This methodology allows the research to engage closely with the novels whilst contributing to a broader theoretical debate. Ultimately, this research contributes to ongoing scholarly conversations in African literature, gender studies and postcolonial discourse. It argues that literature written by African women writers plays a critical role in challenging dominant ideologies , reshaping the narrative surrounding identity and offering alternative perspectives of nationhood that are inclusive, critical and gendered.

Chapter 1 CONTEXTUALISATION OF SOUTH AFRICA AND MOZAMBIQUE

To understand how national and female identities are negotiated in the novels of Paulina Chiziane and Kopano Matlwa, it is essential to first contextualise the historical and political landscapes of Mozambique and South Africa. Both countries experienced prolonged colonial domination followed by national-building activities that aimed to unify fractured societies and rediscovering established identities. However, these efforts often silenced the diverse experiences of women and marginalised groups. This chapter presents a comparative overview of the colonial, postcolonial and nation-building processes in each country, showcasing how these contexts shaped national identity and created the basis for the tensions explored in the selected texts. Mozambique and South Africa, both located in southern African, share histories of prolonged colonial occupation that have deeply shaped their political, social and cultural environments. Mozambique, colonised by Portugal for more than four centuries, was obligated to work by force, subjected to racial segregation and policies of cultural assimilation which favoured colonial language and identity over indigenous identity (Cabaço, 2007). South Africa experienced multiple layers of colonisation, starting with Dutch settlement in the 17th century and followed by British control, culminating in the institutionalisation of apartheid in the 20th century (McKenna, 2011). These disparate colonial histories – one defined by assimilation and the other by racial segregation – have had significant implications for how national identity was constructed in each country (Havstad, 2019; Roux & Baker, 2021). Both countries contexts show how colonial rule disrupted indigenous systems of living and governing and rather imposed hierarchal national projects that excluded the perspectives and roles of women (Da Silva, 2013; Hetherington, 1993). This history is important for the discussion of the post-colonial period. This section seeks to analyse the backgrounds of the countries in which the literature was produced, the social context in which the writers produced this work, to gain a rich understanding of the texts.

1.1 Colonial Histories and Resistance

1.1.1 Mozambique

Mozambique's colonial history began in the late 15th century with the arrival of the Portuguese, who gradually established a presence over coastal regions and later expanded interiorly. Prior to colonisation, the region was home to societies such as the Makhuwa, Tsonga, and Shona peoples, and was integrated into Indian Ocean trade networks (Alpers, 1974). Portuguese colonialism in Mozambique was characterised by forced labour, racial hierarchy and cultural domination. The "assimilado" system promoted the erosion of indigenous culture by granted limited "rights" to Mozambicans who adopted Portuguese language and culture and abandoned their own (Havstad, 2019). Colonial regimes not only supressed African political structures but also imposed gender hierarchies that limited women's roles in public and private spheres. Women in this sense were marginalised twofold – as colonised subjects and as women within a patriarchal society. However, the people , including women were not passive recipients of colonial rule. During the armed liberation struggle (1964-1974), women played active roles in the resistance through FRELIMO, engaging in both war and battles, logistics and education (Arnfred, 2007). Despite their active participation, their contributions were often downplayed in post-independence narratives.

1.1.2 South Africa

South Africa's colonial experience is marked by multiple phases of foreign domination, beginning with the Dutch settlement in 1652 and followed by British colonisation in the 20th century (McKenna, 2010). Prior to colonisation, the region was inhabited by diverse indigenous groups including the KhoiKhoi, San, Zulu, Xhosa and Sotho people, many of whom evolved centralised systems of governance and resistance (McKenna, 2010; Huffman, 2009). From 1836-1853, South Africa saw the Great Trek: the migration to the inland by Boer farmers to escape British rule (McKenna, 2010). This led to the establishment of the Boer Republics (Transvaal and Orange Free State). Conflict later arose between the British Empire and the Boer Republics (referred to as the Anglo-Boer war) in 1899. The victory of the British led to the exoneration of the Boer Republics. The Union of South Africa was then formed in 1910, which consisted of four British colonies: Cape Colony, Natal, Transvaal and Orange Free State. With the systematisation of apartheid in 1948, South African institutionalised racial segregation and economic exclusion, codifying white supremacy into law (Baines, 1998). The

imposition of colonial domination led to widespread land dispossession, the destruction of indigenous governance systems and the classification of people according to their race. As in Mozambique, women – especially Black women – experienced a "double oppression" of racial and gendered oppression. They were often consigned to domestic labour and denied political representation and yet, women were also central to anti-apartheid resistance, organising mass protests such as the 1956 Women's March to the Union Buildings (Walker, 1991). Despite their contributions, official post-apartheid narratives predominantly celebrated male leadership and reduced women's roles to symbolic "mothers of the nation". Like Mozambique, South Africa's liberation movements continued to grow and challenged the regime. South Africa finally realised full democratic independence in 1994 (McKenna, 2010). This history is important to understand the postcolonial era of South Africa and demonstrates the impact that colonialism had on both countries in terms of national identity.

1.2 Nation-Building After Liberation

Following independence, both Mozambique and South Africa tackled projects of nation-building aimed at unifying deeply divided societies. In both countries, the process of structuring a national identity was shaped by the legacies of colonialism, internal political struggles and competing perspectives of citizenships. Although he ideological frameworks and historical timelines differed, both nations framed their post-independence identities around ideals of liberation, unity and equality – often at the expense of diversity , especially in regards to gender and ethnicity.

1.2.1 Mozambique: Postcolonial National Identity and Gender

Mozambique gained independence from Portugal in 1975 following a decade-long struggle led by Frente de Libertação de Moçambique (FRELIMO). The liberation movement aimed to unify different ethnic groups under a common cause. Despite their achievement of independence, civil war erupted between FRELIMO and the anti-communist Resistência Nacional Moçambicana (RENAMO), which lasted until 1992 (Alpers, 1974, p.42). These historical events are crucial to understanding the ethnic and political dynamics in Mozambique, as they have greatly impacted the nation's development and identity. The post-independence government sought to dismantle the colonial divides by created a non-racial, secular national identity grounded in socialist principles. FRELIMO promoted ideological unity, discouraging ethnic, tribal or religious affiliations in favour of a singular Mozambican identity (Tavares,

2010; Cabaço, 2007). The country's young independence, however , is still tormented by elements of colonialism such as the unequal distribution of power and marginalisation of indigenous voices (Leal & Tavares, 2020). Although women had played crucial roles during the liberation struggle – as fighters, couriers, and activists – their contributions are often overlooked and not meaningfully reflected into the new nation. Post independence gender policies often framed women as supporters of male revolutionaries or again as "mothers of the nation", reinforcing patriarchal norms within the nationalist framework (Arnfred, 2007). This created a disconnect between the assurance of equality and the lived experience of women in Mozambique's post-colonial nation.

1.2.2 South Africa : Nationhood in the "Rainbow Nation"

South Africa's formal shift to democracy occurred in 1994, after decades of apartheid rule (Banes, 1998; Roux & Baker, 2021). The new government, led by the African National Congress (ANC), promoted the idea of A "Rainbow Nation" – a dream of inclusive, non-racial democracy articulated by Archbishop Desmond Tutu (Tutu, 2000; Baines, 1998). This was reinforced through national policies such as the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC), which aimed to foster forgiveness, unity and national healing (Wilson, 2001). A nation building efforts continued , the main goal become to eliminate racial divisions and promote a unified national identity (Moodley & Adam, 2000). However, this came with the danger of overlooking complex experiences – particularly those of women , who has not only suffered racial oppression and gendered hierarchies (Hetherington, 1993). The Rainbow Nation ideal was a powerful symbolic tool, yet it often overlooked the structural inequalities that continued to define daily living for the majority of South Africans (Barolsky, 2012). Studies show that despite formal political equality, economic and social discrepancies remain – especially for black women , who are disproportionally affected by poverty, unemployment and gender-based violence. (Cloete, 2006). Furthermore, the contribution of women in anti-apartheid resistance , such as the 956 Women's March and countless grassroots mobilisations – is often overlooked in post-apartheid narratives that focus on male struggle heroes (Walker, 1991). Xenophobia also became a recurring issue, especially in post-apartheid South Africa where the national goal experienced tension over economic inequality and political corruption was expressed through violence against African migrants (Neocosmos, 2008). Kopano Matlwa's "Period Pain" reflects this fragmentation of national identity demonstrating how exclusion, trauma and

systemic failure continue to shape the experiences of black South African women (Eyinda, 2022). While South Africa's post-apartheid commitment to inclusion, it has largely failed to tackle the interconnected issues of race, gender and class inequality (Roux &Baker, 2021). Identity politics continue to shape public life, and the ideal of unity remains contested (Baines, 1998). These national narratives, constructed through liberation struggles and postcolonial governance, frequently excludes women's perspectives placing them as symbolic mothers or erasing them entirely, The novels subject to this analysis respond to this erasure by offering alternative visions of identity that accentuate the female experience.

1.3 The Silencing of Diverse Voices

Despite their contributions to national liberation struggles, the voices of women and other marginalised groups were often excluded from the dominant narratives surrounding national identity that emerged in both Mozambique and South Africa. These national stories that are built on ideals of unity and a collective identity, frequently perpetuated patriarchal structures, making women either invisible or underappreciated. This neglect has had profound implications for how female identity is constructed and represented in postcolonial societies.

In Mozambique, FRELIMO's post-independence vision emphasised a unified socialist identity. While gender equality officially promoted, in practice, women's roles were often essentialised. Female soldiers and activists, despite their contributions during the war, were largely reabsorbed into traditional frameworks, celebrated more as "mothers" and "caregivers" than as active political agents (Arnfred, 2007). This symbolic framing as Leal and Tavares (2020) notice, effectively domesticated female agency and rather reinforced gender hierarchies under the pretense of post-liberation progress.

Similarly, in South Africa, the transition to democracy involved the celebration of certain figures – often male – into national heroes while the broader contributions of women were omitted from public memory (Heatherington, 1993). Although women played a central role in organising resistance during apartheid, from the 1956 Women's March to township uprisings, strikes and underground activism, these efforts were diminished in the dominant discourse post-apartheid national memory (Da Silva, 2013). One common way in which women have been included in national narratives is through their positioning as the symbolic "mothers of

the nation". This trope reinforces the idea that women's primary function in the nation is reproductive (Yuval-Davis, 1997). By boxing women into this maternal role, postcolonial nation building efforts limited their ability to fully participate as political subjects. As opposed to highlighting women's agency, these roles aided in containing it within socially acceptable frameworks.

In both Mozambique and South Africa, the intersectional realities of identity – especially how gender intersects with race, class and location – were also ignored in dominant nation-building projects. In South Africa, for example, post-apartheid discourse often failed to account for the compounded marginalisation of black women, who continue to experience social and economic exclusion despite formal political equality (Barolsky, 2012). Xenophobia further complicate this image revealing the limits of the so-called Rainbow Nation ideal (Neocosmos, 2008). The silencing of diverse voices has created gaps in the national narratives of both countries, especially where the lived experiences of women are mismatched with official accounts of liberation and progress. These silences have made literature an importance space for resistance and rebuilding (Boehmer, 2005). Through fiction, female authors create counter-narratives that challenge national myths and refocus marginalised identities.

In "The Joyful Song of Partridge" (2020), Paulina Chiziane critiques the patriarchal and racialised legacies of Mozambique's colonial and post-colonial systems by emphasising how women's identities are shaped by both personal trauma and institutionalised oppression (Da Silva, 2013). In "Period Pain" (2016), Kopano Matlwa explores the fragmentation and alienation faced by black South African women in the aftermath of apartheid, through themes of mental illness, racism and xenophobia (Eyinda, 2022). Both novels contest dominant national ideologies by prioritising the complexities of gendered experience. These novels not only attach women's voices to existing narrations, they also question the legitimacy of those narratives altogether. By disrupting traditional representations of national identity, they advocate for the reconstruction of the nation in which the full range of experiences that constitute post-colonial reality is recognised.

Chapter 2 National Identity & Female Identity

This chapter explores two central ideas that inform the analysis in this dissertation : national identity and female identity. These two concepts are important in the understanding how literature reflects and challenges the postcolonial realities of South Africa and Mozambique (Boehmer, 2005). Both the novels reveal the fragmented and contested nature of identity in post-independent and post-apartheid societies where the discourse of national unity does not necessarily include the perspectives of women and other marginalised groups, and reflect the reality of national identity in these countries (Da Silva, 2013). National identity, in this context, refers to a socially constructed sense of belonging that is shaped by shared history, cultural practices, political narratives and language (Anderson, 1983). It is often imposed through nation instruments but is challenged by those whose experiences do not lie within dominant narratives (Baines,1998). Alternatively, female identity relates to the ways in which women's roles and self-ideals are shaped by both gendered expectations and broader social-political and cultural pressures (Nnaemeka, 2004). In this chapter, national identity is examined in relation to colonial legacies, liberation movements, and post-independence nation-building. Female identity is explored through the lens of intersectionality considering how women navigate the overlap of patriarchy, race, and nationalism (Crenshaw, 1989). These concepts are discussed both in theoretical terms and also in relation to specific historical and social contexts of South Africa and Mozambique. By unpacking these identity constructs , this chapter serves as the groundwork for the analysis that follows. It highlights how the selected novels critique dominant identity narratives ad offer alternative ways of viewing the self and the nation from the perspective of black African women.

2.1. NATIONAL IDENTITY

The nation is described by Triandafyllidou to be the most "pertinent form of collective identity" (593). National identity and its definition are defined not only from the common features that nationals share but also includes the distinguishing between other nations (Triandafyllidou, 1998, p.563). This definition appears in diverse forms and is constantly changing and reinvented. Anthony Smith (1991, p.14), described a nation as a "named human population sharing an historic territory, common myths and historical memories, a mass, public culture, a common economy and common legal rights and duties for all members". Alongside this, the identity that comes with a nation can be elaborated to include the psychological bond between

people: the sense of belonging and fellowship (Triandafyllidou, 1998, p.595). Because national identity cannot be discussed in isolation, the process of nation building needs to be addressed. Nation building requires a shared history and culture. These common experiences such as war and revolutions can unite people and create a sense of common purpose (Anderson, 1983). Also contributing to the common sense of purpose, belonging and identity is shared cultural traditions such as language, customs and beliefs (Smith, 1991). Another structure mentioned within this definition is related to political institutions and governance. For example, a stable and effective governing system is crucial for providing order and security to the human population and with that, a strong rule of law ensures equality and justice amongst the population (Fukuyama, 2011). Nations also require an economic component that provides opportunities to its citizens and contributes to the national well-being (Alesina & Spolaore, 2003). Infrastructure such as transportation and communication networks play a role in the functioning of a nation. A national identity is also closely linked to unity, shared values, and civil involvements. A sense of shared values and beliefs of a land and civic duties such as voting can unite citizens and foster a strong national identity (Calhoun, 1997). Lastly, external factors such as the geopolitical position of a nation and global events can also affect the process of nation building. The location of a nation and the relationships with other nations can influence its identity and its evolution. Global events such as war; economic crises and globalisation can also impact a nations development (Held et al., 1999). It is important to note these factors when discussing a national identity as they can be influenced by internal and external factors and continuously evolve over time. This process is closely linked to the process of building national identities. The formation of national identity is a complex process influenced by multiple factors, including cultural heritage, historical events, and social institutions (Smith, 1991). However, one of the most significant actors in the formation of national identity is the government and history of a country. Through policies, actions and politics, a government can play a pivotal role in fostering a shared sense of belonging among its citizens (Weber, 1978). Alongside this, history provides a shared narrative that connects citizens to a common past which ultimately fosters a sense of belonging and unity.

National identity is often viewed as a unifying force, constructed through shared history, language and culture. However, in postcolonial societies like South Africa and Mozambique, it is a deeply challenged and political construct – one that is shaped by colonial legacies and nation-building projects that both include and exclude. Stuart Hall (1996) argues that identities are not fixed entities but formed within representation. As such, national identity functions as

a way to create belonging but also as a way to regulate those who belong and whose narratives are acknowledged. Benedict Anderson (2020) popularly described the nation as an "imagined community" – a symbolic structure created by people who may never see themselves as part of the same collective. In Africa, such collectives often developed through anti-colonial resistance movements whose goal was to unify diverse populations against foreign domination. While these struggles were foundational to national identity, they frequently prioritised ideological unity over cultural or gendered diversity, thereby silencing the voices of many – including women (Nzongola-Ntalaja, 2007).

In Mozambique, the victory of FRELIMO following Portuguese colonial rule established a socialist state that prioritised national unity. Tribal, ethnic and linguistic diversity were downplayed to construct a single Mozambican identity (Bussoti & Nhaueleque , 2022). While this was crucial for social cohesion in a post-war society, it also led to the marginalisation of local, gendered and personal narratives (Ngale, 2011)]. Women who participated in the liberation struggle were celebrated in rhetoric however often confined to symbolic roles such as "mothers of the nation" or guardians of culture and morals (Tavares, 2010). Their lived experiences of violence and trauma rarely found space within official historical accounts.

Similarly, South Africa's democratic transition in 1994 sparked a powerful narrative of unity, reconciliation and multicultural unity all embodied by the concept of the "Rainbow Nation". This concept, introduced by Archbishop Desmond Tutu has faced criticism for failing to address persistent structural inequalities and ongoing social exclusions. Scholars such as Barolsky (2012) contend that the Rainbow Nation rhetoric fosters symbolic unity without adequately tackling economic injustice, xenophobia, or gender-based violence. Similarly, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC), prioritised national healing often at the expense of deeper structural change, and the gendered experiences of women during apartheid were sometimes overlooked or minimised (Walker,1991).

Therefore, in both Mozambique and South Africa, projects aimed at creating a unified national identity have both generated inclusion and exclusion. While liberation movements placed the nation as a space of collective empowerment, these perspectives obscured complex and uncomfortable realities, especially those concerning women. Postcolonial national identity then becomes a contested field where memory, power and representation are negotiated. Both novels "The Joyful Song of Partridge" (2024) and "Period Pain" (2016) challenge these national narratives by centering women's voices and experiences. Chiziane's novel critically

reveals the contradictions of pots-independence Mozambique , showing how patriarchal norms and nationalist ideology converge to diminish female agency (de Macedo Mendes, 2016). Her characters experience marginalisation from both colonial history and the new state that pledged equality. In “Period Pain”, Matlwa’s protagonist navigates a fragmented South African identity characterised by racial animosity, xenophobia and gendered disappointment (Tembo, 2021). For Matlwa, the promise of liberation has not been realised, and the nation becomes a source of alienation rather than belonging. In both novels, national identity is not merely depicted but actively challenged as will be discussed further later.

2.1.1 THE ROLE OF GOVERNMENT IN SHAPING NATIONAL IDENTITY

Governments are structures that play a significant role in shaping national identity. Governments promote shared history and culture. Governments often control the education system, shaping the historical narratives of the country and the cultural values taught to its citizens. They can also preserve historical sites, artifacts and cultural traditions that contribute to a nation’s identity. Governments are responsible for establishing and maintaining political institutions. To ensure fairness and equality, the rule of law is important to provide citizens with a sense of security and order. This in turn allows for economic growth thus creating opportunities for citizens and improve standard of living. This can contribute to a national identity by creating a sense of national pride. More importantly, governments play a significant in promoting national symbols such as flags, anthems and holidays. These reinforce a shared sense of identity and belonging within a nation. Whilst governments play an important role in shaping national identity through symbols, institutions and symbols, it is important to recognise the influence of history. Historical events, figures and cultural traditions can provide a shared sense of unity and belonging. By examining the past, nations can feel inspired by historical events and use them to improve the status of the nation as well as establish foundations for a future ideal national identity.

As Tavares (2010) explains, “the construction of a new Mozambique implied sacrifices in the name of a cohesive nation. This leads us to another important measure of Frelimo that would leave its permanent mark on the history of the country: the non-recognition of ethnic and racial difference with the purpose of conveying a consistent image of national unity and simultaneously fighting regionalism and tribalism – which emerged associated with colonial structures.” (p.102). This shows how national identity can be shaped both by promoting unity

and also by strategically understating the divisions that were historically bolstered by colonial powers.

2.1.2 ROLE OF HISTORY

History connects individuals to a common past and creates a sense of unity. Significant historical events, figures, cultural achievements can inspire pride and patriotism. Shred narratives such as these often shape a nation's self-perception and its relationship with other nations. For example, the American Revolution and the Civil Rights Movement are pivotal historical events that have significantly shaped American national identity by emphasising values of equality, liberty and justice. Wars can have a profound impact on national identity. On one side, national identity can be strengthened through the shared suffering and sacrifice. This gives people a common purpose and shared values. Wars can fuel nationalist sentiments by promoting pride in a country and a disposition to defend its independence. Nation building relies on both nationalism and patriotism. Wars can also imbalance the power dynamics within a nation, which can lead to the development of new social and political identities. War can also lead to cultural exchanges and hybridity when different cultures and identities come into contact. For example, the Algerian War of Independence united diverse backgrounds against French colonial rule, which forged a strong sense of Algerian national identity. Similarly, the South African struggle against Apartheid can be seen as one of the defining factors that shaped national identity. Another major historical event that can be considered is colonisation. Colonisation has had a strong impact on the formation and evolution of national identities in colonised territories. This is because colonisers often imposed their language, religion, culture and worldviews on colonised people, which led to the suppression of indigenous cultures and traditions. The colonial regime also exercises divisive policies such as ethic and religious divisions to maintain control of a population. This shared experience of oppression fostered a sense of understanding and unity between colonised people and thus emerged nationalist movements where countries would come to fight for their independence and identity. These movements often sought to challenge the colonial narrative and restore indigenous cultures. Post-colonial nations, however, struggle with mixed identities that combine both a colonial identity and indigenous identity. Researchers argue that the aftermath of colonisation has left many nations to struggle to define a coherent national identity that reflects both their history and their future goals. Colonisation can also leave a lasting psychological trauma on individuals and communities with feelings of inferiority, shame and loss of identity. The effects of

colonisation persist today with much research focused on the link between identity and colonisation. Postcolonial nations as described by Elleke Boehmer (2005) are often imagined and constructed through gendered, familial and patriarchal forms. National identity is shaped by "masculine and feminine systems of value" (Boehmer, 2005:4).

2.2. FEMALE IDENTITY IN FEMALE LITERATURE

Female identity in postcolonial African societies is shaped by a complex interplay of gender, race, tradition, and nationalism. While national identity project I countries like South Africa and Mozambique seek to unify, they often rely on patriarchal narratives that marginalise female subjectivity and experiences. Women are represented symbolically – as "mothers of the nation" or as keepers of moral traditions and values – rather than as active agents in shaping national identity (McClintock, 1993). This symbolic positioning restricts their roles in the political, social and personal space. The construction of female identity is shaped by powerful colonial and postcolonial systems. African feminist scholars contend that Western feminist approaches sometimes do not dully encompass the complex realities of African women whose identities are influenced by factors like socio-economic inequality, cultural norms and nationalist beliefs (Nnaemeka, 2004). These scholars advocate for a decolonised perspective on identity that prioritises African women's experiences and recognising them as both suppressed individuals and agents of resistance.

In Mozambique, the legacy of the liberation struggle has framed women as heroic figures, yet their post-war realities reflect abandonment, poverty and social marginalisation (Tavares, 2010). Their womanhood is defined not only by traditional gender roles, but also by national and historical forces that deny them their complete human essence. Chiziane's "The Joyful Song of Partridge" (2024) illustrates this contradiction by depicting female characters whose identities are splintered by polygamy, war, and betrayal. One of the central characters, Maria das Dores, embodies this tension between national ideal and personal suffering. (Chiziane, 2024). Once seen as a respectable first wife and mother, she is gradually displaced through the practice of polygamy which her husband justifies through cultural and patriarchal norms. Maria is emotionally discarded and treated as obsolete and suffers from maternal betrayal which caused the erosion of her bodily autonomy and self-worth. Chiziane's portrayal captures how female identity in postcolonial Mozambique is caught between recognition and rejection, visibility and erasure.

Similarly, in post-apartheid South Africa, black women must negotiate their identities within a nation that promises equality however continues to exclude them. In "Period Pain" (2016), Matlwa presents a protagonist whose sense of self is fragmented by xenophobia, racism and societal pressures. Her experience reflects the ongoing struggle of women who are expected to uphold ideals of the national identity while being denied it. Both these novels highlight that female identity in postcolonial contexts is not static or unified. Rather, it is constructed, challenged, and constantly adjusted by historical trauma, cultural expectation, and personal resistance. Literature thus becomes a space where female identity is not only represented but contested and reimagined – a space that amplifies the voices of women whose identities extend beyond national narratives.

Authors like Noémia de Sousa, who focused on national liberation, sought to bring attention to the complexity of the woman's experiences and the effect of colonialism within society (Marques Teixeira, 2010). Similarly, Lília Momplé's fiction denounces a "neo-colonial reality", which has been operating in the country since their independence, as other forms of colonialism are created and perpetuated (Marques Teixeira, 2010, p.2). Momplé's fiction focuses on women as subjects and objects within the multi-faceted post-colonial context in Mozambique (Marques Teixeira, 2010). Marques Teixeira (2010) also mentions Lina Magaia (1945-2011), a Mozambican author who gives a feminine diction to the Mozambican civil war: she displays the brutality of war. She contends that Mozambican women's literature should be understood beyond aesthetic-literary critique (Marques Teixeira, 2010). These authors have paved the way for contemporary Mozambican literature that reflects amongst these concerns and amplifies women's voices.

Paulina Chiziane is widely recognised as the first Mozambican woman to publish a novel. During the colonial period, many female authors used writing and literature as a tool in the liberation struggle. Chiziane was born in Manjacaze, Gaza, in Mozambique, on the 4th of June 1955 during Portuguese colonial rule. Her work is known for giving a voice to the marginalised and traditionally silenced narratives, especially from the perspective of African women. The novel "The Joyful Song of Partridge" contributes to this legacy by focusing on the intersections of race, gender and the postcolonial identity in Mozambique. The novel explores the legacy of Portuguese colonisation in Mozambique, including its effects on identity, land, and culture. Further research conducted on this novel will offer an opportunity for it to be studied within

the field of postcolonial studies and allow for the examination of how colonisation has entrenched itself in African societies and how it has reshaped forms of thinking, and ways of practicing culture. Particularly, this novel can achieve this in the lens of Mozambican culture and history. Chiziane also critically examines the ways in which colonial and postcolonial structures press women. The portrayal of female characters in her novel highlights how these forms of oppression are navigated and disputed. Furthermore, this novel is also often studied for its feminist critique of both traditional African patriarchal systems and the ways in which colonialism has reinformed and perpetuated these gender hierarchies. Chiziane challenges the conventional roles assigned to women by exploring themes such as womanhood, motherhood, polygamy and female solidarity. More specifically, Chiziane's work shows the intersection between gender, race, class and ethnicity, The novel not only provides insight into the lived experiences of black women in Mozambique but also spotlights the creation of mixed race people, who are referred to in Mozambique as "mulatos". The complexities of racial identity in a post-colonial context are displayed within the novel. This novel is important for researching feminist literature, gender roles and women empowerment in African societies.

South African literature as discussed in *History, Narratives and Realities*, reflects the country's complex historical and socio-political landscape (Malaba & Melber, 2020). It serves as a medium for exploring identity, belonging and the lingering effects of colonialism and apartheid. These authors also point out the persistence of the colonial legacy in post-colonial realities (Malaba & Melber, 2020). Michael Chapman explores how South African literature has been an area to negotiate identity and search for belonging since the 1970s. He questions the concept of a unified South African nation and whether it truly exists, arguing that national identity remains ambiguous and challenged (Malaba & Melber, 2020). The concept of a "rainbow nation" (a united, post-apartheid nation) has been greeted with discontent. Yet, literature has provided a platform for expressing new personal and cultural expressions (Chapman, 2018).

Some authors also illustrate the tension between inclusion and exclusion within South African literature and history (Van der Westhuizen, 2018). Specifically, Van der Westhuizen (2018) analyses how the V*olksmoeder* (Mother of the Afrikaner Nation) myth has shaped white Afrikaner women's identities over time. She claims that while some white women have embraced democratic South Africa and rejected racial discrimination, others support conservative nationalist ideals (Van der Westhuizen, 2018). This tension reflects broader

historiographical trends in South Africa, where, as Heatherington (1993) shows, how historically, women's experiences were excluded in historical narratives that focused on race and class. Feminist scholars in the 1970s and 1980s sought to challenge this exclusion by examining women's roles in production and political struggles, by focusing on the intersection between gender and socio-economic and political spheres (Hetherington, 1993). While the Volksmoeder myth shaped white Afrikaner womanhood, black women were often framed through different archetypes, such as "mothers of the nations" (McClintock, 1991) who were seen as both caregivers and political activists, the resilient worker expected to sustain her family under exploitative conditions and the rural matriarch whose role was to preserve cultural traditions and strengthen community ties despite colonisation and racial segregation (Hetherington, 1993). Their histories were often erased or neglected, despite active roles in labour and freedom movements, anti-apartheid resistance and leadership (Hetherington, 1993). These narratives show, even though they differ in function, how gendered expectations have historically shaped women's roles in South African society.

Much literature has been produced in regard to Kopano Matlwa's *Period Pain(2016)* and Paulina Chiziane's *The Joyful Song of Partridge (2024)*.. Research has been conducted on how Chiziane's novel uses stereotypical feminine representations to construct national identity (Champagnat, 2020). Champagnat (2020) argues that the image of a female body is pertinent in the Mozambican context as the violation of black women's bodies are often compared to the violation of Portuguese colonisation. As such, is it argued that the body becomes an entity that can be conquered, be it by colonists or by Mozambican men. This brings up the question of a woman's right to her own body and her identity.

2.3 AFRICAN FEMINIST AND POSTCOLONIAL FRAMEWORK

Feminism emerged as a body of study in the 1900s as more people began to challenge the differences in gender and analyse the structures that construct the concept of gender. Authors such as Simone de Beauvoir, are seen as groundbreaking researchers for their works that analyse the myth of the feminine, the role of patriarchy in society and the need for woman's liberation. Beauvoir's work "The Second Sex" (1949) focuses on these issues and provides a nuanced explanation of the goal of feminism to reach gender equality and social justice. Feminism theory is thus used to analyse gender roles and stereotypes, advocates for policy changes and systematic changes, promotes education and awareness about gender equality and

focuses on empowering women and girls to reach their full potential (Butler, 1990). Whilst this is considered somewhat universal, some authors critique Western feminism and its principles. Authors began to describe how Western feminism often overlooked African women's realities. For example, Oyěwùmí (1997) critiques some of the feminist principles that are popular in discourse. Oyěwùmí (1997) argues that gender was not a predominant organising principle in African societies before colonisation and critiques Western feminism and its imposition of a gender binary. Similarly, Akin-Aina (2010) explores how African feminism is distinct from Western feminism in its emphasis on community, history and decolonisation. Akin-Aina (2011) says that the African feminist movement is characterised by an ongoing "self-definition, broad-based membership and resistance to the misrepresentations by Western global feminism" as well as a goal of harmonising power dynamics in Africa (p.66).

African feminism as described by Goredema (2010), is a unique approach to feminism in that it considers the experience of African women on both the continent and in the wider diaspora. It is said to provide arguments which validate the experience of African women. Its specific focus on the histories and realities of African women accounts for the effects of colonialism and its structures, on the African woman. Thus, African feminism depends on the temporal space shaped by political eras – whether these be precolonial, colonial, or post-colonial (Goredema, 2010, p.35). These eras are different across African countries due to their histories of liberation struggles and as such, the meaning of African feminism differs across countries. Despite this, African feminism concerns itself with these categories: culture and tradition, socioeconomic and socio-political issues, the role of men, race, as well as sex and sexuality. It encompasses the humanising of the woman, as traditionally: a woman's role is based on their sexuality and reproductive role. African feminism argues for the "humanness" of women and their right to recognition and equal opportunities.

African feminism advocates for every African woman trying to redefine and re-express their position. It is historically argued that in pre-colonial times, it was common in African culture and tradition for women to be in positions of power and for them to have equal access to resources. Through colonialism, these roles and access to resources were disturbed and replaced with European patriarchal structures and ideologies, which further marginalised women. It is important to acknowledge that patriarchal structures were likely to have existed to some extent, however African feminism seeks to re-imagine gender roles through an informed understanding of history. Furthermore, Africa is a diverse continent with a rich

plethora of cultures and traditions, and these precolonial roles are most likely to vary across regions. Postcolonial theory argues that colonialism not only impacted politics and economics but also impacted cultural traditions norms and values (Ashcroft, 2009). This imposition, specifically on gender and the roles associated with it, is one of the key aspects which African feminism seeks to address. Postcolonialism deals with the effects that colonial rule had upon cultures and societies. As an analytic tool, post-colonialism concerns itself with literature written from the colonised viewpoint (Sawant, 2011, p.120). Postcolonial theory as described by Ashford (2009) is "a methodology for analysing the complex strategies by which colonised societies have engaged imperial discourse, and for studying the ways in which many of those strategies are shared by colonised societies" (p.8-9). This discourse refers to beliefs and opinions as well as language that are dominant in Western thinking. Postcolonial feminist theorists such as Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak (1987) have highlighted the need to critique mainstream feminism and pay particular attention to the double colonisation of women. Spivak (1987) argues that women are double oppressed: first by colonial rule and the powers associated with them and secondly through the patriarchal systems in their cultures and communities. According to Spivak, women are often exploited and belittled in postcolonial societies and that it is important to understand the silenced voices and narratives of women in these societies (Sawant, 2011). Spivak (1987) refers to these marginalised groups as "subalterns": those who are subject to the dominance of others. The representation of these groups is often mediated by colonial narratives and reinforced the subjugating power dynamics between colonised and coloniser (Spivak, 1987, p.80). On the rare occasions where these subaltern voices are used, their voice is mediated by those in power alongside the socioeconomic and political institutions that marginalise the ability for these groups to participate in public discourse. Alongside decolonisation feminism and its principles, using postcolonial theory alongside an African centred feminism will provide an encompassing lens through which the novels can be analysed.

2.4 THE INFLUENCE OF POSTCOLONIAL PERIOD OF MOZAMBIQUE AND SOUTH AFRICA ON THE WORKS OF PAULINA CHIZIANE AND KOPANO MATLWA

Woman must write herself: must write about women and bring women to writing, from which they have been driven away as violently as from their bodies..." (Warhol, 1991, p. 347)

Modern African fiction is said to be particularly concerned with the restructuring of concepts such as motherhood and womanhood, concepts that were fundamentally disturbed by the West (Begum, 2006). Postcolonial African literature is motivated by the drive towards autonomy in the literary space as well as a way of avoiding the "ideology represented by the literature supporting imperialism" (Pöysä, 2014:12). This drive included a push towards writing techniques that would resemble local traditions of narration (Pöysä, 2014). In addition to popular colonial discourse, female "otherness" was also constructed by nationalism narratives (Da Silva, 2013). Da Silva (2013) also mentions that the first generation of African writers, who were primarily men, "produced stereotypical discourses concerning women's sexuality" (p.7). She mentions authors such as Chinua Achebe and offers the example of *Things Fall Apart* (1959) and how women's roles reduce them to objects traded by men (Da Silva, 2013). Nationalist narratives typically portray men as heroes who fight against colonialism and assert their national identity (Da Silva, 2013). Within these male-dominant narratives, women are given symbolic roles that portray them as 'objects of desire' such as mother of the nation (Da Silva, 2013:8). In these portrayals of female characters, men are the primary national subjects whilst women are seen as 'nurturing figures that support men who pave the way to the building of a new nation. (Da Silva, 2013). Syed Begum (2006) states that postcolonial African women writing "explores how the female protagonists react to oppression in all its manifestations, both physical and psychological" (p.104). This male-dominant narrative was sought to be challenged by other African writers such as Paulina Chiziane and Kopano Matlwa.

The post-colonial period in Mozambique and South Africa profoundly shaped the literary works of Paulina Chiziane and Kopano Matlwa, particularly in their navigation of gender, national identity and agency. Chiziane, as Mozambique's first published female novelist, challenges nationalist narratives, especially those promoted by FRELIMO, by exposing the persistent oppression of women beyond the colonial framework (Dos Santos, 2018). When asked about her writing, Chiziane states that she is not a feminist but rather a writer who writes in the feminine perspective (Davis, 2009). Leal and Tavares (2020) state that Mozambican literature is a literature that "questions the Mozambican identity project imposed" by FRELIMO (p.39). The idealised vision of the harmonious, egalitarian Mozambique, once depicted in literature and national identity projects, has for many, turned into a harsh reality (Leal & Tavares, 2020). Instead of fulfilling the promise of equality, the remnants of colonial

structures are still evident, affecting the lives of both men and women in the new nation (Leal & Tavares, 2020). In fact, the political ideological conception of gender, as developed by FRELIMO's national reconstruction plan post-independence, did not eradicate the submissive position attributed to women in Mozambican society (Marques Teixeira, 2010).

In her novel, "The Joyful Song of Partridge", the female body is presented as a site of conflict and exchange, reflecting how patriarchal structures commodify women and their bodies within the colonial and postcolonial narrative (Dos Santos, 2013). Chiziane's novel is thus a presentation of a collection of testimonial memories that reach far beyond the formation of nationalist project for Mozambique (Dos Santos, 2013). Chiziane addresses the issue of Assimilados (colonial collaborators), who enjoyed privileges granted by the colonial administration, whilst promoting their oppression (Dos Santos, 2013). She addresses this through the character of José dos Montes, highlighting the problematic relationship between the coloniser and the colonised in the context of the 'fantasy of freedom' that fuels the liberation war, which was emerging (Dos Santos, 2013:101). Chiziane's narratives also predominantly discuss the questions that the fundamental tenets that determine the historical and socio-political state of the Mozambican woman (Teixeira, 2010). She does this by examining how history, culture, colonialism and patriarchy affect the roles, rights and responsibilities of women in Mozambique. In her novels, she engages with themes of gender inequality, oppression and identity and how these affect women's lives in post-colonial society (Teixeira, 2010). In The Joyful Song of Partridge, Chiziane portrays complex characters like Delfina and Maria. She challenges the notion of an African woman being confined to the domesticity of the home (Begum, 2006). She explores this within the context of colonial and postcolonial times in Mozambique. Syed Begum (2006) states that post-colonial African women writing "explores how the female protagonists react to oppression in all its manifestations, both physical and psychological" (p.104) and Chiziane shows to be such a writer. In the 1970s and 1980s, authors such as Miriam Tlali, the first black South African woman to publish a novel, and Gcina Mhlope arose (Edmunds, 1984). Tlali's (1995) work for example, was often inspired by the realities of black women's lives in apartheid South Africa and explored the gender and racial oppression faced by black women during that time (Cullhead, 2006).

The marginalisation in postcolonial narratives is not unique to Mozambique. In South African history, women were long excluded from historiography, their contributions to liberation

movements and nation-building overshadowed by male-dominated narratives (Heatherington, 1993). Women were often depicted in literature rather than being the authors (Chapman, 2013). In the apartheid era, narratives, including women's narratives, became important for the resistance movement. Building on the broad theme of exclusion from national narratives, South African literature also reflects how women's voices have been overlooked, despite their role in shaping resistance and national identity. The aim to reclaim women's voices in post-colonial societies extends beyond Mozambique, as seen in South African authors like Kopano Matlwa confront the effects of apartheid, colonialism, and patriarchal societies. Similar to Chiziane, Kopano Matlwa's work examines the socio-political struggles faced by young Black women in post-apartheid South Africa and how colonial legacies, patriarchy and racial division continue to shape women's experiences in the new nation. Like how Chiziane disturbs the idea of a liberated, egalitarian Mozambique, Matlwa questions the impact of apartheid on identity in her novel "Coconut'. In her other works like "Period Pain", she addresses the illusion of post-apartheid freedom by displaying young Black women navigating persistent structural inequalities, like in her novel "Period Pain". She also exposes the racial tension in post-apartheid South Africa (Eyinda, 2022). She explores the roots of xenophobia and addresses the issue of unequal distribution of resources across the people (Eyinda,2022). Kopano's works can be seen as a reflection of South Africa's evolving social identity as she delves into the inner processes of her characters to offer a nuanced understanding of identity in a post-apartheid society (Rodgers, 2013). Both authors use literature as a form of resistance, rewriting the narratives that historically excluded women's contributions and their voices in their respective nation histories, as will be further explored in the thematic analysis.

2.5 HOW LITERATURE NAVIGATES THE TENSION BETWEEN NATIONAL IDENITY AND FEMALE IDENTITY

Literature was used as a tool to help mobilise the people of these countries to resist the exploitation and degradation that came with colonialism (Fêo Rodrigues and Sheldon, 2008, p.424). Colonialism and subsequent repressive regimes have not only affected the structures within societies but have also deeply affected the individual at the identity level (Malaba& Melber: 229). Literature produced by women who lived through liberation struggles offers a unique perspective on how female and national identities intersect. Literature of this nature could provide insight on the complexity of the female experience in the context of postcolonial societies.

By spotlighting the complexities of women's experiences in these contexts, these works challenge simplistic and narrow-minded narratives of national identity and provide a nuanced understanding of nationhood. Through exploring themes such as patriarchy, the effects of colonial rule, and the struggles of marginalised women, literature of this nature could provide insight into the process of national identity formation and cultural transformation in South Africa and Mozambique (Said, 2007).

Chapter 3 Methodology

3.1 THEMATIC ANALYSIS

For this research, the two novels will be analysed thematically first and will subsequently undergo comparative literary analysis (Brown, 2013). The method that will be used in this research essay is thematic analysis as outlined by Braun and Clarke (2006). The guidelines outline six key steps which are as follows:

1. Becoming familiar with the data includes an active reading of the text.
2. Generating initial codes, which could outline potential codes that would be of interest.
3. Searching from themes, which consists of organising data into groups and looking at how these groups contribute to the overarching themes.
4. Reviewing themes – refining and finalising groups in the novels.
5. Defining and naming themes - examine how these explain your data, do the themes represent the data, take data extracts, and organise them, how themes are supported.
6. Producing the report – explain the findings and convince the reader of the validity of my argument, make an argument. (Braun and Clarke, 2006)

This method will be adapted to the novels under investigation. Subsequently, a comparative literary analysis method will be used. This method of studying literature compares literature with and in the context of cultural studies (Sahin, p.5). This method of comparing literature allows for researchers to notice the similarities, differences, and cultures of two or more nations (Sahin, p.7) as in this research: South Africa and Mozambique. Furthermore, the researcher will be able to know the influence of the texts and be able to place it within the larger discourse. This method will place national identity and its intersection with the female identity in the larger discourse surrounding the postcolonial identity and the dismantling of the effects thereof (Palmberg, 1999). It is also important to note that scholars such as Sahin (2015) discuss the importance of diversity in comparative literature. This means that comparing two nations (South African literature and Mozambican literature) is considered to yield a richer outcome as compared to comparing two novels within the same band of literature. Thus, the parallels between the two literatures can be analysed and contrasted. This allows readers and researchers the opportunity to enrich knowledge about, “literatures, languages, cultures and identities of their nations” (Sahin, 2016, p.8) and recognise the value of both the self and others. The novels that have been chosen were published within the 21st century literary period. While Chiziane’s

novel was originally published in 2008, Matlwa's novel was published in 2016. In this research, African feminism and post-colonial theory serve as the frameworks under which this comparison will take place. This analysis will focus on the experiences of women characters in the novel, their identities, and the roles they play within society. It is important to note that final and refined codes are presented in Annexure A and Annexure B. This type of analysis is suitable for the investigation of the novels as it is rich in data and allows for constant reviewing of the data (Braun and Clarke, 2006). Thematic analysis is well-suited for analysing narrative texts like novels, which are rich in qualitative data as it allows for a systematic exploration of recurring patterns and meanings within text (Kiger & Varpio, 2020). This method allows for flexibility, allowing for both inductive and deductive reasoning (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

3.2 COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS

Alongside this is the use of comparative analysis between the novels. Comparative literary analysis as a method that examines literature within the cultural and historical context is based on established literary theory and practice (Kholodniak, 2023). The fundamental tenets of comparative literary studies are its emphasis on cross-cultural observations, the identification of broader patterns and the contextualisation of texts within broader discourses (Kholodniak, 2023). This type of analysis allows for studying literature in the context of cultural studies (Sahin, 2016). Using comparative analysis allows for researchers to notice the differences, similarities, and cultures of two or more nations (Sahin, 2016) as in this research: South Africa and Mozambique. By comparing the novels, it allows the researcher to identify broader patterns related to national identity, female identity, and postcolonial discourse. It also allows the researcher to contextualise the novels within larger discourses of African feminism and postcolonial theory, offering an insightful understanding of its importance. Sahin (2016) draws attention to how the comparison of diverse narratives generates rich results as it highlights the complexities of female experiences in diverse cultural contexts. Alongside this, the comparative analysis method is suitable for postcolonial studies, as it also allows for an investigation of how colonial rule and postcolonial realities are illustrated in literature of different nations (Kholodniak, 2023).

1

A collective cry. A refrain.

There is a naked woman on the banks of the River Licungo. In the men's area.

"Eh?"

There is a woman in the solitude of the waters of the river. She looks as if she is listening to the silence of the fish. A young woman. Beautiful and resplendent like a Makonde sculpture. Her eyes fixed on the sky, she seems to be awaiting some revelation.

"Who is she?"

1

A collective cry. A refrain.

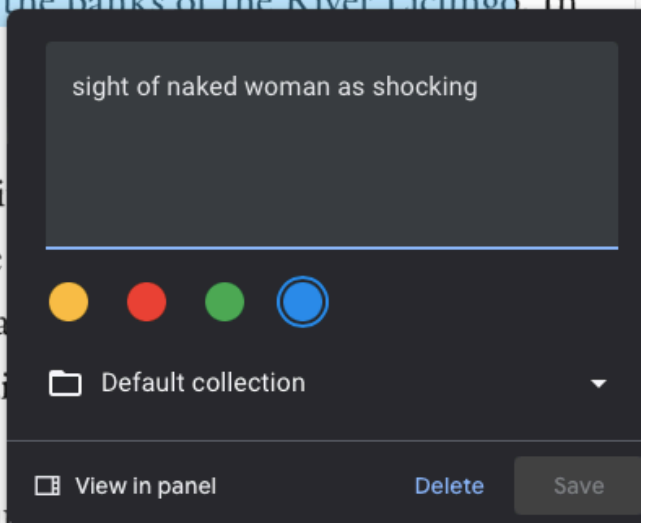
There is a naked woman on the banks of the River Licungo. In the men's area.

"Eh?"

There is a woman in the soli
looks as if she is listening to the
Beautiful and resplendent like a
on the sky, she seems to be awai

"Who is she?"

A black woman, as black as scu



The initial code for this example is = 'sight of naked woman as shocking'. The refined code for this example was 'naked woman=shocking'. This code was then categorised under the potential theme of nakedness and morality. That theme was further redefined under the broader

theme of womanhood and gender dynamics. This process was repeated throughout the entire novels. In analysis and appendices, only the refined codes were included.

This chapter has outlined the methodological framework that will guide the subsequent analysis of the selected novels. The thematic analysis, following Braun and Clarkes (2006) six step process, will be applied in the next chapter to identify and analyse the key themes related to female identity, national identity, and postcolonial experiences in each novel. After this, a comparative literary analysis, employing the ideas of Sahin (2016) and Kholodniak (2023), will be used to explore the differences and similarities between the South African and Mozambican contexts within the broader understanding of their histories. This combined approach will provide a substantial and nuanced understanding of the novels thematic content and socio-cultural significance, ultimately contributing to a profound understanding of African feminist and postcolonial literary discourse. The findings from this analysis will be discussed in detail in the following chapters.

This research is qualitative in nature. The primary texts for this research are Paulina Chiziane's "The Joyful Song of Partridge" (2024) and Kopano Matlwa's "Period Pain" (2016). To examine the relationship between national identity and female identity, this research makes use of a comparative literary analysis where both novels are compared according to themes to identify similarities and differences. Secondary texts that were used include articles relevant to the themes and topics that will emerge from the data. The use of thematic analysis allows for an in-depth understanding of the text, and will be able to uncover nuances and subtle meanings which might be overlooked by other methods. It also provides a rich and distinct understanding of the experiences of the characters. Furthermore, thematic analysis allows for integration with theoretical frameworks and thus is best suited for this research. According to step 1 of the methodology, both texts were thoroughly read to familiarise myself with the data. For step2 and 3, see Annexure A and Annexure B for the initial codes that were derived from the reading of the text. For the third and fourth step, diagrams below were included to show the search for themes and for the refinement of themes,

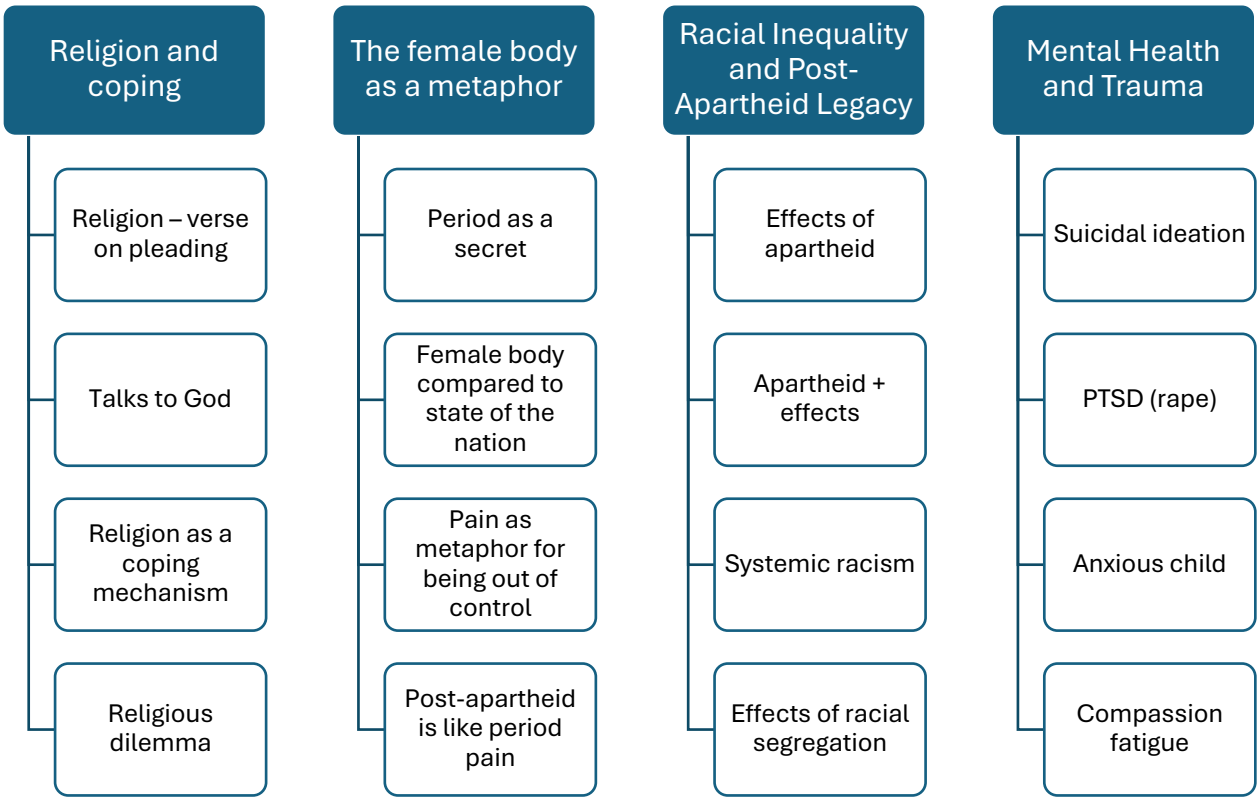


Table 1: Codes organised into potential theme

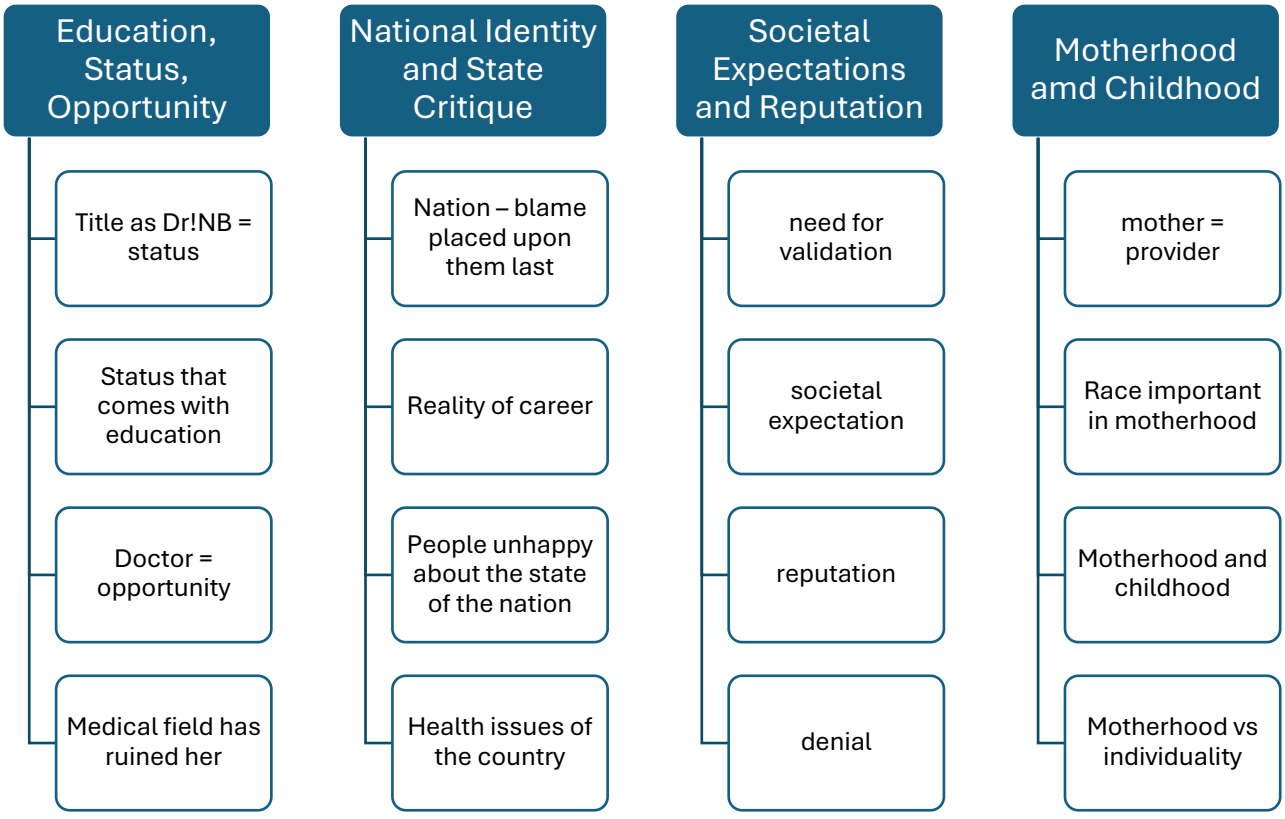


Table 2 Final codes organised into potential themes

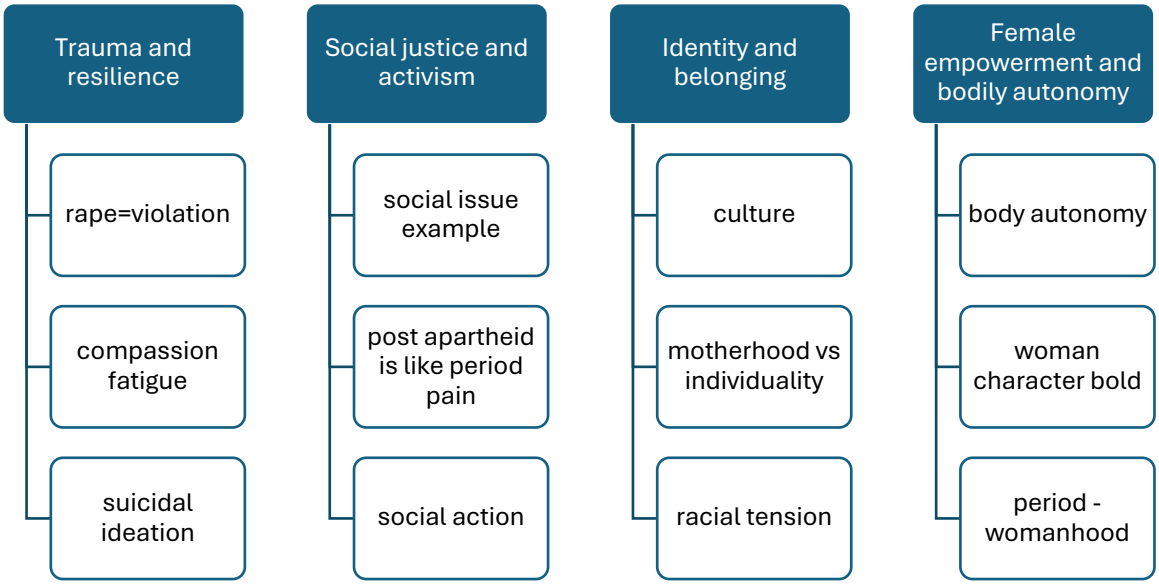


Table 3 Final codes organised into potential themes

As described, initial codes are first created so that they can be grouped together by similarity. As showed in Table 1, Matlwa's "Period Pain" (2016) has generated 121 codes that have been refined and were derived from initial readings of the text (See Annexure A). The codes have been grouped into the following possible themes: trauma and resilience, social justice and activism, identity and belonging, religion and spirituality, female empowerment and bodily autonomy, the impact of apartheid, mental health and well-being, the role of the doctor, the intersection of race, gender and class, the power of storytelling and role of history in shaping the present. These possible themes were regrouped into the following themes: gendered narratives of nationhood, the female body as a vessel of power and resistance and the impact of trauma on female identity. This concludes step 4 and 5 in the methodology. In line with the aim of this research, this analysis focuses on how female characters navigate their gender identity in these novels and how the novels portray the relationship between gender roles and the construction of national identity by further exploring these themes. For step 6, the exploration of these themes and the results thereof are presented in the next chapter. This same process was repeated for Paulina Chiziane's novel "The Joyful Song of Partridge" (2024). Paulina Chiziane's novel produced 991 codes (Annexure B). These codes were refined and

organised into potential themes. The potential themes and their corresponding codes can be seen in the tables below:

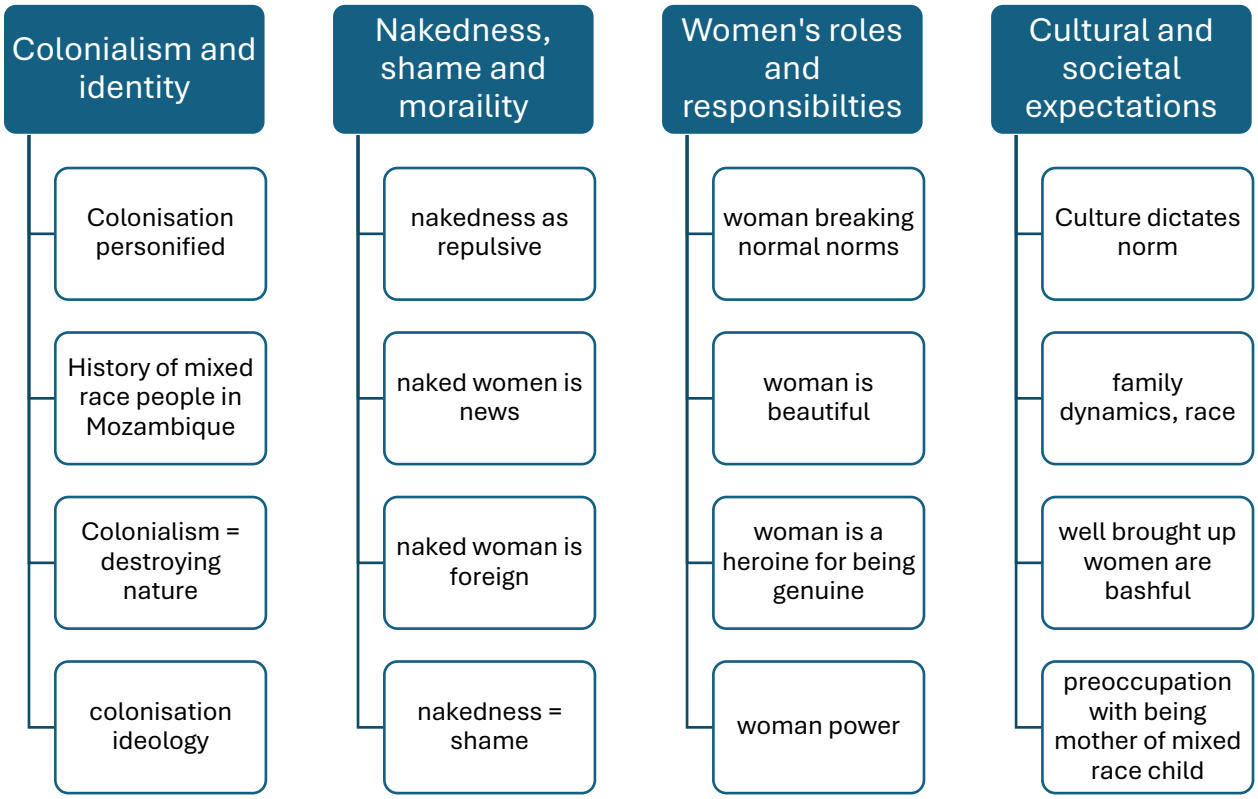


Table 1: Final codes organised into potential themes

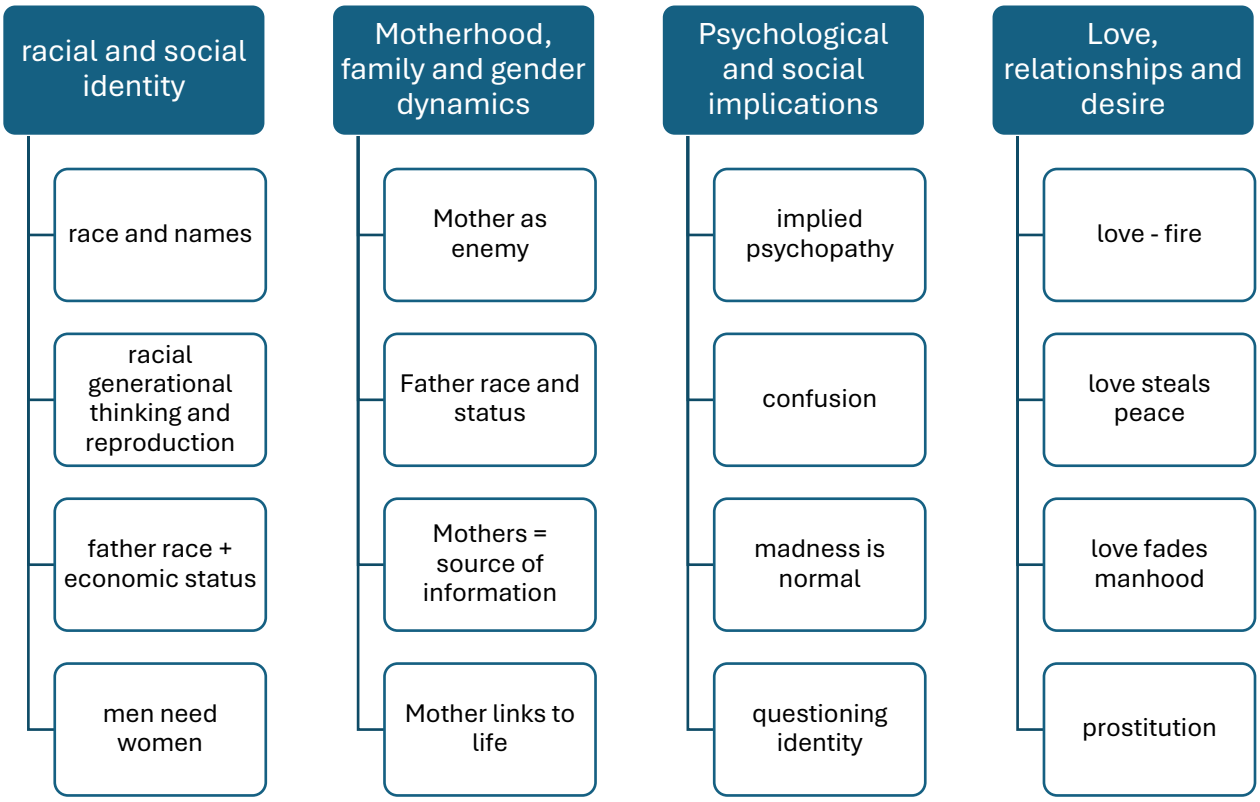


Table 2 : Codes organised into potential themes

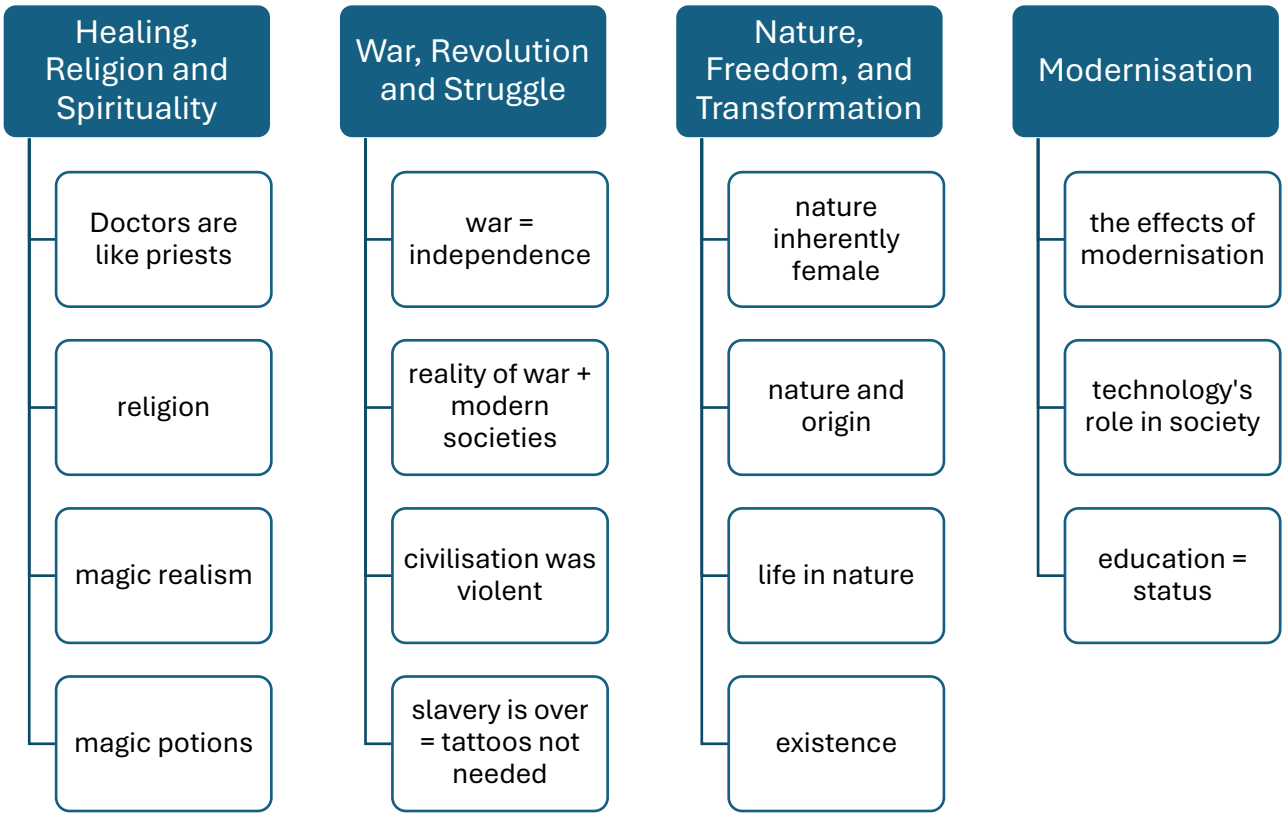


Table 3 Final codes organised into potential themes

These potential themes have been refined into the following themes: colonialism and national identity, motherhood and gender dynamics, culture and society. Although the themes are discussed separately, it is important to recognise the interconnectedness of these themes and that there is significant overlap. For the comparative analysis, both the themes were analysed according to similarity in theme and the differences in each theme following a broader discussion of the entirety of the novels in relation to the research questions. The reasons for the similarities and differences were discussed and presented in the analysis.

Chapter 4 DATA ANALYSIS

4.1 INTRODUCTION TO DATA ANALYSIS

In the contemporary discourse of gender and identity, literature occupies the important role of serving as a medium through which the complexities of national identity, gender, race and post-colonial difficulties are explored. This study examines Kopano Matlwa's novel "Period Pain" (2016) and Paulina Chiziane's "The Joyful Song of Partridge" (2024) and compares how the female characters in these novels navigate their gender identity, explore the relationship between gender roles and national identity, all within the postcolonial context. By placing these texts within a post-colonial and feminist framework, this study aims to reveal the nuanced ways in which gender roles are shaped by national identity and historical pasts.

Kopano Matlwa's novel "Period Pain" was published in 2016 and categorised under the historical and political fiction genre. The novel is written in diary form interspersed with poetic interludes; thus the novel is not equally divided into chapters but is rather written in such a way that there is an intimate flow within the text (Dlamini, 2022).The novel follows the psychological and emotional turbulence experienced by its protagonist, a young black South African female doctor, who struggles with systemic inequalities, trauma and the socio-political landscape of contemporary South Africa (Tembo, 2021). Central themes in the novel include xenophobia, gender-based violence, aspects of identity, and the impact of Apartheid on individual capability. Matlwa presents a deeply personal and political narrative, making use of poetic language and fragmented storytelling to reflect the protagonist's inner turmoil.

Similarly, Paulina Chiziane's "The Joyful Song of Partridge" explores the intricate nature of Mozambican history and culture. As Mozambique's first published female writer, Chiziane presents an analytical view of the intersection between gender, tradition, culture and national identity. The novel follows the lives of women living in colonial and post-colonial times, especially their navigation of a patriarchal society and the effects of colonial rule on women's social roles and responsibilities. Through a mix of oral storytelling traditions and realist narrative techniques, Chiziane critiques the strict expectations placed upon women and the difficulties of asserting personal agency in a male-dominated space.

Both authors engage with post-colonial and post-apartheid themes, yet their narratives styles and thematic issues offer unique perspectives on gender identity. Matlwa's first person narration provides an introspective and personal lens through which Masechaba's struggles are depicted (Winstanley, 2018) while Chiziane's work rooted in oral traditions, offers an intergenerational perspective on women's oppression within patriarchal and colonial societies (Miranda, 2008). The literary techniques and styles of writing both shape readers' understanding of the novels and highlight the diversity of post-colonial women's experiences across different African contexts and histories.

This chapter will explore the historical and cultural backgrounds of contested in Paulina Chiziane's "The Joyful Song of Partridge" (2024) and Kopano Matlwa's "Period Pain" (2016). It will analyse the major themes emerging from the novels, positioning them within the broader discourse of postcolonial studies and the intersection of national and female identity. To contextualise these authors within the wider literary landscape, this study will also consider connections between African women writers. By comparing these novels, the aim is to spotlight the evolving portrayals of gender identity in postcolonial literature, examining how women's lived experiences continue to shape and redefine national and individual identities.

As a qualitative literary study grounded in postcolonial and African feminist theory, the research focuses on close textual analysis to interpret how identity is shaped, represented and challenged in certain literature. The primary texts were selected through purposive sampling based on thematic relevance. Bost novels centre on women navigating identity in postcolonial African contexts and are authored by women from South Africa and Mozambique which are contexts central to the study's focus. "The Joyful Song of Partridge" explores the aftermath of Mozambique's liberation struggle , while "Period Pain" (2016) examines the contradictions of post-apartheid South Africa. These novels offer rich grounds for analysing the intersection of national and female identity in different historical yet ideologically linked contexts.

4.2 THEMATIC ANALYSIS OF PAULINA CHIZIANE'S THE JOYFUL SONG OF PARTRIDGE

Chiziane claims that "The function of the author sometimes is to provoke debate among people." (Allen, 2020). Paulina Chiziane's novel "The Joyful Song of Partridge" encapsulates the silent struggles of identity, family, and culture in a society shaped by colonial legacies and traditional norms of the Namuli people. The novel follows Maria Das Dores' tumultuous life story in the context of Mozambican history. Chiziane discusses her inspiration for this novel in an interview conducted by Nafeesah Allen (2020). Chiziane describes being intrigued by the mixed-race woman who was in front of her house and introduced herself to the woman's eldest sister (Allen, 2020). Chiziane followed the story of this woman to its root, discovered that the woman's mother had married twice, one with a black man and one with a white man and became interested in the issue of miscegenation (Allen, 2020). It is from real peoples' stories that Chiziane find inspiration and constructs her stories using "oral confessions" as she has done for other novels such as "Niketche" (Allen, 2020, p.209). Furthermore, Chiziane is inspired to write her novels as she could not finds books on these issues at the time in the novel "The Joyful Song of Partridge" (2024), Chiziane weaves a narrative that explores the intersections of colonialism, identity, gender, and cultural transformation at the individual and community level. It also reflects on the deep wounds left behind by colonialism and how hey intertwine with traditional structures of power and community. Chiziane's narrative explores how colonialism and identity are inextricably linked and how communities engage with their fragmented histories. In an interview conducted and published by Nafeesah Allen, Chiziane states that "People are still imprisoned by these [colonial] rules, dogmas about that which is considered correct and proper. When something appears outside of that, even if it's something good, there's a fear of confronting it." (Allen, 2020, p.210). Her aim is to question these beliefs and rules, and also to recognise their continued presence in daily living (Allen, 2020). Her portrayal of motherhood and womanhood challenge patriarchal narratives and emphasise the resilience and agency if women in a patriarchal society. Additionally, the novel examines how culture and society intertwine and create expectations of individual life, demonstrating diverse collective experiences in the construction of national identity. As stated by Tavares (2010), the analysis of Chiziane's novels shows that the author offers these portrayals of the "post-independence ideal of Mozambican imagined community" from a woman's point of view, so that Chiziane can dissect it and demonstrate its restrictions (p.194)

THEME 1: COLONIALISM, RACE AND NATIONAL IDENTITY

Colonisation is "blindness in the pursuit of the oath to the abyss…" (Chiziane,2024, p.159)

Colonial regimes have shown to impose rigid ideals of gender roles and racial hierarchies which became linked with the construction of national identity. Female experiences, particularly those in the novel can reveal how gender roles are a product and a form of resistance to colonial ideas which shape the nation. In Chiziane's novel, the lingering effects of colonialism in Mozambique are dissected and is evident through themes of racial identity to shine light upon the inequalities and hierarchies established under colonial rule. Chiziane demonstrates how colonial ideologies persist within the individual and how they continue to shape societies, creating divides along racial, cultural and economic bounds. The novel explores these dynamics by examining the lives of the characters and the structural inequalities that they navigate. The novel presents the enduring legacy of colonialism in Mozambique, portraying the damage left by colonial violence. Chiziane focuses specifically on mixed race identities and shows them as a location of both privilege and alienation, broadcasting the social divisions that have been perpetuated over time, Chiziane critiques the internalisation of white supremacy and its detrimental effects on identity by showing characters struggles with assimilation and social rejection. For this analysis, the colonial ideals present in the novel, the links to racial identity and national identity will be discussed.

The novel makes mention of colonialism on various occasions. People "talk of the foreigner who turned up and then left" (Chiziane, 2024, p.5). This line makes reference to a "foreigner" which highlights the theme of otherness and exclusion. In post-colonial societies, foreigners or outsiders are seen as disruptions to norms. This could represent colonial invaders and serve as a reminder of Mozambique's colonial history where people arrived and disrupted local cultures and norms and promoted exploitation and division between people. The word "foreigner" can also refer to people who defy societal norms such as women who reject traditional roles and behaviours. For example, the novel opens with the image of the naked woman:

> "A collective cry. A refrain. There is a naked woman on the banks of River Licungo. In the men's area. A black woman, as black as sculptures carved from ebony. Jet black, with tattoos on her belly, thighs and shoulders. Naked, stark naked. Hips. Waist. Navel. Belly. Breasts. Shoulders. Everything on show.... A naked woman is headline news." (Chiziane, 2025 p.5)

This woman is ridiculed and ostracised for breaking local norms. The reference to 'men's area' shows that gender division. It becomes clear that areas are divided by gender. Furthermore, the woman nakedness is described in detail by body parts. It is also shown that a naked woman is considered a 'headline'. This line critiques societal double standards where female vulnerability is a public affair. Her nudity is seen by the community as a sceptical seen by the phrase "a procession" – an act that takes personal exposure and turns it into an act for public enjoyment. They go to 'see in order to believe' shows how the community is curious but also judgmental. In this sense, the community reinforced shame and indulges in the acts that they judge. This can be seen in the following passage: "Some women shield their eyes from such immorality. Such infamy. They pretend they cannot see what they nevertheless manage to view through the cracks between their fingers" (Chiziane, 2024, p.90). Chiziane shows the hypocrisy of societal norms where a woman's body is the subject of gossip and judgement but also a subject of societal control. This passage shows the social policing of women's autonomy and their bodies. This exploitation of the body can be seen as a consequence of colonial ideologies. This description of the naked body reflects the colonial ideal of the African woman's body as a commodity that reduces women to symbols of either eroticism or of shame. Champagnat (2020) reflects on the link between the body and the history thereof. During precolonial times, black women's bodies were exploited and 'invaded' by colonisers as a means of ensuring their presence in colonies as well as the perpetuation of their reign (Champagnat, 2020, p.89). As such, the body can be seen as a territory to be vanquished and overruled whether by colonisers or by men. In the context of the novel, Champagnat (2020) argues that the invasion of women's bodies by European sailors can be seen as a metaphor for the colonisation of Mozambique and the continued exploitation of female bodies in contemporary times.

The phrase "up and left" also conveys a sense of abandonment and can reflect the nature of relationships between coloniser and colonised. Colonialism often made use of the exploitation of resources and people and left behind the consequences thereof. In the novel, Maria das Dores (the protagonist), Delfina (Maria's mother), Serafina (Delfina's mother) and José are characters that struggle with ideals of colonial and racial hierarchies. In the novel, Delfina embodies the tension between survival and defiance of a society that sees women as commodities and preserves racial hierarchies. It is evident in the novel that Delfina perpetuates colonial ideals of racial division and exclusion. She admits this:

> José, your black father, personified the institution of marriage by which I gained respectability in the eyes of society. Soares, your white stepfather, was my financial institution. Simba, that beautiful young black boy, was my sexual institution, my other self, capable of great leaps of the imagination, who left me to become your husband. (Chiziane, 2024, p.52)

This passage demonstrates the dynamic between race, gender and power in post-colonial society. Relationships are linked to survival, respectability, status and societal expectations. Delfina refers to José, a black man who helped her gain respectability in society. It can be said that marriage is a respectable thing to do in this society and indicates conforming to societal expectations. José represents the expectation for women, such as Delfina, to adhere to traditional norms to gain social status. His racial identity links Delfina to her own roots and fulfils these expectations in post-colonial contexts that sees marriage as a cultural responsibility. Delfina then makes mention of Soares as her "financial institution". Soares is a white man who symbolises colonial ideologies that associate whiteness with wealth, power and privilege. She refers to him as a "financial institution" which indicates that nature of their relationship as something that is merely material. This relationship dynamic also shows the disparity in access to opportunity to financial stability. Her dependence on Soares for finances shows the colonial reality that black individuals and communities have to rely on structures controlled by white power to guide them through socio-economic disparities. While José fulfils a societal and traditional responsibility for Delfina whilst Soares provides an economic safety for Delfina that also exposes the dependence created by colonial structures. These roles also reflect the racial hierarchy in this: Soares occupies the highest position as he controls financial resources, and this is reflective of colonial owners. José on the other hand occupied a middle to lower position as he symbolises tradition and societal duties. In this sense, it can be seen that relationships are fragmented to account for race, power and necessity. Her organisation of these men into the roles they play in her life shows the ways in which colonial and patriarchal systems dictate women's' relationships and lives within certain bounds. Delfina uses these relationships to gain social and economic stability, exemplifying the limited opportunities available to black women in colonial and post-colonial contexts.

Delfina also demonstrates the internalised colonial ideologies in regards to colonial beauty standards and racial hierarchies. Delfina was born during colonial times and is evident in this line:

> "When she opened her eyes to life, the world was already like this. A film without a plot. Blacks being tormented. Loading. Unloading. The crack of the whip. Strikes and deaths. Images that inspired melancholy and sadness in her. She walks along the paved roads with a lightness of foot. She admires the big colonial houses. Apartments. Buildings. Hotels. Life for the whites is fantastic." (Chiziane,2024, p.98).

From a young age, Delfina was exposed to the realities of the colonial time. Delfina witnesses the torment of black people during slavery. She describes the "crack of the whip" and the "strikes" and "deaths". She also describes her admiration for the colonial houses, apartments and buildings. She idolises the lives that white people have and thus she vows that she shall have the same. She says: "I shall possess the power of the ladies and mistresses, even though I am black!" (Chiziane,2024, p.98). Ny vowing to claim the power associated with "ladies' and mistresses who are most likely white and privileged, Delfina envisions transcending barriers imposed by racism and sexism. This passage highlights the colonial hierarchy that placed whiteness as a symbol of power. For a black woman to possess this power is an act of rebellion against the marginalisation and brutality perpetuated by colonial powers. It also shows the division of privileges and roles associated with women of different races. Whilst women in colonial times were limited because of their gender, intersectionality forces us to also look at the intersection of race and gender. Black women and white women still face different levels of oppression, and what Chiziane refers t in this novel is the experience of the black women in colonial and post-colonial times.

Chiziane points to the internalised colonialism within Delfina. In the novel, Delfina demonstrates this by discussing her ideal life:

> "In her dream, she is a lady and lives in a stone city. With lacy dresses. Servants as black as she to treat like slaves. A white husband and mulatto daughters whose smooth hair she will comb and tie with silk ribbons. She will have the power of ladies and mistresses, even though she is black, she feels it. She will receive Favors from the regime. Black women who marry white men rise in life. They eat salt cod and olives, drink tea with sugar, eat bread with butter and quince jam." (Chiziane,2024, p.98)

This passage demonstrates a couple of things. First, Delfina dreams of gaining access to the privileges and status associate with white women and show how this influences her self-esteem.

Her desire for lacy dresses, salt cod and olives reflect the belief that European culture and wealth is superior to her own race. She envisions servants "who are black as she" which points not only to the internalised colonial belief that black people are inferior but also the perpetuating of the same systems of race and class exploitation. It shows the persistent nature of colonialism. This passage can also be seen a critique of the position that black women occupy within colonial societies. Delfina believes that marrying a white man is the way to gain privilege and power. This shows the limited availability of opportunities because of her dual oppression. Delfina makes measure of salt cod, olives tea with sugar and bread with butter and quince jam. These are markers of European culture and luxury. Food is often a marker by which Delfina differentiates privilege and class and they symbolise success and assimilation to colonial values. This shows how colonialism reshapes desires and values at the individual level. Delfina also makes mention of mulatto children and the preoccupation with whitening.

Whiteness ideology

In colonial societies, racial hierarchies place whiteness at the highest level and blackness at the lowest level, with mixed race falling somewhat in between the two. Delfina shows a preoccupation with mixed race children as it aligns with the colonial ideology of "whitening', where the closer one is to whiteness, the more privilege and respect one has. In the novel, mixed race children are seen as a way to escape systemic discrimination and gain access to the privileged space. This reflects a belief that being or having children that are mixed race comes with improved social status, economic stability and acceptance in a racially stratified society. Delfina imagines her daughters with "smooth hair" tied with "silk ribbons" and this implies that this image is an indication of social success and validation. These traits are associated to whiteness and become symbols of her ambition to transcend racial hierarchies through her children. This aspect of the theme will be further explored in the next theme of womanhood and motherhood. In this theme, it is important to discuss how fixations on smooth hair reflect internalisation of Eurocentric beauty ideals and emphases how characters in this novel aim to align themselves with colonial standards and how this affects their identity. Her obsession with mixed race children illustrates a rejection of her own racial identity which was shaped by her experience of colonialism. Her internalised racism manifests in her ideas of living and her desire to make children that conform to these ideals. By showing how much value, she attributes to race and its privileges, she inadvertently reinforced the structures of racial inequality she seeks to break.

This pattern of thinking extends over generations and is evident even in Delfina's mother, Serafina. Serafina, sacrifices her child's education and prostitutes her to white men so that the family can be financially secure. This decision creates resentment for Serafina. Delfina expresses this:

> "Her mother has cast her like a gazelle into the cage of a carnivore. The old white man was in the darkened room waiting for her… in her case it was to sell her virginity to an old white man in exchange for a glass of wine…It's my mother fault for initiating me into the secrets of the pillow when I still dreamed of obtaining a diploma to teach in some native school (Chiziane 100-105).

Delfina was forced into prostitution not only so that her mother could provide for their family but also for her own personal gain (a glass of wine). This shows the generational traumas perpetuated by colonial systems like slavery. Delfina describes preferring prostitution over working in the field because of the disproportionate pay:

> "Give myself up to the palm plantations as a slave, in order to earn a cupful of salt after all that exhausting toil? No! I prefer to offer the sailors the sweetness of my body and earn a few coins to feed my daily illusions" (Chiziane,2024, p.104).

The act of prostituting one's child shows the systemic poverty that plagues the Mozambican society in the novel. This poverty can be seen as a direct consequence of colonial structures which forced families to make difficult decisions for their survival. Serafina represents the older generation, whose choices are shaped by colonial legacies and economic difficulties. For example: she says to Delfina: "Improve your race my dear Delfina" (Chiziane,2024, p.120) when Delfina reveals she wants to marry José. Serafina says:

> "Come on, get yourself a white man, and make some mixed children. They are never seized or mistreated, they are free and can go where they want. One day, too, they will be bosses and will take the place of their father and your life will be saved…Happy are the women who bear light-skinned children, because they will never be captured and taken away." (Chiziane 129).

This passage reflects the colonial ideals that Serafina carries because of the colonial reality she lived in. Delfina and Serafina, however, are not the only characters who struggle with the consequences of colonialism. Her actions also show the internalisation of colonial ideologies as she values economic stability and symbols of value within a system that emphasises marginalisation. The generational conflict between mother and daughter symbolises and mirrors the broader struggle between preserving traditional norms and value and assimilating to colonial norms.

One such character than embodies this struggle is José. José represents the struggle of assimilation and isolation in the colonial context as an “assimilado” who adopts Portuguese customs and traditions but still remains an outsider to his own culture and norms. Assimilados (assimilated people) as described in the novel is a historical term used in Portuguese colonies like Mozambique to refer to black or mixed-race people who were legally recognised as assimilated into Portuguese culture (Mindoso, 2017). Assimilados adopted the language and culture of the coloniser, and this was recorded into legal documents. These people would be privy to more privilege and status which was linked to better quality of life. This quality of life is something that Delfina aspires to have and after marrying José, it is evident that he cannot provide this lifestyle for her in the beginning. Their financial situation strains their marriage and Delfina expresses this:

> “Delfina's voice starts to express a longing for the olden days when José presents her, at the end of each month, with five kilos of rancid flour, ten coconuts and a ten-escudo coin, his wages as a contract worker. ‘Do you think these wages are good enough for me?’ Delfina screams. ‘You took me away from Soares, my rich white man who gave me everything. Bring me proper money if you want me here.’” (Chiziane,2024, p.151-152)

This passage highlights various issues. Firstly, Delfina makes a comparison of José (a black contract worker) and Soares (a rich white man). This comparison exposes the economic hardship faced by black men under colonial labour systems where they were often exploited and paid low wages. Her demand for ‘proper money’ shows how colonial systems such as unequal workspaces affect the black families' economic resources. Her focus on Soares as a rich white man shows the internalised colonial values that equate whiteness with economic success. This highlights the detrimental impact that colonial ideologies have on personal relationships and self-esteem. In this passage, it is also evident the tension between love and material wealth. Delfina prioritises materiality over romance and this can be symbolic of colonialisms disruption of interpersonal relationships by focusing on economic gain and capitalism over emotional attachments which are essential to human nature. It also shows how marriage can be commodified and used as a means to gain stats and stability while also building a new sense of self or identity. José does not understand Delfina’s preoccupation with improving her status as he exercises more patriarchal norms and patterns of understanding society. He says to her:

> “Delfina, you ungrateful woman, can’t you see how much I suffer for your sake? I took you away from the streets of bitterness. I gave you dignity and a name. You are a respected, married woman.”

José here exhibits patriarchal control and positions himself as Delfina’s saviour. He has granted her ‘dignity’ and respectability in society. This reinforced his patriarchal beliefs that attach a woman’s value and identity to her marital status. José makes reference to saving her from the “streets of bitterness” which could be interpreted as the reflection of broader societal oppression faced by black women in colonial and post-colonial contexts. Delfina continues to pressure him because his sacrifices are not enough and she suggests that he become an assimilado. This is a concept that he initially rejects and is sceptical about. He says: “Assimilados are murderers, Delfina” (Chiziane,2024, p.158) however he begins to imagine what his life could be. José convinced himself that he is doing this for love for the lack of love or possibility of losing Delfina motivates José to become an assimilado. Chiziane describes that to “colonise is to close all doors except one. Assimilation is the one road to survival” (p.159).

Assimilation

José describes his experience of assimilation when he vows to adopt European values and abandon his own culture:

> “Whoever refuses to kneel before the might of the empires will never be able to ascend to the status of citizen. If you don't know the words of the new speech, you will never affirm yourself. So come on, swear on all you hold dear that you won't utter another word in that barbaric tongue. Swear, renounce, sweep it all away, so that you can be born again. Abandon your language, your tribe, your faith. Come on now, burn your amulets, your old shrines and your old pagan spirits. José takes his pledge before a magistrate, in a ceremony that is more like a pledge to the flag. With few formalities in front of a half-drunk official.
> "I swear," he repeated.”
> “Do you swear to abandon all those savage beliefs, that backward language and your barbaric life?” (Chiziane, 2024, p.159).

This passage exposes the mechanism of cultural erasure and the imposition of colonial ideologies. It also exposes the brutality that is within forcing people to abandon their identities,

culture and heritage in exchange for a recognised status of 'citizenship' (Comaroff, 2001). José is demanded to renounce his native language', his faith, his tribe (identity and belonging and culture represents the destruction of native identity. He is asked to renounce these elements of his life in exchange for the colonisers culture that implies their standard of civilisation. The use of the words 'barbaric' and 'backward' show how the colonial powers perceived indigenous people. José's participation in this ritual is one of coercion which shows the colonials power to dictate and control identity or aspects thereof. The ceremony is less than earnest as it was performed by a "half-drunk official' shows the negligibility and unimportance shown by the colonisers with regards to the sacrifice of the natives. This act of pledging himself to the coloniser's ideals can be seen as a tool of subjugation which forced the colonised individual to conform to the colonisers terms while offering little equality and privilege. The passage also makes mention of the burning of "amulets", "old shrines" and "old pagan spirits" is symbolic of the physical erasure of spiritual and cultural markers. The rejection of these markers and roots disconnects the individual from their culture and tradition, thus alienating them and they become caught between the two spheres that never fully accept them.

Chiziane critiques the dehumanising nature of colonial systems that enforce cultural destruction for the sake of perceived inclusion, The act of assimilating can be seen as a commentary on the price that indigenous people paid to the colonial powers and creating a discussion on whether this 'citizenship' was a form of further subjugation or liberation for the individuals. José adopts Portuguese language, customs and culture to gain acceptance and status associated with those who conform. Not only does he abandon his identity, he is employed as a "sepoy" – someone who ensures that colonial powers maintain their control over the people. Being an assimilado provides José with a new sense of self: "He looks at himself in the mirror…savouring his new clothes with his eyes" (Chiziane, 2024, p.162). He feels that "for the first time in his life, he feels good about how well he is dressed" (p.162). His new clothing and status provide him with pride and boosts his self-concept and self-esteem. José finds himself in a consistent battle between tradition and assimilation. This is evident when José first begins to work as a sepoy:

> "He finally understands the real breadth of his new state. He ponders changes taking place in his life, and prepares himself mentally for the great encounter. His hour has come. The army of betrayal and death has gained another recruit. He is going to become his own enemy. To look at his own race and be tormented by it. To kill men and protect the palm grove.

> He dons his khaki shorts. His tunic. He puts on his tall boots and his fez. He places his rifle on his shoulder." (Chiziane, 2024, p.166)

This passage described the moral and psychological change that occurs within José who succumbs to colonial tactics and became an active agent in his people's oppression. He realises that he is 'going to become his own enemy' which signifies the internal conflict that is inherent in serving a colonial regime by joining "the army of betrayal and death", he is complicit in the oppression of his own people and inadvertently of himself. This passage also shows how colonial systems exploit individuals and turn them into agents of oppression against their own people. This passage begins the exploration of identity, agency and complicity by showing the detrimental effects that colonisation has not only on the nation but also on the individual. Despite his efforts to be accepted, he acknowledges that he cannot be one of them. He says: "I have agreed to eliminate my own people in order to survive, but I shall never be one of them. In this world, I am nobody!" (Chiziane, 2024, p.167). José admits that his survival will be at the cost of betrayal to his community and that he is aware that he will face exclusion from the very system that he works for. The line 'In this world, I am nobody' shows the internal belief of worthlessness and powerlessness. José 's sense of being a "nobody" underscores the erasure of cultural identity and personal identity under colonial rule. His statement expresses his questioning of his identity in a world where he is devalued and marginalised. These lines show the liminal position that Assimilados are in: where they are neither fully accepted by colonisers nor accepted to turn back to their people. It also contributes to the broader discussion of identity. José's sense of being a nobody reflects the internal belief of his own worthlessness, a direct consequence of the colonial regime which devalues his race and culture. This erasure of cultural and personal identity aligns with the comment that Chiziane notes in the novel: "The stigma of race has left malignant seeds that multiply like the root of a cancer, and will kill generations, even after the sailors have left." (Chiziane, 2024, p.121). Racism in this sense operates within the individual and their psyche and perpetuates feeling of inferiority and worthlessness. The "malignant seeds" that Chiziane refers to shows how racial stigmas distort identity over time. Racism fractures not only individuals but communities. Chiziane makes reference to 'generations' that will be affected long after the colonisers have left. Chiziane's cancer metaphor emphasises the enduring impact of the imbalanced power dynamic and how internalised racism will continue to "kill generations' by perpetuating these inequalities and distorted identities long after colonisation ends, and independence is gained. This distortion is what José embodies, as his participation in colonialism is an attempt to find a new identity in

a place that will never be accepting of him. José's complicity and effect is discussed by Chiziane in the following passage:

> What José doesn't know is that his deeds have made their mark, have made history, the stuff of myth and legend. They will change the world. Without the complicity of the *assimilados* and the sepoys, the land would never have been colonized.
>
> Women take pride as bearers of life. Men, at least some of them, can take pride in stealing lives away among the shadows. That is why they organize themselves in legions, platoons, armies and terrorist movements. (Chiziane, 2024, p.181).

José's actions have far surpassed them as he and many other *assimilados* will partake in history. This passage critiques the role that *assimilados* and sepoys played in colonisation. This first line reflects the irony of José's role. His actions are solidified as part of the colonial tools that oppress his people. One of the mechanisms of colonial rule and domination was its reliance on internal divisions of communities and people, complicity and systemic violence. The line "Without the complicity of the *assimilados* and the sepoys, the land would never have been colonised" highlights how colonial regimes relied on local people's participation and collaboration. It shows how colonisation is not purely an external process but also an internal one – changing and modifying personal and cultural identities. This complicity is shown as being essential to the success of colonisation and critiques how the colonial regime benefited from those who betrayed their people in return for survival and power. The passage then makes note of women as proud bearers of life whilst men, at least some, take pride in ending life. This juxtaposition of women and life bearers and men as life stealers reflects the gendered expectations within the colonial and patriarchal system. Women's roles are composed as nurturing and life-bearing which ties them to the life cycle and preservation of culture and identity. Men on the other hand are showed to occupy roles of violence, destruction and betrayal. This difference in role highlights the collapse of communities under colonial rule where traditional gender roles are warped and made to serve colonial agendas. That is why people 'organise themselves into legions, platoons, armies and terrorist movements' – this line critiques the institutionalisation of violence of the continuation of power dynamics through military systems. Violence then becomes formalised under colonialism as becomes a structure of power used to maintain control over a population The inclusion of terrorist movements however complexifies this notion as it can refer to those who shall resist. The use of this term can critique the colonial view of resistance and liberation as 'terrorist' movements whilst also showing how colonial systems framed historical narratives.

As discussed in the building of national identity, the nation and its history cannot be separated. Identity and its formation are a complex process by which many factors can mould it. In the analysis of this theme, racial identity and national identity are seen to be connected in the broader context of colonialism and post-colonialism. Chiziane makes an observation in her novel:

> People love identities. They even demand a birth certificate from someone they can see in front of them. Is there greater proof than my presence to confirm I was born? (Chiziane, 2024, p.9).

This statement serves as a critique of the obsession with a formal and externally validated identity which fits a specific standard. In this case, this statement can offer a starting point to the discussion of how racial and national identity intersect in the context of colonial and post-colonial societies. The novel makes references to the time before colonialism on various occasions. The headman's wife, also to be the public figure to which people turn for history, stories and knowledge in the community, makes reference to the history of their land: "

> "We were from Monomotapa, from Changamire, Makombe and Kupula, back in the first dawns of time. The power was ours. Do you remember those times, my people? No, you know nothing about them, no one remembered to tell you." (Chiziane, 2024, p. 22).

This paragraph points to the erasure of history in the post-colonial context but also points to the origins of the Namuli people. She makes reference to the former African kingdom of Monomotapa and the Changamire dynasty, amongst others. Interestingly, she notes that the power was theirs, which indicates a shift in power in the present moment. She also mentions that they know nothing about these times because 'no one remembered' to tell them. This can be interpreted as a note of the erasure of history and the insignificance with which people treat this history as they forget to tell the younger generations. This could be because of the mediation of information and narratives by the colonial regime. However, the irony lies in her statement as she is passing down her knowledge of history through oral tradition. She continues:

> We joined the Shangaan, the Nguni, the Ndau, Nyanja, Sena. We waged war on each other and made peace. We were invaded by the Arabs. Waged war upon by the Dutch and the Portuguese. We fought. The wars with the Portuguese were the hardest and we ran hither, while the ships transported slaves to the four corners of the world. New wars came. Of blacks against whites, and blacks against blacks." (Chiziane, 2024, p.23)

The headman's wife explains their history in relation to slavery, invasion and then colonisation. She also makes reference to the resistance movement that presumably led to independence, and lastly, civil war. She includes events that occurred prior to colonisation, like the joining of forces with the Shangaan, the Nguni, the Ndau, Nyanja, Sena. She mentions the war they waged on each other and the peace-making that followed. These aspects of history are often overshadowed by colonisation and their description often dominates the narrative of the country and its history. The woman ties this history in with racial identity and the 'creation' of mixed-race people:

> "Women were raped and wept over the pains of their misfortunes with seeds in their womb, and they gave birth to anew nation. The invaders destroyed our temples, our gods, our language. But with the, we built a new language, a new race. That race is us. (Chiziane, 2024, p.23).

She references the violence which produced this new race as black women were raped by the invaders and forced to bear children. She makes note of the erasure of cultural and religious markers in their societies like their language, their temples and their gods. With the invaders, a new language as well as a new race was created. Her speech on history and identity brings forth the link between history, race, culture and identity. The legacies of these histories in the colonial and post-colonial contexts which are shaped by systemic oppression and violence, mediate different aspects of identity. Race can be understood as an aspect of an individual's sense of self or identity. In colonial and post-colonial contexts, race is not just a physical attribute but a constructed identity that is tied to power, privilege and discrimination. The lived experiences of people like Jose, Serafina and Delfina who faced racial marginalisation, cultural erasure and systemic oppression, shape their self-concept and identity. Racial identity can influence personal identity through the internalisation of societal views particularly, the colonial views that reduced peoples worth and created feeling of inferiority. On the other side, racial identity can also influence personal identity in the active preservation of one's racial and cultural background. Taking pride in one's customs and culture is *reclaiming* that which had previously been devalued and stigmatised. Besides this, colonialism established racial hierarchies, linking racial identity to societal roles and nationality. National identity under colonial rule was constructed to marginalise racial groups. Like in the novel, assimilated individuals were granted citizen privileges while the majority of the native people were treated as inferior. *Assimilados* in the novel are an example of individuals who are racially marginalised and ostracised from full immersion in both the coloniser's identity and communities' identities.

After independence, redefining national identity to include all racial and cultural groups became a challenge. The effects of the colonial racial hierarchies and cultural erasure complicates the redefining of national identity. Nations had a goal of creates a singular national identity, but these excluded groups struggled to integrate cultural and racial identity or marginalised these minority groups. National identity in this sense, remains brittle when embedded in discriminatory practices rooted in racial exclusion. Because personal identity relates to how individuals view their roles and belonging to the nation. When race becomes a tool of oppression, people can feel alienated from the national identity of the time. For example, the demand of 'proof' of identity as indicated by this line: "They even demand a birth certificate from someone they can see in front of them." (Chiziane,2024, p.9). This line shows the imposition of systems that deny humanity and belonging of indigenous people. The introduction of a dominant national identity can be alienating for those who do not fit the rigid frames of this identity. This can leave people feeling fragmented and divided as they may struggle with consolidating personal, racial and national identities. National identity can also become a tool of division rather than one of cohesion. In the novel, national identity and the promise of being a Portuguese citizen and access to resources, was used to privilege people whilst excluding others. The redefinition of national identity can often draw on the reclamation of culture and tradition, resistance movements and finding unity within community.

In her article, Pauline Champagnat (2020) analyses the representation of women in the construction of Mozambique national identity in "The Joyful Song of Partridge" (2024). Champagnat (2020) examines how the novel uses mythical imagery and colonial narratives to delve into the role of Mozambican women in the process of constructing a national identity. The female body is used as an allegory for colonial rule with the black woman's body being shown as a space of contention between colonisers and the native men (Champagnat 2020). The novel's narrative exposes the violence and exploitations of black women in the colonial era, showing rape as a form of domination and symbolic of the colonisers claim over the nation and its people. Interestingly, Champagnat (2020) points out how Chiziane uses irony to critique the idealised relationship between colonisers and black women. This is evident in the novel and can be seen through Delfina's relationship with Soares. Their relationship is often described in a loving and passionate alongside the reality of the violence that many other women in Zambezia faced due to rape. This concern is discussed in the novel when the headman's wife speaks on the violent reality of colonialism: "Women were raped and wept

over the pains of their misfortune with seeds in their womb, and they gave birth to a new nation" (Chiziane,2024, p.23).

The physical description of the naked woman- her "jet black" skin, tattoos and vulnerability associate her with African heritage and traditions that colonisation aimed to erase. The community's mockery of her shows the internalisation of colonial standards, where cultural objects and race is seen as a shame and should be rejected, This moment reveals the conflict between accepting an African identity and adhering to colonial expectations – a key struggles in the formation of national identity in post-colonial Mozambique, Though the peoples critical judging gaze Chiziane critiques the decisions created by colonial ideals within the individual and society. The scene displays the policing of women's bodies and a bigger effort to regulate identity and maintain hierarchies imposed during colonialism.

THEME 2: MOTHERHOOD, IDENTITY AND GENDER DYNAMICS

Similar to the use of tools of exclusion like race and culture, gender had a critical role to play in forming circles on inclusion and exclusion in persona and national levels. The fragmentation that is associated with the process of integrating personal, racial and nation identities correlate with the struggles that women encounter in navigating their roles within a patriarchal society that is shaped by colonial systems. For this theme, it is important to keep in mind Spivak's (1987) concept of dual oppression: women were first oppressed because of their race and then because of their gender. This dual oppression is an overlap of systems of exclusion and analysing them will help gain a deeper and more complex understanding of women's experiences in both colonial and post-colonial context. In The Joyful Song of Partridge, Paulina Chiziane explores the profound and complex theme of motherhood and gender dynamics and places this discussion within the context of Mozambican history, culture and consequences of colonial rule. The novel explores the lives of women who navigate the intersections of tradition, colonisation, tradition, society and shows how these factors mould identities, relationships and roles in society. Motherhood, specifically, materialises as both a struggle and as a form of empowerment – showing the duality that is ingrained in women's experiences in a society that underwent systemic oppression and sociopolitical change. Chiziane's female characters in this novel embody the complex reality of womanhood and shows the range of roles that they occupy such as nurturing, domestic roles that are shaped by society. The novel examines how

colonialism amalgamated women's oppression, placing them at intersections of racial, cultural and gender-based exclusion. Women are shown to be life bearers and tradition enforcers, but they are also expected to sustain patriarchal systems that limited their autonomy. Chiziane critiques these dynamics by showing women's bodies and work is commercialised, their opinions diminished, and their ambitions renounced for societal expectations.

Motherhood, a recurring theme in the novel, goes beyond the biological responsibility and rather encompasses broader emotional and cultural duties. Motherhood symbolises continuity, resilience, strength and anchorage to culture as much as it does the sacrificed and restrictions placed upon women in patriarchal societies. Gender dynamics between women and men also emphasises the tensions between tradition and modernity, as women break societal norms and expectations and seek to redefine their identities in the changing historical landscape. Through her portrayal of complex characters like Maria and Delfina, Chiziane critiques patriarchal structures that oppress women and commemorates their agency and willingness to resist. This theme acts as a lens through which the novel investigates issues of identity, power and change, making it a fundamental principle of Chiziane's narrative and a commentary on the lived experience of Mozambique women. This theme analysis will show how motherhood and gender dynamics intersect with matters of colonialism, race and social change.

Maria, a central figure in the novel, embodies the marginalisation of black women in a society that is shaped by colonial ideals in post-colonial Mozambique. Her character is central to the exploration of black identity, marginalisation and policing of women's bodies by society. Maria's role as a mother highlights the traditional expectation for women to be selfless and nurturing. She is portrayed as a nurturing figure whose main priority is protecting her children over herself and her desires. From the beginning of the novel, Maria is in search of her children whom she has lost. This aligns with patriarchal ideals and expectations of motherhood, where women are valuable in their ability to endure pain and suffering in the name of others. Maria is first introduced in the novel as: "A black woman, as black as sculptures carved from ebony. Jet black, with tattoos on her belly, thighs, and shoulders. Naked, stark naked." (Chiziane,2024, p.5). Maria is ridiculed and ostracised by society because of her defiance of local norms. The people ask: "Who is the woman with enough courage to bathe in the private spot reserved for men, breaking all the normal norms?" (p.6). Her nakedness is perceived as shameful and repulsive, especially as she has occupied a designated "men's" area. They throw stones at her

and question her origins. They describe her as “solitary. Exiled. A foreigner.” because of her difference. Maria experiences judgement and exclusion because of her identity (or apparent lack thereof), her body and her decisions. Maria is even referred to as a “mad woman” and asked by the community's women: “aren’t you ashamed to show your face? Where did you sell your shame?...Aren’t you scared of men? Don’t you know they can use and abuse you?” (Chiziane,2024, p.10). This statement shows the patriarchal nature of society at present: nakedness is seen as a temptation for men to abuse women’s bodies, a woman’s visibility as equal to dishonour and that woman must follow strict behavioural codes to maintain their ‘honour’. Research shows that female bodies are seen as synonymous with colonised land in popular discourse (Champagnat, 2020). The people refer to “selling her shame” which indicates how patriarchal norms use shame to control women’s behaviours and actions, particularly in male-dominated spaces. Women, in this sense, should be modest and any deflection from the norm will be met with a critique from society. The gender dynamics in this society show that fear is used as a tool of control as a form to restrict women’s autonomy. Instead of holding men accountable for being able to “use and abuse” women’s bodies, they blame women for exposing themselves and their bodies. This belief reinforces the notion that women are to adhere to social norms in order to protect themselves. This passage reflects the systemic power imbalances inherent in gender dynamics in a patriarchal society. Men are allowed to use and abuse women’s bodies without being held responsible. Male dominance and aggressiveness are normalised, thus further embedding a woman’s ‘inferior’ status. The women’s response demonstrates internalised misogyny where even women start to police other women’s bodies according to societal expectations. Patriarchal societies maintain control over women by ingraining shame and fear in women for their ‘nakedness’ whilst upholding societal structures that benefit men.

Maria is later formally introduced as:

> “Maria das Dores – Mary of the Sorrows- is her name. It must be the name of a saint or a white woman because black girls like simple names. Joana. Lucrécia. Carlota. Maria das Dores is the most beautiful name, but it is sad. It reflects the day-to-day lives of women and blacks.” (Chiziane, 2024, p.13).

This passage highlights the intersection of gender and race, showing how societal hierarchies shape identity and self-concept. The name “Maria das Dores” (Mary of the Sorrows) is described as “beautiful” but “sad”, symbolic of the lived experiences of black women in a patriarchal and racially segregated society. The name is referred to as the “name of a saint or a

white woman" contrasts the "simple names" given to black girls, reflecting the colonial beliefs that equate value and virtue with whiteness whilst lessening black identity. The passage can be read as a critique of the devaluation of black women who are double oppressed. The name is heavily associated with sorrow and deep pain - "dores"- which emphasises the suffering endured by black women through societal expectations and structural inequalities. The passage also shows the erosion of cultural identity where names and their perceived meanings reflect the dominance of colonial standards and principles. Maria describes herself as "the woman no one sees" (Chiziane,2024, p.15). This reflects the wider problem of invisibility experienced by black women in colonial societies. Maria "isn't a name, it's a synonym of woman." (Chiziane, 2024, p.17). It can be understood that Maria is an extension or a representative of black women living in colonial and post-colonial times.

Maria's name however is not only representative of struggles black women face on a broader level but is also shown to be representative of the pain associated with motherhood and lost children as losing "a child is a pain that kills. To lose three is something that buries one in the deepest hell" (Chiziane, 2024, p.35). It is important to note that Maria sees her children as a "treasure' and losing them has placed her in great emotional distress. This reinforces the idea that women are inherently supposed to be deeply emotionally attached to their children. Women are also supposed to be dignified and well-mannered, similar to how Maria is described in this passage:

> "The headman's wife studies Maria's profile. She seems a dignified woman. With good habits. With breeding. She lowers her eyes when she speaks, which is a mark of the bashfulness typical of well-brought-up women. She speaks quietly. And she speaks good Portuguese. She seems like a village girl. From the interior, tattoos on the body are a countryside thing. But she is not from the interior, believe me. She must be a city girl. From the big city. She is very hygienic, she doesn't eat with her hand. She begs. She begs for bread and a morsel of cheese. With a bit of butter. She's got the refined palate of city folk. When she is hungry, she leaves the riverbank and goes into town to ask for, to beg for sustenance. In a well-mannered way. Dropping to her knees in order to receive alms from men. Bowing her head to receive alms from women. And she looks tenderly" (Chiziane,2024, p.31).

Maria is scrutinised by the headman's wife. She seems to be a dignified woman as the headman's wife attributes good habits that are associated with social refinement. Maria's "bashfulness", hygienic, and "good Portuguese" is seen as a sign of sophistication and good "breeding". The headman's wife presumes that she is a village girl because of her tattoos however that she can't be one because her behaviours align more with "city folk". This assumption shows how identity is linked to culture and origin and markers thereof like tattoos. Tattoos, the headman's wife says area "countryside" thing. Tattoos are linked o cultural traditions and re framed in this context as something less refined compared to the behaviours associated with "city folk". The headman's wife tries to assess Maria's identity in the context of ruralness and urbanity. This assumption is contrasted by the headman's wife's' next assumption. She concludes that Maria must be from the city because of the following: she is hygienic, she doesn't eat with her hand, she has a refined palate, and she begs for bread with cheese.

She lowers her eyes when she talks, which can be interpreted as a sign of submissiveness and respect, which are traits that are encouraged in patriarchal societies (Garcia, 2021). This reinforces gendered societal expectations of women and the way they influence perceptions of identity. Maria speaks quietly, which aligns with a sense of passivity. Maria's fluency in Portuguese is symbolic of the assimilation of colonial culture. This reflects how colonial structures emphasised the Portuguese language as an indicator of high social status, shaping Maria's perceived identity. She also drops to her knees in order to receive 'alms' from men and bows her head to receive 'alms' from women. Her subservient actions such as kneeling and bowing can reflect the traditional behaviours associated with women in the society. This passage shows the multi-faceted nature of identity and how its shaped by societal perceptions of race, gender, class and culture. Maria's identity is constructed and reframed through external forces which reflects the fluid nature of identity in a colonial and post-colonial setting. Maria's body becomes a blueprint through which her identity is constructed, further demonstrating the link between physical appearance and social perceptions. The tattoos on her body, described as "a web, a mesh, a lace belt stitched by hand, and covering only her belly" (Chiziane, 2024, p.33) act as cultural markers that connect her to her origins and the traditions of the Lomwe people. In Betty Schneider's article titled "Body Decoration in Mozambique" (1973), she discusses how, among the Lomwe people, tattoos were deeply tied to cultural practices. Tattoos carried symbolic meaning and could signify tribal association and personal identity. These

tattoos also reflected a connection to the land and spiritual heritage. The tattoos are symbolic of Maria's origin: "She comes from the mountains, and in her veins flows the sacred blood of the rocks. She is a daughter of the land, returning from her great journey, summoned by the spirits" (Chiziane,2024, p.34). Maria is links to the land and its essence – her identity is integrated with her ancestral home. The mention of the "sacred blood of the rocks" ties Maria to her ancestral heritage suggesting that her identity is also shaped by the history and traditions of the Lomwe people. Maria's return form her journey can be seen as a reclamation and reconnection where she reconnects with the land and her ancestors. This contradicts the isolation that came with colonialism and systems that sought to erase cultural identities. Maria's return and the permanence of tattoos can be symbolic of the resilience of culture and cultural identity as well as the enduring link to traditions and indigenous heritage despite colonial influences. The resilience of culture is reflected in the historical significance of tattoos as described in this passage about their origins during slavery:

> "These tattoos hark back to the time of slavery. That much the old woman knows. The African peoples had to stamp their bodies with marks of their identity. Each tattoo is unique. It is a sign of one's birth. On the body, a map of the homeland is drawn. The village. Lineage. In each line, there lies a message. An ancestral tree. Tattoos helped family members to reunite in São Tomé. In America. In the Caribbean. In the Comoros, in Madagascar, Mauritius and other places in the world. Times changed, Africans do not need tattoos anymore, for the time of slavery is over." (Chiziane,2024, p.34).

Tattoos served as features of identity, linking people to their ancestral lands. Tattoos were "unique" and served as a "map of the homeland" which helped preserve ancestry, kinship and lineage even when separated by enslavement. The historical role of tattoos in the African context accentuates their role as indicators of resistance and preservation. The tattoos provided a way of maintaining a cultural identity, promoting unity amongst separated family members and resisting cultural erasure. Maria's tattoos connect her to Lomwe heritage but can also be seen as metaphorical of the broader historical struggle of Africans to preserve their identity, their cultures and their heritage against colonial forces. Maria's tattoos are symbols of survival, cultural endurance and resistance against colonialism. The permanent nature of tattoos, despite the attempt to erase cultural identity, highlights the strength of cultural ties such as the tattoos used to reunite families from São Tome, Caribbean and Comoros during and after the time of slavery. The use of these tattoos along with stories told about the historical matriarchy can be seen as a way for women to confront their ostracism and rather rebuild their female identity

(Teixeira, 2010b). Furthermore, it helps reclaim Zambezian history and values the woman's role in the building of the nation (Teixeira, 2010b).

Maria not only navigates her identity by exploring her ancestral and cultural heritage. Maria's identity is also shaped by the colonial context in which she lives and was born into. Maria is raised in the context of assimilation. The assimilation process and its effect on the individual in covered in theme one. For this theme, Maria's personal struggle will be the main focus. Maria struggles in the assimilation context as she is forced to bear the burden of being both a woman and a black individual. Her struggle, Mattia (2022) shows, reflects a broader commentary on the erasure and reclamation of cultural identify in post-colonial societies. Maria embodies the psychological and physical scars of her mother's choices (Mattia, 2022). The reality of black women and motherhood can be seen in the novel: "A black woman doesn't play with dolls, but real babies, once she reaches the age of twelve. Talk of love and virginity is for white women, not us." (Chiziane, 2024 p.70). Maria seeks her children, her "treasure". She "declares her wish in a fearsome cry, 'I want my Benedito, my Fernando and my Rosinha, my real babies!!'" (Chiziane, 2024, p. 434). Delfina is portrayed as the opposite. Instead of motherhood being a source of empowerment, it is seen as a site of oppression. Delfina for example, sees motherhood as a means of perpetuating cultural identity but also as a tool for economic survival as she sells her daughters virginity in exchange for wealth and prosperity (Mattia, 2022). Delfina sells Maria's virginity to Simba: her lover and community traditional healer.

This commodification of her daughter critiques the pressures that women to objects used for the family or societal gain (Mattia, 2022). Delfina sells Maria's virginity to Simba: her lover. Delfina describes him;" that beautiful young black boy, was my sexual institution, my other self, capable of great leaps of the imagination" (Chiziane, 2024 p.52). From this description, Simba serves as Delfina's sexual institution: he is an object used to fulfil her sexual desires and needs. Delfina is also open about her sexual encounters with men and how she frequents in this behaviour often:

> "I am one of those women who hibernate by day, in order to sing the symphony of night with the bats. I am a witch. I had all the men in the world. Two husbands, many lovers, four children, a brothel (Chiziane, 2024 p.51)

From this statement, it can be seen that Delfine enjoys this lifestyle. In Mozambican tradition, mothers are seen as life-bearers and community builders, however these roles are accompanied

by strict expectations that reduce women to domestic and reproductive duties (Mattia, 2022). Delfina is an example of a woman character in the novel that challenges these ideals. She sacrifices Maria's virginity to attain a white husband who will fulfil her social and economic desires of privilege and wealth. Delfina describes a woman's role in society: "For a woman, studying isn't important…You don't need schooling to give birth to a child" (Chiziane, 2024 p.343). This view reduces a woman to her reproductive role. Interestingly, Delfina uses her own body as a form of resistance and empowerment. Although Delfina gets married to José, she carries Soares's child as a means to acquire a high social status. Mattias (2022) argues that she aimed to use miscegenation as a way to surpass racial boundaries and reconstruct her identity as a mother of the "mulatto" child and a white man's wife (p.183). She describes this in the novel:

> "I'm black, yes, but only in my skin. I'm already more than a black woman, I married a white man!...I'm almost white, with creams I use. I live with whites, I eat white people's food and I speak good Portuguese." (Chiziane, 2024 p.31-319).

Here, it is evident that Delfina's identity as a mother in linked to her racial identity. She navigates a society that is divided by racial hierarchies, where whiteness and colonial ideals are privileged (Tavares, 2010). Her experience can be seen as both a reflection of the economic struggles faced by women in post-colonial societies and a demonstration of how Delfina's decisions impact her daughters (David, 2009). Delfina's decision to commodify Maria das Dores, strips Maria of her agency and leaves her feeling powerless. Maria screams for her father as she is being abused by Simba: "Everything dies at that moment. Childhood. Innocence. All the starts go out as a sign of mourning…Maria das Dores is being raped" (Chiziane, 2024 p.362). Maria marks this day as the day "when her life changed forever" (p.365). The trauma of her experiences leaves Maria with a fractured sense of identity, and she struggles to reconcile this identity through her own experience of mother. At eighteen years old, Maria had 3 children (Chiziane, 2024 p. 388) and Simba has used this marriage to attain her wealth (p.392). As soon as she realises that she is not being well taken care her she goes on a search for her father and for better conditions. When she is admitted to military hospital, she loses her children. It is with this experience that Maria seeks to use motherhood and her maternal identity as a way to reclaim her agency and redefine her role. At the end of the novel, Maria das Dores finds her children and uses her trauma and experience as a to change her idea and beliefs about motherhood as she has experienced through her own mother. Maria das Dores, however, is not the only child affected by her mother's actions. Maria's sister Jacinta is also affected by her mother's decisions and this makes her question her identity at a young age:

Her little head was filled with a growing dilemma: Where's my place? Why do I have to remain between two races?' (Chiziane, 2024 p.351). Jacinta's privilege appears clearly in the household for her and she notices how Delfina treats her differently compared to Maria:

> "She started to love Maria das Dores, who was oppressed within the home because of her race…they lived under the same roof, slept in the same room, but their mother kept their plates, glasses and cutlery apart" (Chiziane, 2024, p.351).

In fact, Maria also notices this as she says: "when her mulatto sister was born, her mother's affection migrated to the other side of the river, and she never managed to regain it" (Chiziane, 2024, p.351). It is important to note that these racialised treatments of her daughters show how colonial ideologies penetrate the individual and private space and how it affects familial dynamics and maternal relationships. Jacinta's confrontation of her mother allows Delfina to analyse and reflect on her role as a mother : "When a child confronts you, the day you just part draws near…Delfina had always been a fighter, she had won all her battles, had dominated the world and men, but had never prepared herself for a fight with her own daughter" (Chiziane, 2024, p. 372-373). Jacinta forces Delfina to acknowledge the mistake she had made and through decisive action, removes herself and her siblings from the mother's life. Delfina is thus forced to recognise and reflect on her motherhood. She says: "I bore you with a lot of love, Maria das Dores. But when you were born, life imposed adverse rules on me when it came to motherhood. The world dehumanised and disunited us. And I forgot it was my womb that gave birth to you" (Chiziane, 2024, p.423). This reflection is a testament to the topic of intergenerational trauma and the struggle of mothers like Delfina who pass down the trauma to their children, thus creating a perpetual cycle of trauma. Through such a character, Chiziane critiques the view that frames motherhood as a way to assess a woman's value. Delfina challenges traditional norms and rules by stepping beyond her role as a mother (Mattia, 2022). As mentioned in the novel, Delfina justifies her actions by stating that she does this for the security of her children and their futures. The loss of her children represents an intergenerational fracture in "matriarchal lineage" as the bond between mother and first daughter is broken (Tavares, 2010 p. 187). Delfina's Black identity, particularly in terms of motherhood, is rejected and this extends to how she treats Jacinta and Maria. This internalised colonial mentality influences the decisions Delfina makes.

Delfina rejects her race but through the commodification of herself, she acknowledges her value (Tavares, 2010). she uses her body as a means to attain social status by making a mixed-race child. In the novel, the narrator says: A woman's body is a trap where a man gets caught

(Chiziane, 2024 p.192). She commodifies herself and uses prostitution to climb the “social ladder”. Chiziane critiques the patriarchal structures that define women’s roles and regulate their autonomy (Mattia, 2022). Even though Delfina challenges patriarchal norms, she still faces difficulties due to systemic gender inequalities. Delfina’s sale of her daughter's virginity shows how gender intersects with race and economic status to further promote oppression (Mattia, 2022). This cycle of commodifying woman’s bodies is perpetuated even by Delfina’s mother. Delfina however recognises the trauma she has caused and passed down to her child Maria. She says: “I was the cause of disaster, yes. I attracted warfare into the same home. Those black and mulatto children inherited a conflict and they will have to go on fighting until they come to an understanding” (Chiziane, 2024, p.471). Tavares (2010) suggests that the reason why Delfina targets Maria das Dores, is because she sees Maria as a culmination of the very identity she tries to reject and thus exiles her (p.190).

In this sense, the female body is used as a weapon and as a site of destruction. Champagnat (2020) argues that the representation of the woman’s body in the novel, is central to the discourse surrounding the construction of the Mozambican nation. For example, Champagnat (2020) states that the appropriation of black women’s bodies, can be seen as a metaphor for the colonisation of Mozambican territory. She explains how the novel first places the initial interaction of coloniser and natives in an idealised way as seen by the story of the sailor and the perturbing beauty of the woman in the novel. Delfina and Soares represent the allegory of the siren and sailor (Barbosa & Seco, 2014). Champagnat (2020) shows that this is a paradox of the dominant discourse that exists about colonisation and its process, that often omits the violence and systemic oppression that proceeds it. Ironically, the construction of the nation in the novel is not presented as something natural, but rather something that represents the pains of childbirth - the birth of a new nation (p. 94).

In the narrative, Chiziane juxtaposes two sides of black female identity by contrasting submission and agency, tradition and modernity as well as cultural values and colonial values. This dichotomy is shown in her representation of women in relation to motherhood and identity. Chiziane presents black women in the novel as victims of patriarchal oppressive systems and reduces them to subservient roles such as Maria Das Dores. This is shown as the expectations of women to be nurturers and caregivers as described in scenes above. Motherhood, as such, becomes a burden for woman as they are expected to fulfil their domestic roles. Conversely, she also depicts women as characters of resilience and agency. Women such

as Delfina refigures her individual identity outside of the expected motherhood roles whilst Maria uses her cultural roots, spiritual beliefs and connection to Namuli to reclaim her agency and identity as a mother. In this sense, motherhood can be seen as a site of resistance where women prioritise native traditions and values that colonialism sought to erase. In the narrative highlights the marginalisation of women within male-dominated ideals of the nation and proposing alternative understandings of understandings of identity (Tavares, 2010). Motherhood in this case, and the female body are interlinked. Maria's tattoos for example, mark her as belonging to the land and links her to her Lomwe ancestry. These tattoos are symbolic of both her cultural and maternal lineage – a permanent symbol of her heritage.

This theme can be seen as an integral part of Chiziane's goal to reconfigure the feminine memory given that the recuperation of Zambezian history through the recovery of a female genealogy is also the retrieval of the memory of miscegenation "(Teixeira, 2010, p. 173). Maria Das Dores is different from the other women as she does not conform to societal standards and shamed for it that that she may adopt conformity over individualism (Teixeira, 2010). As Teixeira (2010), describes, Maria das Dores defies the cultural representation of women, thus women in the novel seeks to identity and exile her as a means of feeling secure in their definition of being a woman. Her name and its significance provide readers with an understanding of the reality in the novel. Although her name is associated the privilege white population, it also refers to the difficult experiences lived by the underprivileged (Teixeira, 2010). Teixeira (2010) states that's the story of Maria das Dores is a metaphor of the search for an understanding of identity. When this understanding of identity does not fit the social standard, her differences are greeted with repulsion and her actions categorise her as a madwoman (Tavares, 2010). Chiziane addresses this feminine suffering through the narrative by identifying the universal condition of women transcending racial, ethnic and socio-economic issues (Tavares, 2010). The portrayal of these two sides of black female identity shows that motherhood is not merely a biological function, but also a socio-political and cultural role. The varying experiences of the motherhood in the novel displays how women reclaim and lose their personal, cultural and racial identity. Identity in this case is seen as a culmination of both the expectations placed upon women and their acceptance, resistance or restructuring of these terms.

THEME 3: CULTURE AND SOCIETY

In “The Joyful Song of Partridge” (2024), intricately explores the tension between culture and society, especially by using the feminine perspective, using spirituality and modernity. The novel shows how female characters navigate societal expectations and limitations and assert their individuality by focusing on the dual forces of oppression. Through the aspects of nakedness, spirituality, and oral storytelling, Chiziane creates a powerful discussion surrounding colonial past, gender dynamics and cultural change.

Nakedness as Shame and Empowerment

In “The Joyful Song of Partridge” (2024), nakedness is both a symbol of shame and a form of empowerment. Nóbrega, Ramos-Lopes & Rosado (2021) argue that the presentation of nudity in the novel is in confrontation with the “thoughts of other women” in the novel and that she can represent an allegory of the idea of a naked virgin nation untainted from Eurocentric ideals. The women who judge and chastise her seem to demonstrate the Western ideals of culture (Nóbrega et al., 2021). These authors discuss how Western thought has shaped African culture in terms of identity, gender and the feminine body (Nóbrega et al., 2021). The character Maria das Dores makes a stark appearance in the first chapter of the novel as mentioned in the first theme. She is said to symbolise an Africa free from Western influences ((Nóbrega et al., 2021). Her nudity, these authors argue that she represents a pure state and this is what shocks the people on the banks of the River Licungo. These people question her identity in the novel by asking questions such as where she has come from, and who she is and even “cross themselves and place the palm of their hand over their face like a fan” (Chiziane, 2024, p.9). Interestingly, they also “pretend they cannot see what they nevertheless manage to view through the cracks between their fingers (p.9). This indicates that the people although they throw shame at Maria das Dores, they are also intrigued by her and her nakedness. They also threaten her by saying that they will put clothes on her against her free will if she does not comply with her demands (Chiziane, 2024 p.11). This shows that the cultural norm is not only heavily placed on Maria but also reinforced through threats of violence. This shows how Western values are deeply internalised by the women as they react with social rejection and disapproval of others who do not fit their standard (Nóbrega et al., 2021). Using the studies of scholar Oyěwùmí,, Nóbrega, Ramos-Lopes, Rosado (2021) argue that in pre-colonial societies , gender was not a factor for social organisation unlike the West. In the novel, Chiziane questions the impact of colonialism and to present a different narrative that reclaims traditional African values (Nóbrega et al.,

2021). Colonisation brought with in a patriarchal and hierarchical system whilst diminishing the flexible matriarchal structures (Nóbrega et al., 2021). This is mentioned in the novel by the headwoman's wife as she tells the story of matriarchy. She says that "at the beginning of everything. Men and women lived in separate worlds across the highlands of Mount Namuli. The women used advanced technologies" and had fishing boats (Chiziane, 2024 p.20). This shows that women had a sustainable life of their own where they provided for themselves without the interruption of men. She goes on to say that women "dominated the mysteries of nature...they were so pure...powerful" (p.20). She compares this advanced position with those of men who were "still savages, ate raw flesh and red on roots" whilst women had already discovered fire (p.20). Colonisation however, changed these ideas and cultural thoughts and instead implemented a patriarchal and hierarchal system where women are judged and shamed based on their bodies, solidifying strict gender expectations. Maria das Dores for example is classified as a mad woman as she refuses to conform to gendered expectations of her body (Chiziane, 2024 p.13). Maria also chastises the people that scream at her by saying that the nakedness they see in her is a reflection of themselves (Chiziane, 2024 p.14). She calls them "mad ones, covered in a thousand items of clothing like the layers of an onion. In midst of all this heat" (Chiziane, 2024, p.14). In this scenario, Maria critiques the ways of dressing saying that they are mad for overdressing for the weather and climate they live in. Maria revels in her nakedness and says that she hates clothes that limit her flight (p.14) and thus her nakedness is used as a metaphor for self-discovery, and assertion of agency. She refuses to conform to societies restrictions on the female body. This creates tension between personal agency and social expectations. Nudity for some becomes an assertion of identity rather than a symbol of shame. This conversion of shame into strength challenges the patriarchal gaze that has historically objectified and policed female bodies. Through this , Chiziane demonstrates how women negotiate their social position in a society that restricts them.

Another character that challenges Western ideals is Moyo. Moyo is a traditional healer and a cornerstone of the community as many rely on him for advice and guidance (Santos, 2018). They describe him as a man who

> "handles his magic objects like an artist, unhurried, as if he had all the time in the world. With magic wands intricately weaving together the lives and souls of people coming from every direction to confide in him their most outlandish secrets." (Chiziane 2024, p. 92)

And his service to the people varied from being a confider, a spiritual counsellor and witch doctor. He prepares his herbs and roots that we will use to help people with both their bodily and spiritual health (p.92). Moyo's character is a testament to Mozambican traditional beliefs and his services are used in such a way that female characters can redefine their roles and explore their identities outside of societies restrictions (Santos, 2018). Delfina for example, exchanges her daughters virginity for witchcraft that will bless her with wealth and riches (Chiziane, 2024, p. 52). Chiziane mixed these traditional values with contemporary struggles, showing how traditional practices allow women to create space for autonomy and empowerment. Moyo represents cultural wisdom, resistance, and the reclamation of African identity (Santos, 2018). As an important figure in his community, he acts as a guardian of ancestral knowledge. His position within the village is both respected and contested, as he operates within the colonial context. Father Beneditos' character further emphasises the friction between tradition and modernity. Caught between religious and cultural expectations, he is symbolic of the contact of Western beliefs and traditional practices. Chiziane uses Father Benedito to critique the erasure of cultural identity in support of external influences. As such, it can be understood that spirituality remains a battleground for cultural survival.

MODERNITY

Chiziane presents modernity as a drive of progress and an omen of devastation. The passage recounting her realisation of Maria's origins accentuates the corrosion of traditional society. The woman mourns the disintegration of traditional society reflects the widespread displacement caused by war, migration, and colonial influence:

> "The old lady confirms the illusion of existence as she contemplates the corrosion and death of the edifice assumed eternal. Families were destroyed, dispersed, because of wars and migration. In these new times, society has become corroded in the name of a modernity that has dragged hundreds of the old lady's fellow humans to the realm of marginality and madness. The world has adopted new challenges and battles new enemies." (Chiziane, 2024, p.38).

Here modernity is not seen as a constructive force but rather something that disrupts family structures, excludes communities and 'corrodes' cultural progression. Modernity is not seen as an evolving facet but rather one that intensifies social factures and isolates people from their cultural heritage.

Another important aspect of preserving history and redefining identity in “The Joyful Song of Partridge” (2024), is oral storytelling. Oral storytelling is an important cultural tenet of the people Namuli people in the novel. This practice, which is also significant in Mozambican culture shows how history and myth is passed down and how it reconstructs their female identity (Mattia, 2022). This tradition of oral storytelling allows women to deconstruct dominant narratives and reclaim their narrative (Mattia, 2022). The female characters in the novel embody resilience and resistance and uses their stories to redefine society and its norms (Mattia, 2022). Overall, Mattia (2022) recognises the tension that the novel portrays between preserving culture and tradition whilst confronting colonial legacy, and also emphasising women’s role in exploring this duality. Chiziane’s portrayal of storytelling also touches on the tension between modernity and tradition as modernisation seeks to erase these cultures , but women’s resilience and commitment to change ensures cultural preservation. By passing down stories, they challenge historical narratives and popular discourses and , at the same time, assert their autonomy within an evolving society.

Paulina Chiziane’s novel masterfully explores the intersection of culture and society through nakedness, spirituality, modernity and oral traditions. Nakedness becomes a space of contention between agency and oppression, whilst spirituality provides them with a tool to resist. Nakedness symbolizes both shame and empowerment, reflecting societal perceptions of femininity and morality. Female characters grapple with the stigma and power associated with their bodies, using nakedness as a metaphor for self-ownership and rebellion. Modernity is shown as both a blessing and a curse, simultaneously offering new opportunities for growth and deconstructing traditional institutions. Oral storytelling, however, acts as a form of cultural and traditional preservation and a tool for empowerment. Story telling allows people to have autonomy over the content , message and delivery of the message they wish to share. Ultimately, the novel critiques the restrictors of women and at the same time commemorates their strength. Through its complex characters, the novel shows the need for a reclamation of identity and a negotiation of that identity within a changing nation in the post-colonial context, where cultural erasure us combated and womanhood is redefined.

4.3 THEMATIC ANALYSIS OF KOPANO MATLWA'S PERIOD PAIN

THEME 1: GENDERED NARRATIVES OF NATIONHOOD / WOMANHOOD IN SOUTH AFRICA /

This theme explores how the novel constructs and challenges traditional gender roles within the context of national identity. It does this by following the story of protagonist Masechaba, a young doctor who fights through the tough working conditions in a South African hospital. Before delving into the narrative provided by the novel, it is important to consider the title and its meaning. The novel is titled 'Period Pain' which can be interpreted in both a literal and metaphorical sense. Period pain refers to the physical pain associated with menstruation and is a common experience for many women. This term can also be alluded to encompass the broader emotional and societal pains faced by women, particularly in South Africa. Bearing in mind, the context of the novel is set in the post-apartheid era, a time in which nation building or rather rebuilding is at the forefront. This highlights the societal issues such as gender-based violence, xenophobia, and corruption that are highly prevalent in the novel's society. It can speak to the collective struggle that women face in South Africa by paying particular attention to the systemic issues that contribute to these challenges. To further personalise this, the title can reflect the protagonist's emotional and physical struggles. Masechaba is first introduced in the novel reflecting on the time she had first started to menstruate. She described her first period as a self-inflicted action and a form of punishment. She says:

> "When, I first started to bleed, I though Ma would kill me. I was a naughty child, putting my fingers where I shouldn't, feeling parts of my body, I had no business touching…it was my punishment from God" (Matlwa, 2016, p.10).

This suggest a deep-rooted cultural and religious belief that menstruation is a shameful and sinful act. It also highlights how female puberty is viewed as something impure and wrong. For example, menstruation blood is often referred to as "dirt" (Matlwa, 2016, p.13) in the novel. Masechaba's fear of her mother's reaction shows the taboo nature of menstruation and implies that the act of menstruating is one that can lead to punishment. also employs a religious perspective on menstruation: female bodily functions are sinful and evil. However, as she matures, she learns at Sunday school that menstruation is a "physiologically necessary and healthy part of a woman's life that should not only be welcomed by celebrated" (p.10). This dichotomy demonstrates between the stigmatised view and physiological view of menstruation

reflects the complex intersection between cultural religious and societal influence on women's experiences. Furthermore, Masechaba experiences symptoms of menorrhagia (also known as heavy menstrual bleeding (Gokyildiz et al., 2013). These period pains are likened to "growing pains" of the country: "It's just a period South Africa's in,' she said matter-of-factly. 'Growing pains.' 'Like period pain,"" (Matlwa, 2016, p.57). Matlwa draws the parallel between the experience of period pain and the socio-political struggles of South Africa. The comparison suggest that just as period pains are natural, though painful, part of a woman's development, the difficulties South Africa confronts in a necessary phase in its development as a nation.

Masechaba describes her menstrual flow as a "flood gate opened within me, and the blood poured out between my thighs, down my legs and onto my Jelly Baby shoes, and continued to do so for weeks, easing up for a few days at a time, only to gush out again with even more intensity, charging past the clots in its way." (Matlwa, 2016, p.10). This heavy bleeding causes immense discomfort for her, so much so that she asked her mother for her uterus to be removed. Masechaba says "I remember telling Ma that I wanted it taken out, cut away from me and incinerated in the large chamber at the hospital behind the hill." (p.11). She describes always being "light-headed, always fainting, [her] heart always racing in [her] chest at high speed. In and out of hospital [she] went, transfusion after transfusion, pill after pill, patch after patch, injection after injection" (p.14). It not only affected her physically as demonstrated, but also emotionally as she was restricted in social activities. For example, Masechaba describes how she was not allowed to go to parties or sleepovers:

> "No parties. No sleepovers. Ma wanted none of the humiliation that would come with a phone call from another parent to advise that her daughter had bled all the way through the sheets and into the mattress. She pretended it didn't bother her, but I knew she was just as embarrassed and perplexed by the aggression of her daughter's young womb as everybody else was." (Matlwa, 2016, p.13)

This passage further echoes the act of menstruating as an impure and shameful one. Her mother would feel 'humiliated' if parents called her to tell her that her daughter has bled onto the mattress due to heavy bleeding. Not only did it embarrass her but also confused her as to why Masechaba bleeds too heavily. This embarrassment and confusion were not only felt by the mother but also 'everybody else'. Furthermore, Masechaba was not allowed to participate in social events due to her heavy bleeding. This limited her social interactions and opportunities to participate in social events. She also had to become weary and expectant for heavy bleeding.

She describes carrying around “pads, tampons, toilet paper, wipes and black panties” wherever she went as she was distrustful that her bleeding had stopped (p.15). This experience in fact inspired her to become a doctor. She recalls the day on which she job shadowed a neurosurgeon:

> “On job-shadow day, when I saw (through the narrow space between the over-sized theatre cap, mask and goggles they insisted I wear) a neurosurgeon climb onto the operating table and let his colleague release the pinched nerve from his back that had been troubling him all morning, I knew immediately that it was a message from God, and that it was in this very manner that I would get the abhorrent organ cut out of me and destroyed, once and for all…“I was 120% sure that a medical doctor was what I wanted to be.” (Matlwa, 2016, p.15)

This passage shows that this job shadowing experience inspired her to become a doctor as she viewed it as a means to rid herself of her uterus. She further admits this: “I only wanted to become a doctor so I could make a friend at medical school who’d be willing to do the hysterectomy that all the doctors we’d seen so far had refused to perform.” (p.15). She also described her uterus as an ‘abhorrent organ’ which shows the disdain and contempt she has for her uterus. Masechaba eventually studies to become a doctor and graduates from medical school. By the time the title was hers “these childish musings were all but forgotten.” (p.15) as she has matured and grown. Masechaba is ecstatic to become a doctor as this provided many opportunities:

> “I pictured myself applying for a clothing account and the lady behind the counter saying ‘Title, please?’ as she typed my details into the system. ‘Doctor,’ I’d say. Then I’d open a movie card, and again they’d ask, ‘Miss or Mrs?’ and I’d say ‘Neither it’s Doctor.’ Then again at the bank, and when booking a flight, and when visiting the dentist … Again, and again and again. I’d say it slowly, say it loudly, drag it out, repeat it if I thought they might not have heard the first time. I remember laughing to myself as I sat there between L-ab and L-ij. I couldn’t get used to the idea. In just a few minutes I would be a doctor!
>
> A rumour had started that car companies would be waiting at the back of the hall after our graduation ceremony, and brokers waiting to give us mortgages without deposits, as our titles were surety enough.” (Matlwa, 2016, p.18)

As described by the passage, the title of doctor is an important one. Masechaba imagines herself opening a clothing account and being asked for her title. This is one of many scenarios where she shows pride in her title and where it is evident that there are privileges that come with the profession. This title holds significant weight as it is not only a professional designation but also a symbol of societal status as it displays a high level of education and expertise. This is evident when the Father Joshua asks Masechaba's to speak to the youth about careers and her achievement: "He said young people needed to be encouraged. Our people didn't value education anymore, he lamented, and maybe if they saw someone like me doing well, they might be inspired." (Matlwa, 2016, p.18). Not only does this career invite opportunities, but it also helps an individual gain social status. A study done by Maconachie (1989) has shown that in terms of economic participation, women compromised a minority of the employed at the time but also that they were grouped in certain types of jobs. For example, white women were far more likely than women of colour to be employed in managerial and executive occupations (Posel & Casale, 2019, p.3). In precolonial South Africa, women had status and authority as they were the main agricultural producers (Hutson, 2007, p.83). Through colonisation however and the reinforcement of colonial ideals and standards, women began to occupy more domestic roles and struggled to occupy space in the growing work force. Despite the change in government in post-apartheid South Africa, oppression towards women is still an ongoing concern for the country. Masechaba's ability to enter a career that is seen as prestigious, and executive can be considered a challenge to the traditional roles assigned to women in society. She is shown to challenge gender norms from a young age as is described by the text: "When Papa used to live with us, he would often say, 'Why do you talk so much? You're over-confident for a young lady. Be humble, be quiet, rest a little." (Matlwa, 2016, p.98). This attests to Masechaba's character and how she is opinionated and confident which is the opposite of what women are expected to be. This however was shut down by her father who believes that young ladies should be 'humble' and quiet. This also points to the beliefs of the patriarchal figures within the home. Masechaba challenges gender norms through her personality and character but also through her career.

As the novel progresses, it is evident that the title of doctor is accompanied is also accompanied by challenges. The first challenge that Masechaba faces are those related to a crumbling health system. She mentions a mantra she sings to herself day and night:

> "Patients die all the time. Nobody expects you to save all of them all the time. We do what we can. And with our crumbling health system, our staff shortages, our social challenges, well, what can people really expect? We do what we can. This is the mantra I sing to myself, day and night, night and day. I sing it to others, they sing it to me." (Matlwa, 2016, p.23).

This passage highlights the reality of a public health care system. For example, in the novel, the hospital is short on staff. This reflects the reality of the South African heath care system in the post-apartheid era. In an article written by Winnie Maphumulo and Busisiwe Bhengu (2019), the challenges of quality improvement in post-apartheid South African healthcare shows that many of the problems can be traced back to the apartheid period. The health care system was high fragmented according to race and further segregated into ethnic homelands (Bantustans) which has their own departments of health (Maphumulo & Busisiwe, 2019, p.1). They argue that this led to the deterioration of health system delivery due to a lack of resources which greatly affected poor communities (Maphumulo & Busisiwe, 2019). This is evident in the novel as Masechaba reflects on the state of these hospital and reflects on the cause of these challenges. Doctors including Masechaba try to absolve themselves of the responsibility by saying that the patients "know better, but our people refuse to take responsibility for their own health. And then it's the government, the district, the minister, the president." (Matlwa, 2016, p.24). However, as this occurs more and more frequently, Masechaba is forced to face the truth of the situation:

> "Again and again, I sing the words, repeat the speech, sometimes silently, sometimes violently. But when the (irresponsible) mother of the (now dead) baby is running down the corridor, security behind her, Sister Agnes drawing up Valium, patients watching from their beds, mouths agape, and it's your call, your shift, your patient, your incident, another death on your watch, the mantra does not work. The Gini coefficients, the shrinking economy, the legacy of apartheid, the unachieved Millennium Development Goals and human resource constraints, these are all disloyal friends who abandon you to face your conscience alone. You kill the patients alone. You kill them alone." (Matlwa, 2016, p.24).

The first lines of the paragraph indicates that this mantra is a routine behaviour and perhaps suggest a coping mechanism for Masechaba to remain calm even under pressure. The scene described by Masechaba can be seen as chaotic and distressing and the words shown within

brackets show how blame can be shifted from doctor to patient even in dire circumstances. This scene also shows immense chaos and activity as well as responsibility. Masechaba says that it is her call, her patient and her incident which emphasises the burden of the responsibility she holds. Masechaba also begins to mention societal and systemic issues that contribute to this challenge. She mentions specifically the apartheid legacy which is a major factor to the national issue of a deteriorating health system. In the final lines of the passage, it is evident that the character feels the weight of her responsibility and the isolation that comes with it. This passage shows the intense, emotional and psychological burden of working in a health system with limited resources.

Her inner monologues reveal a sense of despair, frustration and guilt. It also shows the connection between individual and nation. Her mention of the legacy of apartheid shows the ongoing injustice that continue to shape contemporary South Africa. Masechaba's struggle can be reflective of the consequences of past discriminatory policies on healthcare systems and economic inequality. The failures within systems like healthcare can also be linked to broader issues of governance, corruption and political factors which shape national identity. It shows the role of the state in nation building. The government's failure to fulfil its obligations impacts its people on an individual level. Masechaba brings up the point of individual responsibility and societal responsibilities. For example, in the novel Masechaba describes the hospital situation to her mother:

> "I tell Ma of the many horrific things our people overcome daily that go undocumented. I tell her that somebody must list them, all the bad things that are happening to them, to me, to us. Somebody needs to write them down.
>
> Ma says I must leave them there, the patients. I must walk in their shoes, but try not to bring their shoes home. So I leave them there, stuck between the soiled sheets and the sandwich hidden for the day an appetite returns, between toilets caked in shit and the soap dispenser that only worked once, the day the minister came to visit. But I fail at walking in their shoes. They have no shoes, Ma. How can I walk in their shoes when they have no shoes?" (Matlwa, 2016, p.25)

Masechaba claims that her people's experiences go undocumented which means that their struggles are not kept on record which makes it hard to effect change. She calls for someone to list these challenges and struggles and that someone needs to write them down. This act of documentation serves the purpose to be exposed to a wider audience. The conditions within

the hospital are unsanitary and unhygienic. The sheets and toilet are soiled which means that they are not being cleaned. Masechaba also mentioned that the soap dispenser only worked once and that was on the day that the minister visited the hospital. This suggests that there is a major disconnect between political rhetoric and the reality experienced by the people. This passage also shows the emotional turmoil that accompanies an internship as a doctor in a public hospital. Despite these difficulties, Masechaba decides to become an agent for social change. She does this in several ways. Masechaba shows a growing awareness of her complicity in the degrading health system. This can be seen in the following passage:

> "I'm the one who convinced her to sign the consent form. To Dr Voel-Vfamba, she was bed A3, the cardiac failure in bed A3. It was my job to protect her from him, from all of them, all those vultures, those third-year students with their logbooks desperate for signatures, signatures at any cost. I should have protected her from the registrars who sought nothing else but to clear the ward so they could study for their exams, from the consultants with papers to write. 'A rare case of drug-induced cardiomyopathy in an elderly black female'. But I didn't save her. Instead, I aided and abetted, facilitated, won her over – and then handed her over. And now she's dead." (Matlwa,2016, p.28)

In this passage it is clear that Masechaba convinced her patient to sign the consent form and that it was her responsibility to protect her and care for her. Interesting she mentions protecting her from Dr Voel-Vfamba who views her as bed A3, a number instead of a name. This shows the distance that is created by supervisors and mentors between patients and themselves. Patients are rather treated as problems rather than as human beings. Masechaba also mentions that that it was her duty to protect her from registrars who seek to empty the ward so they can study for exams and consultants who have papers to write. This suggests a system that prioritises individual academic goals and personal goals over patient care. This is a systemic issue that contributes to the neglect and suffering of patients. Masechaba faces a moral and ethical dilemma faced by her profession as she is often caught between their job responsibilities and moral obligations to patients. She also accepts her complicity in perpetuating this systemic issue when she says she has aided and abetted. Another way in which Masechaba becomes an agent of social change by confronting social issues such as xenophobia. Masechaba says: "I've resolved that I must do something to stop this. Or at least try." (Matlwa, 2016, p.70). She begins with a petition:

> "I'm going to draw up a petition. I'll print it and distribute it around the morning departmental meetings. I'll get all the other interns to sign it too, deliver it to the doctors' quarters, put it under everybody's doors. I'll stick it up at the blood bank and in the lab so that students coming to fetch results can sign it while they wait. Maybe even at the security gate. As people sign themselves in they could simultaneously sign the petition, too. I could even walk around the cafeteria at lunch times, tab le to table, and ask people to sign. I could leave it in the anaesthetists' tea room so they could sign it between cases. Maybe even in the Emergency Department, as people wait, I could ask families of patients to sign it too. And if the CEO of the hospital signs it, and the senior leadership, maybe I could even write to the local newspaper. Maybe it could make it to the Minister of Health and the minister could sign it. Maybe I could even get in touch with other interns on the Intern Facebook page and ask them to circulate it to other hospitals." (Matlwa, 2016, p.71)

It is evident from this passage that Masechaba seeks to distribute her petition against xenophobia far and wide. She makes plans to get interns, doctors, lab technicians, students, visitors, anaesthesiologists amongst many more to sign her petition. She believes that her petition could reach people of high standing and positions such as the CEO of the hospital and the Minister of Health to sign it. This shows that social change begins at the individual level (microsystem) and extends to the exosystem which includes social structures like the government and the media. Her petition proves to gain traction:

> "It's had 3000 Shares on Facebook and 10 000 Likes. I had a call this morning from a lady from SAFM who wants to interview me about what we're doing. I also got a mention in the Mail & Guardian Online" (Matlwa, 2016, p.71)

Masechaba navigates her gender identity by challenging societal expectations and embracing her agency. She challenges the tradition gender roles that are often placed upon women. She pursues a non-traditional career by studying medicine which is a male-dominated field. She challenges the notion that women should be confide to domestic roles. She shows that she is a determined and intelligent woman, and it demonstrates itself in her work ethic. She does her best to ensure that she aligns her moral values and responsibilities. She openly discusses her menstrual experiences, challenging the cultural taboo surround menstruation. She actively seeks a solution for her menstrual problems even as a child. For example: she recalls telling her mother how she felt about her uterus: "I remember telling Ma that I wanted it taken out,

cut away from me and incinerated in the large chamber at the hospital behind the hill." (Matlwa, 2016, p.11). She also recalls potential solutions brought up by her mother:

> "I remember Ma telling Aunty Petunia that the doctors had said that short of a hysterectomy, the only thing that might work was to burn the lining of the womb. 'Let them burn it, Ma!' I remember crying. She had shouted at me to be quiet." (Matlwa, 2016, p.14)

The passage shows that Masechaba is not only vocal about her excessive menstruation but also the possible solutions that could ease her menstruation struggle. The doctors had said that possible solutions were burning the lining of the womb or having a hysterectomy. To this, Masechaba cried and pleaded to her mother to let the doctors burn it. The mother had to shout at Masechaba for her to be quiet which is a further indication of her vocalness. She also confronts the challenges of a resource-constrained healthcare system, and she takes action against it.

Masechaba is not the only female character in the novel to challenge gender stereotypes and traditional gender roles. In the novel we are introduced to Nyasha, a Zimbabwean woman who has immigrated to South Africa. She is Masechaba's roommate and colleague who is characterised by her wit, cynicism and boldness. Masechaba describes the first time she met Nyasha:

> "I met Nyasha at a minor car accident scene. I'd seen her before at work, on the wards. I noticed her because she had beautiful, jet-black dreadlocks and a quiet confidence that was fearsome to behold. She was a medical officer in the Obstetrics & Gynaecology Department, waiting for a specialist training post. However, it was well known in the hospital that if it wasn't for her foreign nationality, she would already be a consultant obstetrician-gynaecologist, because she was a surgeon extraordinaire" (Malwa, 2016, p.34)

This passage highlights the skillset that Nyasha possesses but is not able to fully embody due to her nationality. She is described as a 'surgeon extraordinaire' who has a quiet confidence. Nyasha is depicted as a strong and caring medical professional. Masechaba describes Nyasha in action as an obstetrician:

> "I watched her one night, joking with a mother who was a heartbeat away from losing a perfectly healthy baby. The baby's umbilical cord had slipped out of the woman's

> vagina during labour, and Nyasha stood for four hours with a damp cloth in that bloody cavity, keeping the cord moist until a theatre space opened up and the consultant had arrived on the premises. All the while she was laughing, Red Bull in one hand, the baby's life in the other. I knew then that I wanted her as my friend, and that I'd do whatever it took to make sure she was in my life." (Malwa, 2016, p.34)

This passage shows that Nyasha is shown to be a dedicated and skilled doctor. She goes above and beyond her duties as a doctor. As described by the passage, Nyasha stood for four hours making sure that the umbilical cord stays moist until an operating theatre became available. She is described to have Red Bull energy drink in one hand and her other hand in the woman's cavity. Despite these difficult circumstances, Nyasha has a good sense of humour. She sat there laughing and joking all whilst the baby's life was in her hands. This suggests that Nyasha is resilient and able to be light hearted even in extreme circumstances. Her empathy and her compassionate nature are evident in this scene. Apart of this softness and gentleness displayed by Nyasha, she also displays her highly critical opinions of South African society. Nyasha shows to be highly critical of South African society, especially racial and class issues.

> "She speaks like an authority on what we South Africans should and should not do, as if she has some sort of expertise. Just the other day she came home upset about a white patient she'd just admitted, who asked if there was a girl who could help him carry his bags to the ward. Nyasha was outraged by his use of the word 'girl' and went off on a tirade about how arrogant white South Africans are. I responded that she needed to be the bigger person in those kinds of situations. She was the doctor, and he was a patient in pain who didn't know what he meant. She called me an idiot. That's why we South Africans will continue to live under the illusion of freedom, she said, unaware of how we remain captive to white supremacy." (Matlwa, 2016, p.36)

She expresses her frustration with xenophobia and the indifference of South Africans to their daily struggles. Her reaction to the patient's statement shows her attentiveness to racial power dynamics. She believes that the patients use of "girl" is a racially charged statement. This shows the lasting effects of colonisation and apartheid.

In "Period Pain (2016), Kopano Matlwa carefully entangles personal difficulties with national challenges, using Masechaba as a lens through which the broader realities of post-apartheid South Africa are explored. The novel highlights the intersection of gender and systemic

oppression specifically in the health field. Masechaba's journey from internalising the same if menstruation to navigating the brutal reality of a disintegrating health system which is reflection of the nation's crisis with gender inequality, xenophobia, racism and institutional neglect. Through the novels portrayal of menstruation as both a personal and collective burden to bear, Matlwa shows the persistent stigmatisation of female bodily functions. Furthermore, Masechaba's career in medicine challenges traditional gender roles, showing the difficulties women face in male dominated professions whilst simultaneously showing the medical space as one affected by historical injustices. Her eventual activism shows a shift away from victimhood and compliancy to agency. This shows how individuals can play a role in social transformation and ultimately social cohesion. Moreover, Nyasha's character displays the novels critique of systemic discrimination against foreigners and exposes the contradictions withing South African society and goals towards nation building. Both Nyasha and Masechaba resist oppressive structures that surround them, showing the complex nature of identity, resilience and a goal for social justice.

THEME 2: FEMALE BODY AS SITE OF POWER AND RESISTANCE

Masechaba's body is plagued by severe menstrual pain. A hysterectomy symbolises the broader societal control over women's bodies. This medical condition can be seen as a metaphor for the physical and psychological burdens that women endure in patriarchal societies. This is shown in the novel. Masechaba describes the view her mother has on her medical condition: "Ma said I was speaking nonsense, that these were the things women were to endure, and that if it was removed from me I would one day regret being unable to bring life into the world." (Matlwa, 2016, p.11). This statement highlights the tension between the societal expectations of women as life-bearers and the reality of their distress. Masechaba rejects the expectation of women to reproduce and create life which challenges the stereotypical gender role that women's purpose is motherhood. She says:

> "Life? What did I care for bringing life into the world when I couldn't have a life of my own? When I lived hostage to a beast in my pelvis that could split its head at any moment of its choosing, and angrily spill its contents onto the floor at any second of its liking without provocation?" (Matlwa, 2016, p.11)

Masechaba described feeling as if she is “hostage” to her uterus. She describes her uterus as a “beast” who overpowers her and impacts on her living. This is common within the novel, as issues surrounding the safety of women, especially the bodies of women are constantly revealed. This can be seen in the following passage:

> “When she moved to South Africa as a teenager, her mother forbade her from sleeping at other girls’ houses in case she got molested. She didn’t trust anybody in this crazy country. I laughed, and called her xenophobic. She laughed too, and said that South Africans thought they owned xenophobia. It was a happy day. A happy weekend.” (Matlwa, 2016, p.37).

The woman’s body is also a target of sexual violence in the novel. Matlwa mentions incidents of gender-based violence related to her characters and women in society. Masechaba describes a woman she treated whilst on call:

> “On call, last night, the paramedics brought in this white lady at about 1:30am. She was at home with her boyfriend when four men broke into their flat, raped her, shot her in the head and ransacked the house. I didn’t get the full story because the consultant doctor on call was panicked and sent us all running around. I was told to take femoral blood and get it to the blood bank. When I came back the surgical team was preparing her for theatre. She was fully conscious and speaking despite the shot to her head, which was weird. On my way to the blood bank, I heard one of the paramedics telling a nursing sister that the police had found blood splattered across her living room walls and her boyfriend had died at the scene, but she hadn’t been told yet.” (Matlwa, 2016, p.38)

Rape is described as a violation of the body and is symbolical of physical violence and the destruction of bodily autonomy and personal safety. Not only was the woman’s body violated, her home was ‘ransacked’ and she was shot in the head. Despite this, the woman was conscious and speaking which shows not only strength but resilience in the face of adversity. It is revealed that her partner had also been shot and died at the scene. The four men who broke into her house violated her personal space and their actions caused her detriment to her physical and emotional health. She lost her bodily autonomy, her physical health status and her partner. Another instance in which women were physically assaulted is during xenophobic attacks as described by Masechaba :

> "Last night Mamokgheti Sesing of Vukani News told the world that a mob of 20 South African men set a street of shops belonging to a community of Somalians in Sechaba township alight. In addition, three young Somalian girls were stoned to death, and many families had to flee their homes. They showed a woman who'd been beaten by the crowd crying outside her ashen store, her children staring wide-eyed into the camera." (Matlwa, 2016, p.65)

The passage describes physical assault against three young Somalian girls who were stoned to death as a well as a woman who was beaten to death. Female migrants are subjected to physical violence during these xenophobic attacks. Not only are their bodies violated because they are foreign but also because they are women. This shows the intersection between race and ethnicity and highlights their dual marginalisation. This violence is encompassed in the amalgamation of nationalism, poverty, economic distress and gender inequality. This shows how gender-based violence intersects with other forms of oppression against women.

In "Period Pain" (2016), rape is an ultimate form of violation of the female body, and it symbolises both physical violence, destruction of identity and annihilation of bodily autonomy. Matlwa uses her protagonist to deeply explore the personal, social, and psychological effects of rape and emphasises it as an oppressive tool that ultimately affects identity. Rape is used as a weapon which can hurt and wound a person physically and psychologically. Masechaba's rape can be seen as a loss of control over her own body. Her body becomes the location of forced dominance and as such reduces her to a subjugated object. Masechaba describes her traumatic experience through her dialogue with God: "You didn't even blink. You, God, watched them tear me apart, divide me among themselves, and You stood and stared. Or did You run and hide? See none of it at all? Only hear about it later?" (Matlwa, 2016, p.76-77). The passage suggest that Masechaba has endured gang rape and that she is upset with God for allowing the act to happen. She refers again to the rape: "03:02 … 03:02 … 03:02. What is it about this time of night that drags me from sleep, pulls my eyelids open, shakes my mind awake? There were three men, and they divided me in two? Or was it three times two" (p.87). This passage shows the dissociation Masechaba has as well as her lack of sleep.

She further describes a bad dream she had:

> "You like your kwere-kwere pipi, ne? That's because you've never had a real South African man. Today we will make you a real South African woman.'

> And then there was blood pouring out of me, between my things, gushing, spraying, splashing everywhere. It covered their legs, then their arms, then their heads, drowning them, drowning me." (Matlwa, 2016, p.91)

The term "kwere-kwere" is a derogatory term that is used to refer to black foreigners (Moyo, 2020, p.41). The rapists use of this term shows how xenophobia underlies their actions. They also use this to justify these actions as they will make her a 'real' South African woman. This also suggests some sort of negative nationalist ideal and identity. This nationalist ideal creates an 'us' and 'them' and thus the ideal is created through the process of othering and exclusion. In this sense gender-based violence is not only used as a means of control and domination, but it is also used as a tool to reinforce socio-political ideologies which in the novel present as an exclusionary. Sexual violence is used as a punishment, and it also reveals the patriarchal mindset that equates women with submission and violence. It also reflects the belief that women must conform to specific societal roles and that any deviation from the norm will have severe consequences. Masechaba describes the blood 'pouring' out of her …'gushing, spraying between [her] things' and this symbolises the physical violation and harm inflicted on her body. It also shows how the woman's body is used as a site of punishment and oppression. She also describes how the blood drowned both her and her attackers. It can be said that the blood is symbolic of resistance: a human body's resistance to trauma. This can symbolise the way the protagonists body resists and fights back even though she has been violated. The line "drowning me, drowning them' can also suggest that violence affects both the person being violated and the attacker. For the survivor, it highlights how trauma affects sense of self and identity. For the attackers, it signifies the nature of violence and the ideologies that ultimately cause harm to not only themselves but also others. Overall, this passage spotlights the intersection of oppression in the post-apartheid context. As shown, women can be attacked not only because if their gender but also their nationality and race. This shows the link between social issues such as xenophobia and systemic issues such as patriarchy and its manifestations. It also demonstrates the effect that the macro-systems have on the individual level. Masechaba details the effect that the gang rape had on her:

> "There is no vocabulary for the pain I feel. How do I construct a sentence that explains that they made me into a shell of myself? Not 'like' a shell of myself, but an actual shell of myself? How do I explain that what they stole from me is more than just my 'womanhood' or any of that condescending stuff people like to talk about, but a thing that once lost can never be found because it is unnamed? How do I explain that the

> languages at my disposal can't communicate the turmoil I have inside? That it's more than my 'dignity' they stole, it's more than a 'violation' they subjected me to? That it would have been better to die than to be spooned out and left that way?" (Matlwa, 2016, p.96)

Masechaba claims that the pain she feels is one that cannot be described so much so that language fails her. Language becomes inadequate to convey the trauma she endures. She described feeling like a 'shell' in the sense that she is physically empty. She also mentions how they stole her 'womanhood'. Interestingly, she places this word in commas which can suggest that she does not necessarily agree with the perceived societal understanding of womanhood and dignity. Instead, it suggests that rape is a loss of something intangible and indescribable. She is unable to name this experience, and this reflects how the understanding of this trauma is a complex one that exceeds conventional perceptions of the experience. It is more than a 'violation' and that death would have been better than to be left feeling hollow. During her therapy sessions with Dr Phakama , the psychologist tells Masechaba : "After rape one suffers a loss of the former self, she said, and it's normal and important to mourn." (Matlwa, 2016, p.101). This shows how rape can affect a person's sense of self.

Masechaba's personal suffering (gang rape) parallels the physical and symbolic violence inflicted on South Africa's marginalised populations. Her rape is seen as a consequence of her advocating against xenophobia. The rape is used to discipline Masechaba and serves as a punishment to force her into societal norms and expectations. This reflects a broader societal tendency to use violence, especially against women, to maintain social order. Sexual violence in the novel is shown to occur under dehumanisation of women and is used as a way to remove autonomy. Masechaba's body is used as a battlefield and symbolises the struggles of women in patriarchal societies. Her rape is linked to her advocacy against xenophobia and shows how woman's bodies are used in nationalised conflicts. Masechaba reflects on the incident:

> "She then had the nerve to say that there's a blog for women like me, for women who've been gang raped. 'Correctively raped' as she called it, a rape to correct what their society deems abhorrent behaviour. She says in our society many people don't like foreigners, and the men who raped me might have seen my behaviour as threatening societal norms, and felt it their duty to correct me. She said this has been seen in the gay and lesbian community, but she hadn't seen it reported in the context of xenophobic

> violence. She said it would help to try to understand where the men were coming from. It would help my healing." (Matlwa, 2016, p.105)

The perpetrators attempt to silence her and force her to align with their nationalist ideals. As noted earlier in this report, nationalism can foster an "us" and "them" mentality where the nation is superior, and foreigners are viewed and treated with hostility. The perpetrators want to make her a "real South African woman" tie her rape to exclusionary identity affairs. It does this by showing how societal norms and nationalist ideologies weaponize gender and violence to implement social obedience. In the novel, the rapists aim to 'correct' her identity through violence. Rape is then a way to reinforce nationalist ideals and reduced 'womanhood' to something that is mediated by male authority. Rapists in the novel use nationalism to justify their act. Identity is thus policed through violence especially against women are deviate from the norm. Masechaba's stance on xenophobia is seen as a betrayal of the nation because they associate womanhood with South African identity. It is also clear from the passage but she is encouraged to be empathetic towards the rapists and she 'must see where they coming from'. Despite wrong being done upon Masechaba, her therapist and other female figures in the novel shift blame onto her because her behaviour is 'threatening' to society. The shifting of blame can be seen here:

> "She says maybe these things happened because I didn't tell the ancestors I had graduated. I didn't tell them I was now working, didn't tell them where I worked and that it wasn't safe, that I'd be doing 24-hour calls, so I'd have to work at night. Ma thinks it's all down to a miscommunication between me and the ancestral realm, and if I'd only spoken, all this could have been avoided." (Matlwa, 2016, p.94)

This shifting of blame not only happens to Masechaba , but also she perpetuates this line of thinking by blaming herself for her rape. She says:

> "Maybe this is all my own doing. I should have voted. I shouldn't have let that white boy play with my vagina. I should never have started that petition. I should have gone to the cemetery. I shouldn't have stopped my medication. I shouldn't have written all this blasphemous crap in this journal. I should have been less excited. In life one should never be too excited. That's when bad things happen. I was too happy, running around with that petition. I wasn't focused. Instead I was daydreaming about Francois, who didn't even know how to pronounce my name properly." (Matlwa, 2016, p.95)

It is even shown that other people tried to warn her – further solidifying the rules that women are meant to conform to:

> "Sister Agnes had warned me. 'Doctor, why do you wear such nice clothes to a call? We don't dress like that for overnight calls.' Sister Palesa had warned me. 'Doctor, the community is not happy with this petition thing. You're getting too carried away.' But I wouldn't listen. I needed to look nice at work because people had started to recognise me from the anti-xenophobia press coverage. I should have listened. I should have been calmer, quieter, more thoughtful, more focused. I was too, too excited. That's why those men raped me." (Matlwa, 2016, p.95)

Overall, it can be said that women's bodies are the sites of power and domination. However, women's bodies can also be sites and resistance. For example, Masechaba's rape results in an unwanted and unexpected pregnancy: "I suppose pregnancy had never really been in the picture for me after all the procedures I'd had to calm my raging uterus. In fact, one outraged doctor, who couldn't believe I'd been given an endometrial ablation so young, had told me that falling pregnant was both unlikely and dangerous." (Matlwa, 2016, p.128-129). It is evident that the possibility of Masechaba falling pregnant was highly unlikely due to an endometrial ablation to stop her uterine bleeding hence her pregnancy comes as a shock to her. Masechaba chooses to carry the child to term and believes that her child is a fresh start for her. She describes her child: "But she looked like nothing, like a blank page, like a fresh start. My fresh start." (p.129). She names her child Mpho because: "because that is what she is, because it's not her fault, because she doesn't deserve to have this stain on her future, because [she] refuse[s] to allow anyone to tell her, or [herself], otherwise. She's my Mpho, my gift." (Matlwa, 2016, p.133). It is significant that Masechaba names her child Moho – meaning gift- as it strongly contradicts the violence she endured.

The female body is shown to be both a site of resistance and of oppression. Matlwa shows the multifaceted oppression women face in post-apartheid South Africa. Masechaba's medica condition and the societal expectations paced upon her, highlight the control that society has over women's bodies. The novel shows the threat of violence against women, with instances of rape occurring often in the novel, including Masechaba's brutal gang rape. These instances are depicted as acts of physical and psychological violation and represent the destruction of

bodily autonomy. These violent acts reflect a broader social issue of gender based violence as shown by the xenophobic attacks and other forms of gender-based violences described in the novel. Women are targeting because of their race, ethnicity, and nationality. The novel shows how these intersecting identities contribute to their vulnerability and oppression. Masechaba's personal trauma can be linked to the socio-political context of post-apartheid South Africa. Her rape is shown a consequence of her activism against xenophobia, highlighting how violence is used to enforce social norms and to suppress opposition. The perpetrators seek to "correct" her behaviour through violence and this shows the weaponisation of gender and violence to establish and maintain social order. Despite the trauma Masechaba faces, she ultimately finds a form of resistance and agency through her pregnancy. She decides to carry the child to term and names her "Mpho" (gift). This is a reclamation of her body and of her agency and also a way to resist the violence inflicted upon her. Essentially, Matlwa uses her protagonist to showcase both the impact of oppression and the resilience of women in adverse situations.

THEME 3: XENOPHOBIA AND RACIAL TENSION

Post 1994 South Africa has failed to address economic inequality, healthcare inadequacy and racial injustice (Coovadia et al., 2009). Apartheid legacy has affected health and health services as post-apartheid South Africa faces challenges like non-communicable diseases, HIV/AIDS and violence resulting in poor health outcomes (Coovadia et al., 2009). Although the public health system has been transformed, it faces failures in leadership and management (Coovadia et al., 2009). The novel "Period Pain" (2016) exposes the failures of post-apartheid South Africa, showing how racial and socio-political issues continue despite the transition to democracy (Ngom, 2019). This is depicted in the novel , the ideal of the rainbow nation, which was meant to symbolise unity and inclusion, is challenged by the xenophobic violence directed towards foreigners (Chapman, 2018). He further emphasises how these tensions disrupt the ideal of national cohesion and shows how xenophobia is most times worsened by poverty and economic inequality (Chapman, 2018). Masechaba is used as a lens through which the systemic neglect and corruption of the South African healthcare system are examined (Tembo, 2021). Her experiences highlight the exclusion and discrimination thar foreign nationals face in public hospitals. To understand the xenophobia in systemic injustices, an analysis of people's attitudes and thoughts is necessary. For example, Masechaba's mother discriminates Nyasha because of her foreign nationality (Eyinda, 2022):

> "These kwere-kweres, Masechaba, they'll use their black magic to steal all your intelligence, your whole future. Everything you've worked so hard for will be gone, and you'll be left with the nothing they arrived in this country with." (Matlwa, 2016, p.33)

The term "kwerekwere" is used derogatorily to dehumanize African migrants, reflecting an exclusionary form of nationalism rooted in ethnicity rather than shared humanity (Tembo, 2021). This stems from the fact that foreigners migrated to South Africa after the country gained independence and saw an opportunity to progress in the newly form nation and thus, this garnered hate from South Africans (Eyinda, 2022). South Africans viewed them as "opportunistic individuals" who 'stole' their jobs and caused their resources to be scarce and thus, they would attack them by destroying their businesses and killing them (Eyinda, 2022, p.54). This disdain for foreigners was also expressed by Masechaba at some point in her life. When she was a student, she would laugh with her friends about the "smell of immigrants" (p.54). She admits laughing in her first year of university when her friend called foreigners "oorkants" and said that they smell of menstrual blood (Matlwa, 2016, p.63). In addition, whenever she has an argument with Nyasha, she blamed her based on her nationality (Eyinda, 2022). She confesses that at times she would like to tell Nyasha "to go back to her own country and fix her own problems and stop meddling in ours" (Matlwa, 2016, p.36). This racial discrimination and exclusion extend to the experience of foreign nationals in public hospitals. The presence of remnants from the apartheid era, such as a kidney dish engraved with "Slegs blankes" (whites only) that is used for foreign patients in the hospital:

> "I tell Ma about the kidney dish that still has Slegs Blankes engraved into it, that the nursing sisters keep for foreign patients. I tell her how appalling it is that we've become the very thing we fought so long and hard to destroy." (Matlwa, 2016, p.43)

This moment symbolises how deeply entrenched racial prejudice continue to shape societal attitudes thus reinforcing systemic exclusion. The healthcare sector, meant to provide care and support, instead becomes a culmination of societal biases, where foreigners experience systemic neglect and maltreatment. This institutional xenophobia not only subverts the health and welfare of foreign nationals but also corrodes the ethical principles of medical practice.

These portrayals show the xenophobic attitudes that are weaved into society thus perpetuating and promoting the cycle of exclusion and violence (Tembo, 2021). Xenophobic attitudes also

extend to the subtle forms of making foreigners feel unwelcome (Tembo, 2021). For example, the nursing sister, Sister Dlamini, warns Masechaba that she may get sick from drinking Nyasha's water (Matlwa 2016, p.65). Later, Sister Palesa and Sister Agnes tell Masechaba to refrain from mentioning that xenophobia is offensive (Tembo, 2021). Sister Palesa warns her: "Doctor, the community is not happy with this petition thing. You're getting too carried away." (Matlwa, 2016, p.92). Part of the reason Sister Palesa claims that the community is upset with foreigners is because she believes that foreigners are to blame for Black South African suffering (Tembo, 2021). She complains to Masechaba : "People here are really suffering, she said, and foreigners are largely to blame. 'People can't feed their families, doctor. These foreigners are eating everything.'" (Matlwa, 2016, p.70). This view shows how foreigners are portrayed as consumers that deplete local resources and explores the implications of this portrayal. Sister Palesa's statement exemplifies the dangerous narrative that scapegoats foreigners for systemic economic problems. In the novel, these xenophobic attitudes are manifested into physical action as discussed by Tembo (2021). The novel makes mention of an incident where several foreign shops were burned down:

> "a mob of 20 South African men set a street of shops belonging to a community of Somalians in Sechaba township alight. In addition, three young Somalian girls were stoned to death, and many families had to flee their homes. They showed a woman who'd been beaten by the crowd crying outside her ashen store, her children staring wide-eyed into the camera." (Matlwa 2016, p.63).

The fact that a 'street of shops belonging to a community of Somalians' immediately shows the targeted nature of this violence. This shows the reality of xenophobia where certain nationals are stigmatised. The description of "20 South African men" and the stoning of "three young Somalian girls" portrays the brutality of the attack. This attack caused a forced displacement of these foreign nationals and shows the grief and despair experienced by them (Tembo, 2021). This prejudice that comes with xenophobia is not just from South Africans towards foreigners but also from foreigners towards South Africa (Tembo, 2021). Nyasha for example, uses the same xenophobic rhetoric's to "project their own ill-informed sentiments about South Africans" (Tembo, 2021 p.7). Nyasha judges South Africans based on their physical attributes like how they chose to wear their hair: "Nyasha says her group of new intern doctors all have weaves. Twelve girls as black as night, with mops of plastic on their heads. She is annoyed." (Matlwa 2016, p.43). This prejudice extends even to white people. Masechaba describes Nyasha's view on white people:

> "Nyasha wants to fight, fight, fight. She hates white people and blames them for everything. Maybe she's right, maybe they are to blame. But it is what it is. What's happened has happened. We can't go back, and we certainly can't change who we are to try to avenge the past. She says we black South Africans are too nice, too accommodating, too soft. 'Weak' and 'pathetic' are the words she uses to describe us." (Matlwa, 2016, p.44)

This passage exposes not only the how Nyasha understands apartheid but also black South Africans apparent complicity in it whilst Masechaba shows an acceptance of the past and finding a way to move forward. The novel also highlights the paradox of a society striving for inclusivity while struggling with internalised racism. Masechaba reflects on her own prejudices during her university career:

> "When she moved to South Africa as a teenager, her mother forbade her from sleeping at other girls' houses in case she got molested. She didn't trust anybody in this crazy country. I laughed and called her xenophobic. She laughed too and said that South Africans thought they owned xenophobia." (Matlwa, 2016, p.37)

This critical self-analysis reveals the complex nature of unlearning prejudice in a nation struggling with mending the damage inflicted by apartheid. Although Masechaba tries to remedy this, these concerns persist in the novel. Xenophobia is shown to be deeply rooted within the post-apartheid society and it affects the way in which people navigate their identity. In this case, Nyasha carries prejudice towards South African people as her mother forbade her from sleeping at friends' houses in case she got molested. Masechaba's interactions with Nyasha provide her with moments of insight and reflection. She reflects on how South Africa treats foreigners and says that she feels bad as "we should know better, what with apartheid and all." (Matlwa, 2016, p.35). She describes Nyasha as "quite fair skinned, and actually looks South African, so you wouldn't even know she was foreign until you heard her speak" (p.35). This statement reveals that firstly, Masechaba has an awareness of historical injustice and reveals a moral obligation to treat others with respect however, it also suggests some detachment as she recites it as a learned lesson rather than a deep, personal empathy for Nyasha. Secondly, her comment about Nyasha's appearance shows the tendency to make superficial judgements based off a person's look and indicates that she, like many of those around her, carry bias about what a typical South African looks like and sounds like. This shows the process of othering and displays her prejudice despite her awareness of the country's past.

“Period Pain” (2016) acts as a stark critique of post-apartheid South Africa, revealing the failure to reach economic equality, healthcare inadequacies and racial injustices. The novel questions the idea of the “rainbow nation” by exposing the realities of xenophobia and systemic discrimination. Matlwa used Masechaba’s experiences to show the healthcare systems neglect and corruption especially when dealing with foreign nationals. The derogatory terms used to refer to foreigners and the discriminatory practices displayed in hospitals, like the use of apartheid era artifacts, shows the deeply entrenched prejudices that continue to shape societal attitudes. The novel illustrates how xenophobic attitudes manifest in subtle forms such as verbal slurs and discriminatory practices in health care to more overt forms like violent attacks and murders. The burning of the Somali-owned shops and the stoning of young women show the brutal reality of xenophobic violence. Matlwa also explored the internalised racism and prejudice showing how it is not unique to South Africans. Nyasha, for example, demonstrates that prejudice can exist beyond nation and racial borders which highlights the persistent struggle to unlearn harmful stereotypes and prejudices in a society riddled with the negative effects of apartheid. As such, Matlwa portrays a post-apartheid South Africa that is trying to grow however painful it may be, where systemic injustices remain and challenge the nations progress towards true equality and reconciliation.

4.4 COMPARITIVE ANALYSIS OF THEMES IN BOTH NOVELS

African feminist thought provides a powerful lens to examine how gender and national identity intersect in postcolonial African literature. While nationalism often positions women as bearers of tradition and culture, it also marginalises them within political and economic structures (Da Silva, 2013). “Period Pain” (2016) by Kopano Matlwa and “The Joyful Song of Partridge” (2024) by Paulina Chiziane both critique the limitations placed on women in nation-building projects. By drawing from African feminist scholars such as Oyěwùmí (1997), Akin-Aina (2010), and Goredema (2010), this analysis explores the contradictions in nationalist projects in the post- colonial context by highlighting women’s marginalisation, the female body as a site of power and resistance and the intersection of gender and race in societies. While Matlwa and Chiziane critique different national contexts – post-apartheid South Africa and post-colonial Mozambique, they both use literature as a way to redefine national identity from a woman's perspective. Having analysed how each novel explores the intersections of gender, nationhood, and identity through distinct thematic lenses, this section offers a comparative reflection that moves beyond similarity to explore the political and theoretical stakes of reading these texts together.

Literature often serves as a tool for examining the intersection of race, gender and national identity, particularly in post-colonial African societies. The post-independence period marked national identity as a central focus of societal and political discourse, though one charged with contradictions and exclusions. National identity in post-colonial Africa is a contested and evolving concept, shaped by colonial legacies, nationalism and socio-political struggles (Triandafydillou 1998). While independence brought a goal of unity and self-determination, the persisting structures of colonial rule, patriarchy, and racial exclusion continue to influence how national identity is reconfigured. Scholars such as Benedict Anderson (1983) and Partha Chatterjee (1993) argue that national identity is not a fixed or natural phenomenon but rather and “imagined” institution often shaped by biased practices that marginalise certain groups, including women and racial minorities. As highlighted by Gilroy (1993), traditional beliefs of national identity often rely on citizenship and patriotism while ignoring ethnic, gendered and cultural differences. In this sense, literature is a critical space for integrating the tensions between national identity and gendered experiences. Period Pain (2016) by Kopano Matlwa and The Joyful Song of Partridge (2024) by Paulina Chiziane both explore how female identity

intersects with national identity in post-apartheid South Africa and post-colonial Mozambique, showing the gendered exclusions, racial hierarchies and societal contradictions immersed within nation-building processes. While Matlwa's novel focuses on the disillusionment of the "Born Free" generation in South Africa, exposing the continued xenophobia, gendered violence and systemic oppression, Chiziane's work critiques the racial and cultural legacies of Portuguese colonialism especially through exploring polygamy, colourism and the commodification of the female body. Both novels emphasise the female body as a site of exploration for national ideologies, where women navigate trauma, resistance and agency in societies that define them through colonial and patriarchal views. This comparative analysis examines how these novels challenge popular nationalist discourses, exposing the forms in which female identity remains ingrained within historical oppression and contemporary socio-political struggles in their respective nations (Spivak, 1988; Boehmer, 2005).

African feminist scholars argue that nationalist movements often exclude women from political influence whilst glorifying their roles as 'mothers of the nation' (Oyěwùmí (1997). The nations failure to address gender-based violence, xenophobia, and healthcare inequalities reveal the exclusion of women from national development. "Period Pain" (2016) by Kopano Matlwa examines post – apartheid South Africa through the kens of a young female doctor, Masechaba, as she navigates the struggles of societal expectations, xenophobia and systemic inequality. Masechaba embodies the struggles of Black South African women in the post-apartheid era. The apartheid era for racial and gendered segregation is shown in Masechaba's experience working in a public hospital where systemic neglect disproportionately affects poor Black women (Malaba & Melber, 2020).

"The Joyful Song of Partridge" (2024) by Paulina Chiziane explores post-colonial Mozambique, focusing on the intersection between gender, race and national identity through the generational struggles of Maria das Dores and her family. The novel critiques the Mozambican government's failure to position women highly. Historically, while FRELIMO promoted gender equality in its address, the reality was that women continued to be placed into domestic and reproductive roles (Dos Santos, 2013). The novels characters such as Maria das Dores and Delfina navigate patriarchal society where national identity is defined through male leadership, often overshadowing women's voices. The novel shows the idealised vision of Mozambican unity as an illusion, demonstrating how colonial structures remained despite independence (Leal & Tavares, 2020). Both of these novels use female characters to critique gendered and racial expectations and inequalities that are immersed in national identity.

Despite differences in geographical and historical settings, both novels explore the intersections of gender, colonial legacies, and national identity, with female protagonists navigating oppression, trauma, and resilience. This comparative analysis will compare and contrast the individual analyses conducted for each novel whilst considering the broader context of national identity in the post-colonial society.

GENDER AND NATIONAL IDENTITY

In Matlwa (2016) novel, Masechaba's journey reflects the post-apartheid South Africa's gendered national struggles. This is evident in Masechaba's struggles with gender roles and how it reflects the failures of post-apartheid South Africa. Masechaba enters a male dominated field (medicine), which can be seen as symbolic of progress, but she experiences workplace gender discrimination, showing the persistence of oppressive systems. The hospitals failing system resembles the failure of the new democracy to protect vulnerable citizens, especially women. Her experiences highlight the gendered failures of post-apartheid nationalism, where women's rights remain subordinate to broader national concerns. The persistent gender-based violence and exclusionary policies show that the "Rainbow Nation" ideal continued unfulfilled for women (Malaber & Melber, 2020). Masechaba's pursuit of medicine and her job as a doctor also further reject traditional gender roles and defy the expectation of domesticity (Matlwa, 2016). Her struggles with menstruation symbolise both literal and metaphorical pain of women in society: *"When I first started to bleed, I thought Ma would kill me... It was my punishment from God."* (Matlwa, 10) as menstruation plays both a societal and biological role. On one hand, menstruation is indicative of puberty where the body begins to change and one the other hand symbolises a transition to womanhood.

In "The Joyful Song of Partridge" (2024), women's identities are shaped by racial hierarchies, colonial legacies and patriarchal expectations as shown in the thematic analysis. Maria das Dores' journey illustrates the ways in which national identity is connected to the racial and gender hierarchies created in the colonial era. Women were expected to maintain traditional norms and values whilst concurrently being denied agency. Delfina's character further typifies this contradiction, showing how women's identities are shaped by racial and national narratives (Champagnat, 2020). Delfina's marriage to both a black man and a white man are shown to be symbolic in the novel. Whereas the marriage to José is one of love, it also helps Delfina gain

social respectability and fulfil cultural obligations, whilst her marriage to Soares ensures a rise in her racial hierarchy as she births mixed children. Furthermore, she relies on Soares to be her "financial institution" as he can provide her with the life she seeks, one with codfish, olives and wine [associations of wealth during the colonial time] (Chiziane, 2024, p. 52). Delfina does not entirely fulfil her domestic roles and prefers to seek agency – she opens a brothel and prostitutes her black daughter so that she and her mixed-race children may continue to live in luxury. Maria das Dores, Delfina and Serafina navigate oppressive structures where their roles as mothers, daughters and sexual objects are placed upon them. Maria, in particular, struggles with fulfilling traditional expectations and embodies the fragmented identity of post-colonial Mozambican women (Chiziane, 2024, p., 2024). The tattoos described on her body symbolise heritage and resistance: *"These tattoos hark back to the time of slavery... Each tattoo is unique. It is a sign of one's birth. On the body, a map of the homeland is drawn."* (Chiziane, 2024, p.34) These markers of identity show the connection of the individual to the nation and vice versa.

THE FEMALE BODY AS A SYMBOL OF NATIONAL IDENTITY

Both novels highlight how women's bodies serve as battlegrounds for nationalist ideologies. Spivak (1988) argues that that the female body in post-colonial societies can be seen as a site of "double" oppression – first by colonial powers and then by patriarchy. Oyěwùmí (1997) critiques the imposition of Western gender binaries onto African societies and highlights how definitions of womanhood are framed by patriarchy. This framework is useful to analyse the way in which these authors depict the female body as a site of oppression and resistance and its role in building national identity.

In "Period Pain" (2016), Masechaba's body becomes a metaphor for the nation's betrayal of women. Her menstrual condition (menorrhagia) symbolises the physical burden of womanhood and femininity in a patriarchal society. Her desire for a hysterectomy reflects a rejection of the traditional roles associated with motherhood and womanhood. The symbolism of her menorrhagia parallels the societal burden that women bear to uphold nationalist ideals whilst enduring systemic oppression. Furthermore, her rape is a striking critique of the failure of the nation to protect women, reflecting the gender-based violence that is a part of the nation's identity. Her rape can also be considered as a punishment for challenging xenophobic and patriarchal narratives reinforcing how woman's bodies are used to enforce political ideologies.

Her pregnancy, however, contrasts this and represents an act of agency – the choice to keep the child born as a result of violence shows a form of resistance against both gender and national oppression. In "The Joyful Song Of Partridge" (2024), Chiziane similarly presents the female body as a site of national controversy. The naked woman by the river, an image of cultural defiance, mirrors Maria das Dores struggle for autonomy. Women's bodies are used to gain power, racial identity and social status as seen by Defina's preoccupation with marrying a white man to secure her privilege. Chiziane explores the role of women in shaping and resisting concepts of national identity. These examples show how women's bodies are both controlled by nationalist and patriarchal ideals but also as sites of resistance (Boehmer, 2005). In Chiziane's novel presents the female body as a commodified entity. Delfina internalises colonial beauty expectations, believing that approximating whiteness will elevate her social status. This reflects what African feminist scholars call "the coloniality of gender" which is described as the control of Black women's bodies through racialised beauty norms (Lugones, 2007). Chiziane further critiques the practice and belief of "improving race" though miscegenation, showing how colonial ideologies continue into mould national identity through women's reproductive decisions (Dos Santos, 2013).

Both novels highlight the ways in which gender roles and expectations are shaped by national histories and nationalist goals. Chiziane's novel demonstrates how gender roles in colonial and post-colonial Mozambique reflect national identity conflicts. Women's bodies become metaphors for the nation as seen by the headman's wife's speech: *"Women were raped and wept over the pains of their misfortunes... and they gave birth to a new nation."* (Chiziane, 2024, p.23) That shows how the nation was framed as a product of colonial violence, with women's bodies as sites of both oppression and resilience. In "Period Pain" (2016), Masechaba's identity as a South African woman is shaped by the socio-political climate. Gender based violence, xenophobia and systemic discrimination highlight the position of women in society in the broader national context. Her rape becomes a means through which nationalist ideologies can be enforced: *"The perpetrators want to make her a 'real South African woman'... weaponizing gender and violence to implement social obedience."* (Matlwa, 94). This also emphasises the link between gender identity and nationalism and how women's bodies are controlled to ensure compliance with societal ideals.

MOTHERHOOD AND GENDER DYNAMICS

Motherhood is a central theme in both novels as it reflects the gendered expectations placed on women as a part of the national identity building process. Governments and nationalist movements place women as "mothers of the nation", reinforcing the idea that their main role is to reproduce and nurture the next generation (Chatterjee, 1993).

In "Period Pain" (2016), Masechaba's experience with motherhood is shaped by trauma and perseverance. After he assault, she makes the choice to raise her child and names her "Mpho" which means gift. She does this despite societal stigma and redefines motherhood as an act of defiance and a form of empowerment. Conversely, her mother, reinforced patriarchal norms that limit women's autonomy and reinforces xenophobic beliefs that at the end reject the notion of a "Rainbow Nation" that prioritises diversity and acceptance. This dynamic shows the intergenerational conflict between women who reinforce and resist the national narrative. In "The Joyful Song of Partridge" (2024), motherhood is similarly depicted as a tool of empowerment but also as a form of subjugation. Serafina's beliefs and control over Delfina's life displays how older generations of women perpetuate patriarchal and racial hierarchies. Delfina's wish to be white and make mixed race children shows how colonial legacies continue to shape gendered expectations in postcolonial Mozambique (Champagnat, 2020). These narratives show how national identity dictate who belongs and the conditions of that belonging, with women's reproductive roles being a key piece of this control. Furthermore, it shows how individual identity is deeply intertwined with national identity due to historical events and the current socio-political climate.

RACE, GENDER, AND EXCLUSION IN NATIONAL IDENTITY

Both novels show how national identity remains biased against race and gender. As Gilroy (1993) mentions, nationalist projects often prioritise unity at the detriment of cultural and ethnic diversity, thus silencing marginalised voices in the process in "Period Pain" (2016), xenophobia became an extension of apartheid era exclusion contradicting the ideals of democratic South Africa. Masechaba's interactions with Nyasha, a Zimbabwean doctor, expose the irony of post-apartheid nationalism. Black South Africans who were once oppressed, now participate in the exclusion of other Black Africans. This shows the persistence of the colonial era's racial hierarchies within national identity where foreign nationals are seen as a threat (Malaba & Melber, 2020). This is evident in how the kidney dishes that are reserved for foreigners are the ones labelled "*sleg blankes*" (only whites), which is symbolic of how apartheid continues to mould social structures (Matlwa, 2016).

Similarly, in “The Joyful Song of Partridge” (2024), racial identity is an embedded factor in national belonging. The Portuguese colonial system of assimilation created a racial hierarchy that persists in post-independence Mozambique, with mixed race individuals like Maria Jacinta occupying a liminal space. The favouring of whiteness in terms of marriage and social status shows how national identity is still defined through racial exclusion (Ricard, 2010). Both novels show that national identity in postcolonial Africa is in fact not a unified or inclusive concept in the novels but rather one that continues to reflect historical divisions and exclusions. It is important to note that the historical background of each country places an important part in the novel. Both novels show how their respective histories shape gender and national identity, though Mozambique and South Africa have distinct colonial pasts. Chiziane seems to critique Portuguese colonialism’s impact on racial and cultural hierarchies. Assimilation policies like those given to the character José, forced Mozambicans to abandon their African identity: *“Swear, renounce, sweep it all away, so that you can be born again. Abandon your language, your tribe, your faith.” (*Chiziane, 2024, p.159). On the contrary, “Period Pain” (2016) reflects the lasting impact of apartheid, especially how it intersects with gender and race. Masechaba’s activism against xenophobia shows national identity as challenged and disputed. Masechaba recognises the structural inequalities that remain despite political change. Masechaba discusses the popularity of her petition and is proud to bring about the change that she believes is needed. This comes at her own detriment as her activism threatens the social discourse surrounding foreigners.

Both novels critique patriarchal and colonial structures that dictate women’s roles and national identity. They explore motherhood as the social dynamics that influence this role. In “The Joyful Song of Partridge” (2024), motherhood is both a burden and a means a cultural and identity preservation whereas in “Period Pain” (2016), motherhood can serve as a source of wisdom but maternal figures can perpetuate and reinforce harmful gender roles While Chiziane’s characters struggle with internalised colonial ideologies in terms of race and culture, Matlwa’s characters navigate a racialised violence in post-apartheid South Africa. Despite their unique struggles, most female characters in both novels assert their agency – either as a means to discover their identity or as a mean to create new identities that fit in their socio-political context.

Identity Exclusion and Literary Resistance in “Period Pain” (2016) and The Joyful Song of Partridge” (2024)

Both “Period Pain” (2016) and “The Joyful Song of Partridge” (2020) confront the disconnection between political freedom and personal freedom for women in postcolonial African nations. Yet to merely state that both novels show exclusion limits the power of comparative reading. What emerges through close, theory-informed comparison is not just a similarity in theme, but a shared strategy of literary resistance that questions how nationhood continues to erase and diminish female subjectivity, despite claims of progress. By looking at these novels through the lens of women’s lived experience, a close comparative analysis reveals how distinct historical forms of gendered exclusion – and how literary form becomes a place of resistance. It demonstrates how different nationalist ideologies impact the lived experiences of women, shaping their bodies, voices and emotional states in distinct ways Both novels present compelling explorations of female identity in postcolonial African contexts and do so uniquely. While rooted in different sociohistorical and geopolitical contexts – Mozambique’s post-independence era and South Africa’s post-apartheid transformation – unveil how postcolonial nationalism and gender politics are deeply enmeshed and often aristocratic.

Chiziane and Matlwa critique the myth of the inclusive nation by showing how national identity is often constructed through the erasure of women. Chiziane’s novel illustrates how post-independent Mozambique, while claiming to liberate all its citizens, re-entrenched gender hierarchies under the guise of unflinching dedication. Maria’s descent into madness reflects the personal cost of a national identity that marginalises women outside of reproductive roles. Anne McClintock (1993) argues that women are frequently positioned as “boundary markers” of the nation and its traditions but are denied agency. This is evident in Chiziane’s narrative where Maria is treated as a boundary marker for various male-dominated power structures. In her youth, her virginity is a commodity. Here her body serves to mark the boundaries of economic desperation and traditional, patriarchal control. She becomes a symbol of a pact. Later she wanders through the war-torn Mozambican landscape and her “mad” form becomes a boundary marker of the nation’s trauma and its unresolved patriarchal violence. She becomes the living embodiment of the cost of the nation’s struggles, an undeniable symbol of suffering that stands at the end of official narratives. She is consistently denied agency. She has no say in her initial violation, no power to escape the psychological effects of the war and no voice in

the dominant narratives that idealise heroic women whilst excluding those who don't fit conform. Her decent into madness is the ultimate expression of this denial of agency, as her own mind becomes a fractured scene , reflecting the shattered reality she occupies. The novel itself , through its narrative structure, becomes a way for Maria's story to be told and acknowledged. Her journey holds a truth that the "official" national history may ignore or subdue. Her eventual stabilisation suggests a form of internal peace found in facing her trauma rather than suppressing it. Her journey is more about survival, resilience, and finding a peace within her splintered self-accepting the complexity of her identity forged through immense suffering. It can be seen as a testament to the enduring spirit of women who find ways to exist and thrive outside the rigid confines of patriarchal national narratives. Marias path to recovery involves indigenous practices and the support of other women. She is not cured by doctors but through rituals, the embrace of her traumas and the acceptance of her community. This emphasises that for many African women, healing is holistic and deeply connected to their cultural and spiritual heritage, while nationalist projects downplayed in favour of Western-influenced model. While traditional reproductive roles initially trapped her, Marias connection with her children becomes a source of anchoring, a source of identity and a sense of purpose. It is about the profound, nurturing and protective aspects of motherhood that go beyond societal expectations. Even as she searches for her lost children, her capacity for love and care helps ground her. Ultimately, Maria das Dores story is a powerful commentary of nation building that overlooks its most vulnerable people especially women whose experiences are deemed unimportant in the grander scheme of nation building narratives. Her "madness" is the outcry and her journey if the quiet yet defiant assertion of a complex female identity.

Matlwa's South Africa however, presents a different violent national network. Masechaba is positioned as a functional subject of the rainbow Nation – educated, professional and politically conscious – however- she is constantly sidelined by the xenophobic and misogynistic realities of the democratic state. Her psychological breakdown is not a consequence of failed domesticity like Maria, but of structural neglect. Masechaba encounters the institutions of nationhood such as public health, education, government as places of betrayal and failure. The nation, whilst claiming to be inclusive and united, exposes her to violence, dehumanisation and psychological trauma. In both novels, the nation's promise of inclusivity and belonging fails but rather than tradition or culture, the bureaucratic reasoning enforces exclusion, in Matlwa's case. In both cases, national identity is shown not as a unified or neutral construct but as a

project stamped by selective memory and exclusion. As Stuart Hall (1996) states, national identity is a "discourse- a way of constructing meanings which influences and organizes both our actions and our conception of ourselves" (p.4). Both authors illustrate how women are depicted as vital symbols upholding national traditions and values but also prevented from engaging meaningfully in the nation's political landscape or its collective emotional sphere.

In "The Joyful Song of Partridge" (2024), the liberation narratives unintentionally powers a patriarchal system where men can perpetuate practices such as polygamy, exert economic dominance and demonstrate emotional disinterest, frequently with societal justification. This male dominated nationalist script rendered such behaviours unquestioned and unchallenged. In "Period Pain" (2016), however, the nation operates through systemic apathy – the way a bureaucratic system through its adherence to rules can lead to neglect or harm to individuals. Masechaba , though taught to serve her country as a medical professional, becomes collateral damage in a system that does not know how to process her traumas and struggles or compassion for foreigners. The contrast in national structures , one placed in the liberation narrative and the other in expert governance allows readers to see that the exclusion of women is essential to the functioning of the nation.

Gayatri's Spivak's (1988) theory of "double exclusion" is a useful lens for understanding how both protagonists are silenced – by booth patriarchy and nationalist ideologies. Spivak's notion of the "subaltern women" who "cannot speak" resonates deeply with both Maria's silence and Masechaba's psychological implosion. They express their pain through embodied refusal, such as madness or as a psychological breakdown, rather than public discourse or protest. For both novels, this refusal can be read as a critique of what Obioma Nnaemeka (2004) describes as "the collusion between tradition and modernity in suppressing African women." (p. 360). For Maria, polygamy and religion serve this role whilst for Masechaba, its psychiatry and nationalism.

However, both texts also suggest that these women characters are not entirely voiceless. Chiziane offers moments of collective solidarity among women especially where female characters begin to challenge their roles and negotiate their positions in the domestic sphere. Similarly, Matlwa allows Masechaba moments of confrontation and self-reflection, particularly in her resistance to institutionalised xenophobia and her expression of political unrest. These instances point to the agency Nnaemeka (2004) calls "Nego-feminism" a

feminism that prioritises negotiation, survival, and resistance as well as a feminism that acknowledges structural limitations whilst seeking change.

Beyond their themes, the structure, tone and narrative voice, helps critique the nation. Chiziane's story with its fragmented timeline and multiple perspectives, tears apart the dominant version of national freedom. This lack of a single, reliable voice mirrors the deterioration of the nation's forced ideological unity. Similarly, Matlwa uses the disoriented diary entries and internal monologues, forcing the reader directly into Masechaba's emotional distress. These writing choices resist simple, nation approved endings, favouring uncertainty, recurring ideas, and chaos. Ultimately, comparing these novels shows us their value not just in their shared themes, but in what they expose regarding the boundaries and potential of postcolonial national identity when seen through a feminist lens. They demonstrate that national identity is not stable or inclusive but rather build purposefully on gender-based exclusions that continue despite political changes, whether it is through polygamy and spiritual control in Mozambique or xenophobia and bureaucratic violence in South Africa, these novels clarify that a liberated nation does not imply liberated women or rather all liberated people. More importantly, they force us to imagine what happens when women refuse or negotiate their place within the nation. This comparative reding highlights not just differences and similarities but a need for women to reclaim their stories , their power and their national identities from the peripheries.

CONCLUSION

This dissertation set out to examine how national identity and female identity intersect in Paulina Chiziane's "The Joyful Song of the Partridge" (2024) and Kopano Matlwa's "Period Pain" (2016), using postcolonial theory and African feminism as analytical frameworks. Through a comparative thematic analysis of the two texts, the study shows that both novels question dominant national ideologies that claim to be inclusive but, in practice, marginalise women's voices, bodies, and agency.

In response to the research questions stipulated, it is first evident that national identity in both novels is portrayed as exclusionary and unstable. Chiziane's Mozambique constructs national identity through the colonial legacy and racial discrimination. The *assimilado* class—those who adopted Portuguese culture and language to gain privilege—is depicted as separate from the majority of the Black population. Chiziane explores internalised racism through her female characters, showing how it manifests in a desire to "whiten" or purify the race. The novel also critiques gendered exclusion and the role of patriarchy in denying women agency and power within the national identity sphere. It exposes the unfulfilled promises of post-independence Mozambique, where early hopes for a unified and equitable nation are shattered by corruption, inequality, and enduring social division. Chiziane employs mythic elements and oral narrative techniques as a counter-narrative to the dominant national discourse.

In contrast, Matlwa's portrayal of post-apartheid South Africa presents national identity as a bureaucratic performance that abandons those who fail to conform to its version of nationhood. Her work dismantles the "Rainbow Nation" ideal that defined the country's early democratic narrative. She exposes a nation still grappling with structural inequalities, unresolved historical injustices, and rising xenophobic violence. Matlwa critiques the re-emergence of old nationalisms that continue to fuel "us vs. them" mentalities—once defined by race under apartheid, now extended to nationality and gender. Through Masechaba, she reflects the disillusionment of the "Born Free" generation, who grew up after apartheid but inherited a society filled with violence and fractured belonging. While the ideals of unity and equality remain central to South Africa's political rhetoric, they have failed to fully materialise for many. Matlwa's characters navigate deep societal challenges including patriarchy, gender-based violence, and the burden of social expectation—grappling with internalised prejudices and searching for both personal and collective agency. The perspective Matlwa employs

enables her to address multiple forms of oppression affecting Black South Africans, regardless of gender, and broadens the scope of female identity to include women's roles in the collective struggle for a more just society. These portrayals affirm that national identity is not a neutral or universally shared construct but rather one that is historically contingent and deeply gendered.

Regarding the second research question, both novels foreground the disintegration of female identity as a consequence of the nation's failure to fulfil its promises of freedom and dignity. Maria's madness and Masechaba's psychological breakdown are not individual failings, but symptoms of systemic violence. The characters are appropriated and later discarded, revealing the limits of inclusion in postcolonial nation-building. Using Spivak's (1988) concept of the "subaltern woman" and Nnaemeka's (2004) notion of "nego-feminism," alongside other African feminist perspectives, the analysis demonstrated how female subjectivity is shaped through silence, resistance, and negotiation.

The third research question asked what the intersection of national and gender identity reveals about broader postcolonial dynamics. The comparative analysis in Chapter 4 showed that, despite different historical contexts, both novels critique the patriarchal foundations of postcolonial nationalism. Chiziane does this by revealing the emotional costs of assimilation and patriarchal dominance. Matlwa critiques the administrative façade of the post-apartheid state that promotes inclusion while perpetuating structural inequality. When read together, the novels show how national identity in postcolonial Africa can fracture a woman's sense of self—physically, emotionally, and politically—while also offering modes of resistance rooted in memory, solidarity, and personal integrity.

Beyond answering the research questions, this study contributes to the broader field of postcolonial feminist literary criticism by showcasing how literature becomes a space for the contestation and reimagination of national identity outside state-sanctioned narratives. Both Chiziane and Matlwa use formal and thematic disruptions—ranging from fragmented narration to emotional disintegration—to resist narrative closure and reclaim the interior lives of women. Their novels serve as counter-archives to nationalist histories that erase women's pain and resilience, and instead re-centre them. Future research might extend this comparative perspective to other regions in the Global South, or explore how postcolonial literature engages with queer identity, migration, or environmental justice. Additionally, examining how male-

authored texts grapple with similar themes could further deepen our understanding of gendered nationalism.

In conclusion, these novels do not merely tell stories of broken women in broken nations. By comparing the two, this dissertation provides a more nuanced understanding of national and female identity. It reveals the dissonance between the ideal of a unified nation and the lived realities of women in postcolonial African societies. As nation-building continues to evolve under the enduring legacies of colonialism and systemic gender oppression, narratives like these offer crucial perspectives. They challenge exclusionary histories, reclaim silenced identities, and argue for more inclusive representations of national belonging.

ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

For this study, primary data which was used are the two novels above mentioned, along with secondary data such as articles and studies. This research poses no risk as no human subject were involved. This research could be expanded to include male identity as a factor to compare and contrast against. Also, the different in the language in which the original texts were written does create a barrier for understanding. I, however, have read both the Portuguese and English

version and applied my discretion where needed in terms of understanding the text to the best of my ability. For the purposes of this research, I have used the translated text of Paulina Chiziane's "The Joyful Song of Partridge" (2024).

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Annexure A – Initial codes Kopano Matlwa's "Period Pain" (2016)

RESULTS INITIAL CODES GENERATED FOR KOPANO MATLWA'S PERIOD PAIN

Body autonomy	Woman character bold	Period (57)
Womb as punishment	Xenophobia – history	Xenophobia
Period = punishment	Social issue example	Post apartheid is like period pain
Period = womanhood	Women safety	Culture
Motherhood vs individuality	South Africa xenophobia	Anxiety
Determined, focused girl	Period as a secret	Suicidal ideation
Period=shame	Women rape	Need for validation
Period unusual	Racial tension	Social action
Religion Title as Dr NB! = status	Opportunities better for the white people, refers to black people as subversive	Xenophobia
Youth is the future	Women have to be tough	Effects of apartheid
Friend = depression = suicide	Religion – verse on pleading	Xenophobia
Mother = provider	Social issue = teenage pregnancy	Xenophobia
Denial	Xenophobia	Discrimination
State/nation corrupt	Bystander to wrongdoing	Social activist
Grief + culture	Effects of racial segregation	Activism
Each chapter begins with a bible verse	Effect of apartheid	Religion

Childhood + link to career	Xenophobia	Gang rape survivor
Anxious child	Apartheid + effects	Inner dialogue for main character
Reality of career	Effects of apartheid	Grief
Health issues of the country	Racial tension	Ptsd rape
Nation – blame placed upon them last	Wants to quit job	Blaming herself for the rape
History and reality of South Africa	Metaphor for being out of control	Dignity of the female body
Pain	Strong women feelings	Gender expectations
Status that comes with education	Religion	Violence of apartheid
Reality of being a doctor	People unhappy about the state of the nation	Racial tension
Mentions the government	Continents future	Violation of the body = trauma
Religion	Talks to GOD	History
Doctor – opportunity Murder = doctor	History of south Africa	Religious dilemma
Drugs	Doesn't feel good enough	Suicidal ideation
Medical field has ruined her	Religion	Gang rape
Lack of fulfilment	Character is desperate	Religion as a coping mechanism
Compassion fatigue	Voting = privilege in south African history	Sa country tensions with foreigners
Speaker vs reader	Talks to God	Regret

Rape = violation (96)	Ways of coping	Religion to cope
Gbv	Social issue	Rape, xenophobia, education
Female body compared to state of the nation	Tshiamo is her brother – stigma about mental health	Religion
Systemic racism	Discrimination	Colonisation/ apartheid
HIV	REPUTATION	Societal expectations
Denial	Empowerment	Seeking approval
Race important motherhood	Selfishness	Motherhood childhood
Mother = protect		

Annexure B – Codes for Paulina Chiziane's "The Joyful Song of Partridge" (2024)

RESULTS INITIAL CODES GENERATED FOR Paulina Chiziane's "The Joyful Song of Partridge" (2024)

wife is an adulterer	patriarchy	passivity of white women
baby birth compared to canon firing	feminism origin	black women vs white women
birth to dishonour	superstition	race, fetishisation of skin colour
birth of a new race	naked woman dancing	racial equality
stigma of blackness	queen = white man's wife	post-colonisation
sex = weapon	social rise of a black woman	compares her two husbands
women belong to the regime	race + behaviour expectations	Delfina comfortable in sexuality
mixed race children are seen as future seeds	black woman - social status	threatened with knife
racial hierarchy	calls father ignorant	love and violence
mulattos will have privilege	rich by sexuality	woman as an object
whiteness = beauty	Delfina - 2 husbands	polygamy
race and power	racial offense	stolen from
black women seek to have mixed race children	identity and race	no father = orphan
hope that daughter will be black	considers herself white	society's revenge
mixed child = death of the family	change race	father = protector
Delfina prostitute	Lisbon - homeland of all races	kill to restore social order
tough woman	religion	wealth distributed for children
mulatto child = status	love and race - black and poverty, white = resources	mistrust for Delfina
right to land	poor are human	Delfina has a bad reputation
child will save siblings from ruins	colonial ideology - perpetuated by black people	control over the white man using magic
proper woman uses her body to make money	freedom and racial equality	woman role
José could have stopped her betrayal	freedom and financial security	being a woman =- having skill to hunt for wealth not education

love and freedom	freedom = racial equality	trades daughter’s virginity for business
Moyo alive	racial divide and racial duties	woman is a commodity to be sold and bartered
oral tradition	power	marry to attain wealth from Maria
suicide	life before colonisation	mother love for child
Zambezia like coconut	homeland	white father ashamed of having black daughter
monogamy vs polygamy vs same-sex relationships	freedom does not allow privilege and elitism	soares = shame to white class
laundryman	people suffering	father coward as he denied his black daughter
mixed race children are security	freedom and revolution	black man with white child raises suspicion
advantages of having a mulatto child	what it means to be a woman	how black man treated with white child
idolising white man	Delfina's identity	grandfather treated with such violence
names and identity	Delfina's ideal self	death and race
all women named Maria	child is to obey	racial identity
racial equality in future	existence and identity	race is learned
reconciliation	race and destiny	assumption that white child is mistresses’ daughter
shame to be born a man	husband is not security	too white to be mixed race
racial politics	children mistreated for being black	teacher reinforced racial divide
woman's body is a commodity	mulattos' racial hierarchies	child innocence
race	black children and identity	mixed race child being reduced to black
female body for hiring	mulatto children are the future	language and race
race and identity	love transcends race	mixed race child should be able to pronounce Rs correctly
race	identity	Jacinta excluded as ring dance is for black girls
racial hierarchy	equality	race and gender roles
identity and adolescence	Jacinta treated differently - race	racial awareness = identity
freedom and uprising	good fortune = white stepfather	racial dilemma
race	identity	RESENTMENT towards black mother for race
race	identity - wanting a white mother	Maria oppressed
fatherhood and race	racial hierarchy	segregation within the home

favourite children	coloniser sees effect on colonised	reality of multiracial household
white children represent survival, status, food	discovery	race taught at young age
Indian = credit	regret	Maria affected by the departure
black children neglected	women and power	abandonment
family and race	characteristics of white woman as wife	mother affection leaned towards mixed race
woman belongs to everyone	girlhood to womanhood	motherhood
religion	whiteness and marriage	learnt suffering is a stage from black father
paternity	partridge and pride	learnt that joy is right from white father
child of a different race = a benefit	marriage	Zezinho was sick seeking his fathers
man's dignity	race	Maria parentified child
prostitution gave husband wealth	motherhood	black, whites and mixed race = same in poverty
freedom	race and motherhood	mother is drunkard
power	race and identity	Maria set fire to house to relieve mother of burden of having black children
nature	society	LACK OF URGENCY
José disappears into the water	racial identity	Maria character
woman showing initiative	child and mother disconnect	interracial relationships - ideal
love		hair and race
financial security as a goal for a woman	daughter and honour	hair and race
witchcraft to make her desirable	daughter and parent	standards of the "white world"
love transcends race	motherhood	rape
power and strength	distraction	loss of innocence and childhood
infidelity is a punishment	daughter achieved mother’s aspiration - identity	rape
saint	race	2 fathers
Delfina is different	character	Maria a commodity
Delfina character	sisterhood	sex makes a girl a woman
dream to have white husband	birth	man, and abuse
gender and Asia	racial division is learnt	abandoned orphan
orders of a woman	humanity, race, and division	husband and father role

Delfina wants the impossible	mother and daughter relationship	daughter vs slave
white man's wife	mother and identity	coloniser support
war	mother and destiny	saint
witchcraft doesn't work on white people	mother importance	motherhood
woman who thinks = admirable	marriage	childhood
wives	race + humanity	women and liberation - kill all men
Delfina character	mother life entangled with child	the beginning of male domination
war	mother is a mother	tragedy
Delfina character	mother given by God	child and mother
Delfina character	motherhood and position	fear of being sold as a virgin by her mother
regime	generations	age to be raped by man
colonisation and manhood	religion	child confronting mother
marriage material	wedding	Jacinta character
racial barriers	mother, children, and race	confrontation by daughter
conditions of living	power of the tongue	race
dependency on woman = humiliation	betrayal	character - fighter, domination
renouncing culture for assimilado status	mother is shame and disgrace	threaten mother
culture	drinking as a coping mechanism	sacrifice black daughter for white one
wizard	new nation - new race	social status
Delfina pledges to white man	nature	generational conflict
man and virility	awareness of presence	adults prey on innocence
woman's job as a wife	pain	4religion
wife of Soares	Delfine commodifies sex	slavey must end
woman wants to fight for her honour	poverty	existence -
men = goats	song	patriarchy
find freedom in home	Maria pain	racial segregation
Delfina secures man	womb	mother - and child
pain transcends race	pregnancy	Delfina hates regime
Delfina used magic to torture Soares' wife	motherhood	Maria = character
witchcraft on white people works	exploitation	mother and daughter
religion and woman	wake up and prepare for those who are to return	daughter take care of mother

story of Namely Goddess - motherhood	question of identity	
mother and child	Maria is woman no one sees / black people are not seen	reflecting on colonisation
origin	naked woman seen as ethereal/threat	National Women's Day
race and birth	subhuman	freedom
Maria parentified child	goal of a woman	strikes against slavery
Maria lost cause = pregnant	the beliefs of the people	traditional woman roles
social worker	Maria synonym for woman	feminism
drinking to cope	woman wise storyteller	born in a time where life had no illusion
domestication of man	storyteller women bring relief/peace	stories of gender war
woman	compassion	kingdom of men
first black women to change social structures	nature inherently female	children fed coconut milk and born from nature
Delfina is a queen - warrior	existence	discovery of women
dream is to open a brothel	naked women = fertility and freedom	beginning of patriarchy
colonists	matriarchy	National Women's Day is women reclaiming their power
new race and identity	story of matriarchy	duplicity of femininity and masculinity
women in positions of power	woman used to occupy "male' roles	company fills the soul
women planted and hunted	woman power	religion and rebellion
story of life before men	stories = tranquillity	white Christ vs black Christ
tradition	patriarchy	tradition
emergence of man	woman reflects new world of war	motherhood and madness
pregnancy	questioning identity	colonial war
patriarchy	identity is from womb	traditional healing meets western medicine
woman is boss	origem	Maria's story
motherhood	time before colonisation	mother and children
polygamy	history	seeks her children
domestic violence	colonisation	fatherhood
marriage	war - independence	religion
drugging	women coconuts	reuniting families
Maria is 18 and has 3 kids	mixed race	children story
orphan	history of mixed-race people in Mozambique	mother = comfort
husband	nakedness = purity	betrayal

love	religion	new century
sex	life in nature	clothes and Behavior
men and sex	her children	queen described
parenthood	life as continuous	social order and democracy
mother	interracial relationship	abandoned home revisited
slavery	sex - commodity	regrets of changing races
corporate punishment	colonisation	reputation
marriage	CULTURE DICTATES NORMS	killing to defend social status as husband or as assimilado
using law	CAPITALISM	violent men don't cry
inheritance and marriage	COLOURISM	gentleness associated with women
escape	COLONISATION IDEOLOGY	excitement to be reunited with her daughter
freedom	race and sex	forgiveness as a mother
motherhood	disgusted by husband	woman as a vessel
life commodity	mother betrayed her	sight of a naked woman as shocking
seeking father	family dynamics - race	nakedness is shocking
nature	Well-brought up women are bashful	nakedness
liquor + drugs	Maria traits	nakedness as an invite for abuse
white people and heaven	Maria is refined woman	Red:
searching for children	homeland = identity	capitalism
nation building + race	gesture of kindness	Dedication:
mother role	mother reaction to being left by husbands of different races	woman as a vessel
Simba gripped by anger	wanted to be white	who owns truth
curse	mother - betrayal	tattoos as forms of identification / origin
marriage	Delfina born during slavery times	tattoos in slavery
sight of a naked woman as shocking	colonialism = destroying nature	slavery is over = tattoos not needed
nakedness is shocking	colonial ideology	existence
nakedness	idealising life of white people	reality of war + modern societies
indicates conservative community	inferiority complex	ancestors - origin
colonisation personified	idealises mixed race children	Maria searches for her children
naked woman is news	power of mistresses - regardless of her race	Maria could have been rejected for being sterile.

woman breaking local norms	black women who marry white men benefit financially, food etc.	sterile woman is not human
describing people who are collecting in one space	denied access to education	clothing - colonial premise
milk and angry women	beauty = distractor for boys	nature
confusion	Delfina distracted the faithful	mother's womb
aggressiveness	defina's mother threw her to the wolves	pastor + doctor
myths important	history of revolution using language to liberate	modernisation
woman sitting in meditative position	parents use children to own advantage	paster description
nakedness as repulsive	song	men need women
naked woman travelled from far	prejudice towards her own race	referring to sex
she is hated wherever she goes	song	Bantu tradition - male figures are made to procreate
people are cruel to naked woman	children honest	woman seducing pastor
woman is lost	prostitution	priest is a waste of beauty
social comment on human nature	pride is a mask	religion vs culture
implied craziness	each man is her death	culture and nature
origin	surrendering is easier	women - desire
naked woman is foreign	prostitution is better life	gender
nature imagery	blames her father for hard life	women practice patience
lucky are the blind - don't have to bear witness to the woman terror	mother prostitution against Delfin's wish to get an education	femininity to balance masculinity
being naked is immoral	Serafina = Delfin's mother	protection
nakedness = shame	Assimilados = means respect and status (identity)	headwoman on source of information
morals	black woman = painful	nature
identity as a piece of paper	pains and rebellion	new character
identity = existence	contempt for her own race	worry of a mother who has lost a child
women have to bear	demon possession	culture
nudity = offensive	gestation binds mother and daughter	mother's daughter
nakedness as an invite for abuse	expressing dreams are forbidden for black women	woman of the night

woman is beautiful	questioning her darkness	black, husband = society + respect white husband = financial
nakedness is shameful	humans not free	lover = sexual institution
threatened	mulatto + white people = valuable in society	women described as ruthless
cannot force woman to dress	being black is worthy of thanks from God	racial generational thinking and reproduction
language is a weapon	love steals peace	white husband- finance
violence to achieve morality	cursed love	woman agonising lost Childs return
thrown with mud and clay	love fades manhood	freedom?
she is a heroine for being genuine	magic potions	education = status
heroine	love = fire	Maria is a woman name
mad woman	love elusive	men are scary
CHARACTERS NAME is of sorrow	love has distracted her	origin
race and names	José is a slave	help others to help ourselves
Maria as a metaphor for black suffering	true men are financially better off	origin
mother as an enemy	sex = trap	nature and origin
nakedness is theirs	marriage = relief	honesty
hypocritical	marriage destroys love	everyone has a story, an origin
questioning identity	love temporary	doctors are like priests
forever changing	love = illness	child is a mother's joy
she sees herself as a free body	questioning identity	relationship between mother and daughter
dedicated to finding her treasure	love makes you a slave	song
woman cry is strong	future husband = a trophy	black man cannot give same as white man
making life is hard	new image	race
two fathers of different races	poverty ages	race to be improved
father race + economic status	resistance + identity	reproducing racial inferiority
mother preoccupied with money	song of generations	sex = weapon
two fathers - physical appearance	second-class citizen	Serafina brainwashed to be racially inferior
men fighting for woman love = metaphor for colonisation	slave becomes enslaver	reality of colonisation + racial inferiority
religion	far from homeland	prostitution = immoral
first generation - black	sepoys are important	love can be taught
colonisation and slavery	religion	fate of black son

alludes to colonisation	help coloniser erase culture	man-made from clay
true woman = virgin	mothers Intune with children	Serafina's children taken
man woman family is root of problem	mothers bring calm	colonial regime has removes love from women hearts
preoccupation with being mother of mixed-race child	survival	slave works in the swamps
Maria convulses - seemingly witchcraft	1953 - colonial times	man - enslaved
children with mothers to be envied	liberation	self-reflection = he is honourable man
humanising the mad woman	flag	slave vs white man benefits
madness is normal	mother = protection	black women see pregnancy as anguish
WHITE husband - different perspective	Delfina is sharp and hurtful	having sons is a curse
navigation of the Portuguese	child = favour in exchange for golf earrings	culture
history of Mozambique	José used for sex	war vs peace
creation of mixed race	Delfina owns José	love for a black woman
navigator and religion	José is owned by Delfina	black woman - child pregnancies
navigators were welcome	mother-in-law said to be stupid and ill mannered	love and virginity for white women
history	pregnancy = ruin her beauty	love is unpredictable
slavery	song and tradition	marriage kills love
woman metaphor for Zambézia	united race	light skinned children = racial hierarchy
mothers suffered giving birth to sons to die in war	homeland	Serafina wants freedom
coping mechanism	freedom	witchcraft
violence	song of freedom	being white man's concubine ensures no poverty
women inherently valuable	race identity	black man may have power and money
man is made to suffer	culture	if black man is rich - luck if white man is rich - destiny
mystical		poor white man higher than rich black man
whiteness = wealth	land = menstrual, umbilical cord	better for black women to be sterile = sons taken away
woman is comfort. life	people of the land resist	black women seen as desirable for a white man
mother links to life	culture	mother wants to rent her daughter's body

navigator	culture	black women's life is to serve
nature	culture	beauty = luck from hard labour
mother's uterus = comfort	woman - encouraged liberation	loss of child
slave has no identity	land	childbirth
civilisation was violent	dilemma on whether to fight colonisers or fight his people	child = prized possession
spread religion through sex	religion	pain of a mother
new world - weapons	race + nation	marrying black man = suffering
slavery	life over power	eliminate race to gain freedom
nature imagery	become a coloniser	hates mixed race women
culture + healing	complicity helped the colonisers	racial hierarchy
patriarchs are wise	women pride to give life	black women in the regime
Moyo is cornerstone of many lives	men pride killing	mother lost children
Moyo is a healer	colonialism and pregnancy	assimilation
love - momentary	black men suffer	clans
fictional woman	Jose joined white side	religion
love is deceptive	true women submissive	blessing from father
love is not what it seems	gendered expectation	children and parents
production over beauty	Jose has a boss	shame + race
magic realism	risen in hierarchy of life as an assimilado	black man is tough
inherent nature of an object	racist	liberation
love is letting go		virgin black girl for white boss
woman is uterus that gives birth	mixed child = death of the family	black virgin honoured by having sex with white man
from prostitute to virgin bride	Delfina prostitute	black woman dreams of mixed-race child
having children in the name of others	tough woman	mother
patriarchy	mulatto child = status	race
fear of whites	right to land	Rebe = threatens white race
witchcraft	child will save siblings from ruins	violence
mulatto children trying to erase black roots	proper woman uses her body to make money	racial inferiority
mother	Jose could have stopped her betrayal	pregnancy
mothers have power to give life	love and freedom	banana man - papaya woman

mother blamed for not making child white and a woman	Moyo alive	woman body is a trap
unheard for prostitute to get married	oral tradition	men's happiness = women sexual
culture	suicide	fate of a black child
José conquered queen bee	Zambezia like coconut	children not the same
witchcraft	monogamy vs polygamy vs same-sex relationships	what being man means
marriage = order in life	laundryman	family names and tribes
children shape women body	mixed race children are security	having a daughter means
womb	advantages of having a mulatto child	culture superstitions
deadline brought freedom to her slave	idolising white man	name and heritage - identity
honeymoon = conquest and ownership of body	names and identity	pregnancy is birth - hope
honeymoon for woman = status as serf	all women names Maria	race and babies
violence	racial equality in future	racial purity
subservient	reconciliation	motherhood
marriage unsuccessful = monetary	shame to be born a man	world has rival - woman and earth
marriage relies on money	racial politics	rituals for motherhood and birth
Delfina - tyranny	woman body is a commodity	childbirth
Delfina preoccupied with her beauty	race	birth as detachment
black women and hair	female body for hiring	birth as an expulsion
black women = vain	race and identity	baby born - victor
Delfina is well sought by men	race	daughters make for family expansion
José suffering from love	racial hierarchy	brave mother
economic disparity	identity and adolescence	womb give birth to liberation
black = curse	freedom and uprising	freedom
mans greatness measured by wires image	race	herba medicine vs western medicine
Delfina lived well as she had white lover - race and status	race	race matter?
sex as a weapon	fatherhood and race	indoctrination
love is synonymous with sex	favourite children	trust in tradition
marriage = respect	white children represent survival, status, food	roots of the black people and of the Bantu

poverty + colonialism	Indian = credit	birth ritual
being assimilado = good fortune	black children neglected	renounced tradition
pain of being a man = build the world	family and race	Delfin knows white men intimately
Assimilados = murderers	woman belongs to everyone	colonialism is bad spirit
black - kill or be killed	religion	race can't be changed
European = standard of beauty / attractiveness	paternity	ownership of land and race = home
colonisation	child of a different race = a benefit	ritual for birth
colonisation - one viewpoint	man's dignity	name of daughter
assimilation = survival	prostitution gave husband wealth	sorrow in parenthood
assimilado = leaving behind faith, tradition	freedom	foreshadowing
beliefs of colonialism	power	life of black people = filled with sorrow
assimilado	nature	mothers and naming children
assimilado - status	Jose disappears into the water	slavery regardless of assimilation
identity	woman showing initiative	language and beliefs
prefers his own culture	love	land compared to woman womb
prefers what is familiar	financial security as a goal for a woman	power and strength
history	witchcraft to make her desirable	infidelity is a punishment
powerful people are saved by weapons, law and white peoples	love transcends race	saint
race and religion	love	Delfina is different
Jose haunted	white men love Delfina	Delfina character
tradition	Delfina is determined	dream to have white husband
song	bewitchment	gender and Asia
racial inferiority	Mono is saviour	orders of a woman
ritual	Jose compared himself to God	Delfina wants the impossible
possessed	power	white man's wife
magic to reduce Delfina's sexual desire	Delfina character	women belong to the regime
Mono is protector	regime	mixed race children are seen as future seeds
resistance and independence	colonisation and manhood	racial hierarchy

colonialism beyond body - into mind	marriage material	mulattos will have privilege
effect of the regime	racial barriers	whiteness = beauty
power and domination	conditions of living	race and power
traditional healer	dependency on woman = humiliation	black women seek to have mixed race children
origin	renouncing culture for assimilado status	hope that daughter will be black
born during slavery	culture	rich by sexuality
indigenous	wizard	Delfina - 2 husbands
history	Delfina pledges to white man	racial offense
violence - my identity	man and virility	identity and race
complicity in regime	woman job as a wife	considers herself white
status	wife of Soares	change race
witchcraft	woman wants to fight for her honour	pain transcends race
Jose is killer	men = goats	Delfina used magic to torture Soares' wife
body	find freedom in home	witchcraft on white people works
guilt	Delfina secures man	religion and woman
applause for being 'modern'	culture	story of Namely Goddess - motherhood
treated as a traitor	collaboration made colonisation possible	patriarchy
fatherland	superstition	feminism origin
freedom has died	wife is an adulterer	superstition
idolising colonisers	baby birth compared to cannon firing	naked woman dancing
social rise of a black woman	birth to dishonour	queen = white man's wife
race + behaviour expectations	birth of a new race	religion and rebellion
black woman - social status	stigma of blackness	white Christ vs black Christ
calls father ignorant	sex = weapon	tradition
Lisbon - homeland all races	story of life before men	motherhood and madness
religion	tradition	colonial war
love and race - black and poverty, white = resources	emergence of man	traditional healing meets western medicine
poor are human	pregnancy	maria’s story
colonial ideology - perpetuated by black people	patriarchy	mother and children
freedom and racial equality	patriarchy	seeks her children
freedom and financial security	woman is boss	fatherhood

freedom = racial equality	motherhood	religion
racial divide and racial duties	patriarchy	reuniting families
power	polygamy	children story
life before colonisation	domestic violence	mother = comfort
homeland	marriage	betrayal
freedom does not allow privilege and elitism	drugging	new century
people suffering	maria is 18 and has 3 kids	clothes and behaviour
freedom and revolution	orphan	queen described
what it means to be a woman	husband	social order and democracy
Delfina identity	love	abandoned home revisited
Delfina's ideal self	sex	regrets of changing races
child is to obey	men and sex	reputation
existence and identity	parenthood	killing to defend social status as husband or as assimilado
race and destiny	mother	violent men don't cry
husband is not security	slavery	gentleness associated with women
children mistreated for being black	corporate punishment	excitement to be reunited with her daughter
mulattos racial hierarchies	marriage	forgiveness as a mother
black children and identity	using law	rape
mulatto children are the future	inheritance and marriage	2 fathers
love transcends race	escape	maria a commodity
identity	freedom	sex makes a girl a woman
equality	motherhood	man and abuse
Jacinta treated differently - race	life commodity	abandoned orphan
good fortune = white stepfather	seeking father	husband and father role
identity	nature	daughter vs slave
identity - wanting white mother	liquor + drugs	coloniser support
racial hierarchy	white people and heaven	saint
coloniser sees effect on colonised	searching for children	motherhood
discovery	nation building + race	childhood
regret	mother role	women and liberation - kill all men
women and power	Simba gripped by anger	the beginning of male domination
characteristics of white woman wife	curse	tragedy

passivity of white women	marriage	child and mother
black women vs white women	girlhood to womanhood	fear of being sold as a virgin by her mother
race, fetishisation of skin colour	whiteness and marriage	age to be raped by man
racial equality	partridge and pride	child confronting mother
post-colonisation	marriage	Jacinta character
compares her two husbands	race	confrontation by daughter
Delfina comfortable in sexuality	motherhood	race
threatened with knife	race and motherhood	Delfina character - fighter, domination
love and violence	race and identity	threaten mother
woman as an object	society	sacrifice black daughter for white one
polygamy	racial identity	social status
stolen from	child and mother disconnect	generational conflict
no father = orphan	daughter and honour	adults prey on innocence
society revenge	daughter and parent	religion
father = protector	motherhood	slavey must end
kill to restore social order	distraction	existence -
wealth distributed for children	daughter achieved mother's aspiration - identity	patriarchy
mistrust for Delfina	race	racial segregation
Delfina has a bad reputation	character	mother - and child
control over the white man using magic	sisterhood	Delfina hates regime
woman role	birth	maria = character
being a woman = having skill to hunt for wealth not education	racial division is learnt	mother and daughter
trades daughter's virginity for business	humanity, race and division	daughter take care of mother
woman is a commodity to be sold and bartered	mother and daughter relationship	mother and child
marry to attain wealth from maria	mother and identity	origin
mother love for child	mother and destiny	race and birth
white father ashamed of having black daughter	mother importance	maria parentified child
soares = shame to white class	marriage	maria lost cause = pregnant
father coward as he denied his black daughter	race + humanity	social worker

black man with white child raises suspicion	mother life entangled with child	drinking to cope
how black man treated with white child	mother is a mother	domestication of man
grandfather treated with such violence	mother given by God	woman
death and race	motherhood and position	first black women to change social structures
racial identity	generations	Delfina is a queen - warrior
race is learned	religion	dream is to open a brothel
assumption that white child is mistress' daughter	wedding	colonists
too white to be mixed race	mother children and race	new race and identity
teacher reinforced racial divide	power of the tongue	women in positions of power
child innocence	betrayal	women planted and hunted
mixed race child being reduced to black	mother is shame and disgrace	rape
language and race	drinking as a coping mechanism	loss of innocence and childhood
mixed race child should be able to pronounce Rs correctly	new nation - new race	discovery of women
Jacinta excluded as ring dance is for black girls	nature	beginning of patriarchy
race and gender roles	awareness of presence	National Women's Day is women reclaiming their power
racial awareness = identity	pain	duplicity of femininity and masculinity
racial dilemma	Delfine commodities sex	company fills the soul
resentment towards black mother for race	poverty	interracial relationships - ideal
maria oppressed	song	hair and race
segregation within the home	maria pain	hair and race
reality of multiracial household	womb	standards of the "white world"
race taught at young age	pregnancy	blacks, whites and mixed race = same in poverty
maria affected by the departure	motherhood	mother is drunkard
abandonment	exploitation	maria set fire to house to relieve mother of burden of having black children
mother affection leaned towards mixed race	wake up and prepares for those who are to return	lack of urgency
motherhood	reflecting on colonisation	maria character

learnt suffering is a stage from black father	National Women's Day	born in a time where life had no illusion
learnt that joy is right from white father	freedom	stories of gender war
Zezinho was sick seeking his fathers	strikes against slavery	children fed coconut milk and born from nature
maria parentified child	traditional woman roles	kingdom of men
feminism		