

# A comparative analysis of the depiction of Socialisation of the girl child in the Ndebele plays.

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**Abstract:** Due to various political and economic factors, the Ndebele family institution has undergone tremendous changes. These changes have impacted the socialisation of the girl child within the family set-up. The girl child still faces socialisation problems due to the nature of the present-day family set up. Guided by the Social Learning Theory, the paper examines the family's role in the girl child's upbringing as depicted in Makhalisa and Ndlovu's plays. It is found that the environment in which a girl child grows up influences their behaviour. The study adopted a textual analysis method, and its primary aim was to carry out a comparative analysis of the depiction of the socialisation of the girl child in the Ndebele plays *Umhlaba lo!* (B.Makhalisa) and *Lakanye Wangenza* (T.P Ndlovu). The analysis revealed that both plays depict the Ndebele family set-up. Colonisation, Industrialisation and Urbanisation are presented in the plays as the factors contributing to the decline of the traditional Ndebele extended family whilst giving rise to the nuclear family set-up. Both plays present the socialisation of a girl child, with Makhalisa portraying the advantages of extended family in the upbringing of a girl child whilst bringing out the social and economic aspects encountered by a girl child. Ndlovu on the other hand is successful in capturing the contemporary urban family, characterised as the nuclear family and how it has a negatively impacted in the upbringing of a girl child. The study, therefore, concluded that the family stands out to be the core of every girl child's upbringing, and it determines an individual's future. Both playwrights successfully depict the girl child's socialisation in the family whilst bringing out the Ndebele people's lived experiences during the colonial era and post-colonial.

**Keywords :** Socialisation, extended family, nuclear family, Girlchild, Colonisation, Industrialization, Urbanisation.

## I. INTRODUCTION

This paper aims to interrogate the selected playwrights' depiction of the girl child's upbringing in the family. The family is defined by Neubeck (1979:354) as "a multifunctional unit, central to the stability and continuation of human society". It may be seen as a social collective that protects and aids the individual to confront the challenging and sometimes stressful demands of daily life. The Ndebele family institution has undergone tremendous changes. It is due to various political and economic factors that have caused these changes. The family is believed to be the bases of all humans' well-being and therefore stands as an essential component. The upbringing of the girl child, in other words, can be defined as the socialisation of the girl child, which Parsons (1943) defines as the process by which individuals

adapt to and internalise the norms, values, customs and behaviours of a shared social group. It is a process through which people are taught to be proficient members of society, and it is the task of an older person within the family to help in the upbringing of a girl child. Cook *et al.* (2002:1284) also state that the family significantly impacts a girl child's upbringing.

This study's focal point is to evaluate the two playwrights' effectiveness in portraying the Ndebele people's lived experiences from the events that both playwrights present. It is of paramount importance to evaluate how each playwright effectively depicts the Ndebele family and its contribution to the girl child's upbringing. The study investigates how accurate both playwrights are at presenting the upbringing of the girl child. As Shoyinka cited by Petersen and Wastberg (1998:26) would say,

*"the author must not content himself with chronicling the customs of society. He must play the part of bard and oracle, he must see more clearly and exactly than other people, he must be a visionary, a warning voice and a builder of the future."*

Therefore, any writer's role is to reflect the people's lived experiences in a given society without altering the events. The study seeks to investigate the effectiveness of the two playwrights in depicting the girl child's upbringing whilst evaluating how they have fulfilled an African writer's roles as described by Shoyinka.

After having realised that there has been a great deal of change in the family set-up, it was found essential to examine how different foreign factors have affected the family as an institution. Studies have been carried out to investigate the impact of society at large on a child's upbringing. However, not much has been done specifically on the girl child's upbringing within the family set-up. Parsons (1943) notes that the family is becoming more of a specialised group concentrating on the children's socialisation and providing emotional support and affection for family members. Although Parsons views family this way, attention is generally on children. Therefore, the present research has further narrowed down the study paying particular attention to the girl child's upbringing in the Ndebele family, linking it with literary work. It can be noted that the girl child still faces socialisation problems due to the nature of the present-day family set up. The extant literature highlights the family's

effect on children's upbringing, which may include issues to do with child abuse, poverty, and lack of opportunities, to mention but a few.

Notwithstanding these constraints, a girl child's upbringing in the revolving Ndebele family in this phenomenon seems to have not received enough attention. It is in light of this gap that this paper was carried out. Indeed, the study's findings, quite apart from serving as a foundation for further studies, would provide a better understanding of the socialisation of the girl child in the Ndebele family.

## II. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The study was guided by the Social Learning Theory, which Armstrong (2012) defined as a theory where people learn behaviours based on those around them. It is a sociological theory propounded by Albert Bandura in 1963 and further detailed in 1977. The theory applies to examining the family's role in the girl child's upbringing as depicted in Makhalisa and Ndlovu's plays. The theory examines how different family members play a role in the girl child's upbringing and how the family structure contributes to the girl child's upbringing.

The theory postulates that, in the social learning system, new patterns of behaviour can be acquired through experience or by observing others' behaviour (Bandura, 1977). Bandura views learning as an interaction between humans and their environments. Therefore, human behaviour is a continuous reciprocal interaction between cognitive, behavioural and environmental determinants. The three variables interact with one another to explain an individual's actions. The capacity to learn by observing can enable one to acquire behaviour units without engaging in the trial-and-error process. Observing others can help an individual to learn fearful and defensive behaviours. The theory helps highlight each family member and society's roles in developing the girl child's social skills. It provides an alternative approach to fix the social dilemma with which thousands of girls living in different kinds of family structures struggle today.

The environment in which a girl child grows up influences their behaviour. The Social Learning Theory, in this case, is utilised to explain how the family holds an impact on the upbringing of the girl child as depicted in the plays and how it can contribute to better living conditions and awareness of family togetherness and help maintain good interaction within family members.

## III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Data was analysed through the textual analysis method. Textual analysis is defined by McKee (2003: 1) as a way in which human beings make sense of the world. It is a data-gathering method for a researcher who wants to understand how members of various cultures and subcultures make sense of who they are and how they fit into the world in which they live. It is helpful, especially for researchers working in sociology; therefore, it was essential for this study to examine

the playwrights' depiction of the girl child's upbringing. Two Ndebele plays were used as primary sources, *Umhlaba lo!* (1977) by B Makhalisa and *Lakanye Wangenza* (2001) by T.P Ndlovu. The researcher examined the playwrights' various ways depict the girl child's upbringing and how effective the playwrights present the Ndebele society's lived experiences. The analysis of these plays aided the researcher in assessing and examining the family institution changes from the colonial era up to date.

Secondary sources that examine issues to do with family, particularly from sociology, were consulted to substantiate the researcher's findings. Data was presented in a qualitative method.

### *The Ndebele family structure and the upbringing of the Ndebele girl child*

The basis of every community is founded on the notion of a family. A family is a central core in which every individual is brought up and socialised to become an active member of society. With reference to two Ndebele texts, *Umhlaba lo* by B. Makhalisa and *Lakanye Wangenza* by T. P Ndlovu, the following literature investigates how the two playwrights present the changing aspects in the family set-up. The plays reflect two different time frames. In *Umhlaba Lo!*, the playwright presents the girl child's upbringing in an extended family during the colonial era in a rural and urban setting.

In contrast, in *Lakanye Wangenza*, the playwright presents the girl child's upbringing in a nuclear family set-up in the post-colonial era in an urban setting. The literature change in family structure from the traditional extended family structure to the contemporary nuclear family structure. It gives a brief description of how a Ndebele girl child is brought up in the Ndebele family whilst exploring different factors that have initiated a change in family structure, including colonisation, industrialisation and urbanisation as presented in the two plays.

The term girl child can refer to any youthful female person. Every child goes through puberty stage, and it is at this stage where the girl child goes through an intense socialisation process where she is weaned from childhood to adulthood and becomes an active member of society. This occurs within the family, and in the traditional Ndebele family, when the girl child reaches her adolescent stage, she was believed to be ready for marriage. Matshakayile-Ndlovu (1995:79) posits that the adolescent stage meant that the girl child had reached the stage where she can conceive; therefore, this stage was the most critical stage of her life. In the Ndebele society, the grandmother or paternal aunt took the upper hand in assisting her with issues to do with menstrual cycles and many other household chores that were expected to be done by a girl child. They performed the puberty ceremony, which Matshakayile-Ndlovu (1995:80) refers to as a process where they were being prepared to brace up for whatever hardships that they would encounter in their marriages.

It is of paramount importance to first of all review the family structure in the pre-colonial era. This will give one a better understanding of the changes in the family structure. According to Neubeck (1979:354), a family is viewed as a

*multifunctional unit, central to the stability and continuation of human society. It may be seen as a social collective that protects and aids the individual to confront the challenging and sometimes stressful demands of daily life.*

Therefore, the family plays a pivotal role in the upbringing and the well-being of an individual. The Ndebele society was organised in an extended family set-up. According to Bourdillon (1997:20), an extended family is a family where grandparents, aunts and uncles play significant roles in the children's upbringing. This may or may not include these relatives living with the children. Mbiti (1969:108) states that the extended family members live together in a traditional compound consisting of several houses, live proximate to one another or maybe disunited by some distance in case of geographic separation. Therefore, these family members may or may not be an addition to the family Bourdillon (1993:19) posits that "the extended family is fundamental to African society as it is the basis of all the traditional African society". Nyoni (2014: 22) echoes the same sentiments as she states that the extended family set-up was the most dominant type of family in the Ndebele society. It played a significant role in an individual's upbringing in all the stages from childhood to adulthood. Hence, it was most common in the Ndebele society.

The Ndebele people believed in collectivism, which meant living and working together rather than individualism. Ndlovu and Ndlovu (2013:182) argue that "the Ndebele traditional society was organised around an elongated family". This promoted members of the society to relate to each other effectively, helping them in conflict resolutions, creating a better living environment conducive for the upbringing of the girl child.

In the case of conflict resolution, mediators among family members were given the task of solving family conflict. As noted by Ndlovu and Ndlovu (2013:182-184) that "the responsibility of conflict resolution fell on the shoulders of *ugogo* (grandmother), *ubabakazi* (paternal aunt), *umalume* (uncle) and *ubabamkhulu* (grandfather)". Thus, individualism was not celebrated among the Ndebele people. Members of the extended did not only assist in conflict resolution but also took up parenthood; they assisted the adolescents through their socialisation process. Nyathi (2001:97) asserts that, at the puberty stage, the adolescents needed maximum support from adults as they were weaned from the diminishing world of childhood. At this stage, the adolescents were stirred from being passive members of the society into active members of the society. Therefore, girls were assisted by their grandmothers or paternal aunts whilst boys were assisted by their grandfathers or uncles. This was a common exercise in the Ndebele society as Makhalisa also presents it in her play

*Umhlaba Lo!*. She presents *ugogo* (grandmother) playing a significant role in the socialisation of the girl child Sibonile.

However, due to various inevitable changes that have taken place in African societies, the foundation of the extended family structure has been shaken. Ndlovu, in his play *Lakanye Wangenza* presents to us a family that consists of a married man and woman with one child. This is a typical example of a nuclear family. It shows how the family as an institution has changed over the years. Baoke-Boaten (2011:104) notes that there has been a tremendous transformation in Africa since its contact with Europe and other foreign cultural changes. This transformation can be attributed to colonisation, industrialisation and urbanisation, which caused a change in the family structure.

*Factors that led to the decline of the extended family*

#### *Colonisation*

As portrayed in the plays, colonisation brought about a negative impact on the Ndebele people's lives. It destroyed their way of life, distorted their traditions and diluted their culture. Fanon (1952:154) notes that "colonialism created several problems that included an inferiority complex, which led to the desire to be white and take up white people's cultures. It caused a loss of dominion among Africans, and it left people questioning their identities". The desire for impersonating white people's way of living perpetuated changes in the Ndebele people's social values.

Traditionally, the Ndebele people believed in collectivism rather than individualism. Members of the same kin lived together. Kasongo (2010:314) posits that colonisation was just another way of domination and imposition of incoming new cultures over traditional cultures. Therefore, most of the Ndebele societies changed. Most African societies embraced new cultures such that the family structure became altered, resulting in the adoption of the nuclear family structure.

This kind of impact can be noted in most Ndebele nuclear families where tension emanates from parents to children and parents conflicting with other kin members. These tensions remain unresolved because nuclear families promote individualism rather than collectivism. Ndlovu, in his play *Lakanye Wangenza* depicts a typical example of a Ndebele nuclear family, which encounters family conflicts that remain unresolved to the extent that members of the family end up hurting each other. In Makhalisa's play, Masuku lives with hatred towards Sibonile's mother, and she even lets it out on sibonile. Therefore, the advent of colonisation brought about a host of social changes that include family disintegration, which affected the Ndebele family as an institute. Colonisation can be said to have perpetuated the advent of industrialisation and urbanisation, which altered the Africans' social structure.

#### *Industrialisation*

Talcott Parsons (1951) argued that industrialisation led to tremendous changes in both the structure and the role of the

family and family members' roles. It is a process that has occurred in most of the developed and developing world countries. The advent of industrialisation altered the lives of many people living in Southern Africa. This was a transition from an agricultural society to an industrial society. In Zimbabwe, after independence, industrialisation was identified as a critical long term for the requirement for economic development.

Due to industrialisation, the movement around the country steered the collapse of large family units. Neale (1959:954) argues that, with each man living in a different locality and receiving his pay pocket, the natural unit becomes the biological family of man, woman and children. Appadurai (1996) also believes that the recruitment of workers in cities altered their relationship with other family members. This made it difficult for most African people to maintain the traditional extended family structure. It became difficult for most men to maintain relations with their relatives as they became more attached to factory work.

Industrialisation also brought about a financially based society. Cash incomes have, over the years, contributed to social changes. Bourdillon (1993:23) posits that the movement from an economy based on agriculture to an economy based on cash has brought about hospitality constraints within family members. He also notes that when a relative visit from the rural areas to seek work or schooling in the city, the urban family may want to help, but cannot afford to support another head in the family due to restricted space and the high cost of living, therefore, they may be asked to leave. This does not necessarily suggest that people living in the industrial era are less caring, but industrialisation's new economic order pushes them. This has brought about a negative impact on the social lives of many African people. These kinds of situations are also found in the Ndebele society, as presented by Makhalisa in her play *Umhlaba Lo!*, where a teenage girl goes to Bulawayo to seek employment but falls victim to eviction by her aunt and ends up jobless and homeless. This shows that industrialisation, according to Makhalisa, negatively affected the lives of many teenagers in cities.

#### *Urbanisation*

Urbanisation is defined as the increase in the population living in urban settlements and the resulting extension of the urban culture and lifestyle (Gelles, 1999:64). Waugh (1990:418) also defines urbanisation as a population shift from rural to urban areas. This shift influences the formation of towns and cities, and they become large due to the increase in population.

The movement from rural to urban areas has influenced social changes. However, it can be noted that this movement promoted private life and individualism, which has depleted the meaning of community leading to the infringement of the extended family. Bourdillon (1993:2) argues that the movement from the countryside to cities or towns has resulted

in many people regarding towns and cities as their home and have provided new social mixing patterns and new ways of behaviour. This has caused most children in urban areas to become isolated from their parents because both parents would be working and cannot spend ample time with their families. Therefore, this has created less opportunity for children to benefit from the influence of grandparents, aunts and uncles. Bourdillon (1993:25) notes that in education, the support of the extended family is significant in the rural setting such that grandparents, uncles and aunts perform a critical role in the education of children, whereas in urban areas, such contact with these adults is lacking. Ndlovu, in his play *Lakanye Wangenza* presents a typical nuclear family staying in the city of Bulawayo. In the play, a girl child is confronted with socialisation problems and has no other relative to talk to because she is not exposed to other family members in the city.

Urbanisation has deeply planted several ideas in most young people living in rural areas. Most people believe that the city provides better living standards, such as the rate at which rural to urban migration is increasing is tremendously high. This has caused most youngsters from rural areas to move to the city in search of greener pastures. However, it does not always turn out good for them. Due to the economic hardships and lack of employment, most youngsters become jobless and unemployed. Therefore, this has affected their socialisation, with most girls becoming prostitutes and boys becoming thieves, thugs and substance abusers. As presented by Makhalisa in *Umhlaba Lo!*. Where young girls and boys become victims of urbanisation and cannot find better jobs than prostitution and stealing. Urbanisation has created many problems in children living in towns and cities and for many girls and boys who migrated from rural areas to urban areas.

From the factors discussed above and as presented by the playwrights, it can be noted that the family structure has gone through tremendous changes over time. The traditional extended family structure has become scarce, especially in urban areas, which has influenced individualism through the nuclear family set-up.

#### *The nuclear family*

Bourdillon (1997:20) defines a nuclear family as a family consisting of a married man and woman and their biological children. Gelles (1999:108) also shares the same view that the nuclear family is the one that consists of a husband, his wife and their immediate children living in a home of their own. This type of family is commonly found in the contemporary Ndebele society, especially in urban areas.

Demo and Acock (1996) argue that the family has played an essential role in sustainable human development for generations. Therefore, family composition is much more critical in determining family processes. The nuclear family can be viewed as independent and working without reference to different relatives; regularly, their place would be radical.

This means that the nuclear family promotes individualism which results in family conflicts that cannot be resolved.

Most nuclear families are associated with sexual abuse and wife battering because there would be lacking interference from other relatives whenever there is a family conflict. This is supported by Gelles (1999:412), who notes that nuclear families bring about a host of problems such as mental illness to wife battering and sexual abuse of children. Due to the individualistic nature of nuclear families, members of the nuclear family fail to interact with other relatives that may aid in conflict resolution. It becomes a less conducive environment for children's upbringing. Coantz (1992) would, therefore, conclude that the nuclear family contained the seeds of its destruction. The processes that occur within the family affect its members psychologically because they cannot talk to any other relatives outside the family, therefore destroying themselves.

Such experiences are noted in the Ndebele society as presented by Ndlovu in his play *Lakanye Wangenza*. Ndlovu, the playwright, addresses an issue where a girl child who grows up in a nuclear family experiences sexual abuse and cannot relate her traumatic experiences to anyone.

#### IV. DATA ANALYSIS

*Summary of the play Umhlaba lo! by B. Makhalisa (1977)*

The story begins in a rural setting where a young girl, Sibonile, lives in an extended family set-up with her mother, father, grandmother and siblings. She has just completed Secondary level and performed exceptionally well but cannot secure a place in any government training institutes to train as a nurse or a teacher. She is left with no choice but to move to the city in pursuit of work.

It does not become easy to convince her father, Nduku, who is so adamant about believing that the city is packed with immorality. He perceives it as a dungeon filled with all sorts of immorality that he does not wish his daughter to be exposed to. He is concerned about accommodation in the city, which he views as the one which influences immorality among youngsters. Therefore, it becomes difficult to convince him. He believes that accommodation is not enough to sustain everyone living in the city. After intense lobbying by Sibonile's mother, MaNyoni and her grandmother, Nduku finally allows Sibonile to go to Bulawayo.

When she arrives in the city, she stays with her uncle, her mother's brother Zenzo who stays with his wife Masuku and their children (a nuclear family). Her stay does not turn out good. Complex challenges in the city confront her as she fails to get a job, and her days in her uncle's house become numbered as Masuku feels that she is becoming a worthless unemployed burden in her house. Therefore, Masuku begins to ill-treat her and eventually throws her out of the house. Sibonile does not only face problems of being jobless and homeless, but she also faces socialisation problems. Her friend Lulu advises she gets a new boyfriend to take care of

her financial and other needs. Sibonile does not agree to this, and she decides to go to her aunt Zandile who also increases the pile of her problems by arranging her to have affairs with older married men. As if it is not enough, Ndaba, her aunt's husband, makes sexual advances on her in Zandile's absence, and she eventually runs away.

Sibonile fails to stay with any of her relatives, and the only option left for her was to seek shelter at Lulu's place. Lulu stayed with her friend Nozipho. Lulu and her friends were girls with loose morals who engaged in sexual activities in exchange for money. Eventually, Sibonile finds a job at Magaya's shop. Magaya is a renowned businessman known for his disreputable reputation for sexual aggravations on his women employees, and he makes his advances on Sibonile but fails.

On the other hand, Lulu does not give up on trying to lure Sibonile into lewd behaviour. She finds Sibonile a boyfriend called Jeff in whom she believes would take care of Sibonile's financial needs. By all means, she also tries to separate Sibonile from her boyfriend Mbonisi but fails, and Jeff turns out to be an unemployed thief whom Sibonile disapproves of. Sibonile finally gets the job that she came to look for in the city and marries her God-fearing boyfriend, Mbonisi. It can be noted that with her patience and adherence to good principles and values, Sibonile finally makes it through to city life.

*Makhalisa's depiction of the upbringing of the girl child in the family*

Sharpe (1994:1) notes that family relations are by nature complicated, especially between parents and children, and many children suffer social problems which they fail to communicate with their parents or guardians. According to the Ndebele society, it is the duty of an elderly relative to assist adolescents in the socialisation process. Nyathi (2001:97) argues that "adolescents need maximum support from adults as they are weaned from the diminishing world of childhood". At this stage, most teenagers are not able to speak closely with their parents. Therefore, the role of other family members becomes necessary.

In an extended family set-up, a girl child can relate much more comfortably with her grandmother or paternal aunt, issues to do with menstruation, sex and any other social problems. Nyathi (2001:98) further argues that "the adolescent stage entails the process of emotional, social and economic adjustment". This is when adolescents are moved from being passive members of society to become active members of society. As pointed out in the foregoing, the family is the central core in which every individual is brought up and socialised to become an active member of society. The study investigates the playwrights' depiction of the upbringing of the girl child in the family. It also evaluates the playwrights' effectiveness in depicting the girl child's upbringing in the Ndebele family.

*Umhlaba Lo* (1977) is a play that portrays both extended family and nuclear family set-up where a young girl Sibonile

is brought up by both parents and her grandmother in a rural setting, and she moves to the city and stays with relatives who are living in nuclear families. Sibonile is raised in a Christian way of life, and she acquires both western and African traditional education. As a young girl, she becomes exposed to rural life, which teaches her to become an industrious young woman who can perform all house chores. Ndlovu and Ndlovu (2013:182-184) note that “the responsibility of teaching a girl child from childhood falls on the shoulders of *ugogo* (grandmother), *ubabakazi* (paternal aunt) or *umalumekazi* (aunt)”. Therefore, Makhalisa, in her play, depicts an extended family where Sibonile’s grandmother becomes part of her upbringing. This is evident in the play when Sibonile’s grandmother speaks of how Sibonile has helped her perform house chores.

*Ngiyamangala ngikuyekela ungijwayeza kangaka nje..Amanzi ngiphonguthi ‘Boni!’. Inkuni zingangiphelela, ‘Boni!’ indlu ifuna ukuthanyelwa lokusindwa, yisoleso. Hatshi kambe uyangijwayeza bandla! Ngosala ngiyini usuhambile (p7) (I am surprised with the way that I am spoiling myself around you. Whenever I need water, I call out ‘Boni!’ When the firewood gets finished, ‘Boni!’, when the house needs flooring, I call you again. You are spoiling me. What will I do when you leave?)*

From the statement above, one can note that the grandmother’s role is to ensure that a girl child acquires full knowledge of carrying out different house chores. Nyathi (2001:) posits that the girl child is taught different kinds of house chores at the adolescent stage, such as fetching water and firewood, plastering and flooring the house and cooking, among other household chores. Therefore, in the play, Sibonile’s grandmother’s requests for her to carry out all these duties become helpful in moulding her into becoming a hardworking girl who can perform household chores as expected of every girl in the Ndebele society. When Sibonile relocates to the city, she becomes a good ambassador of her grandmother’s teachings as she can withstand all the pressure of performing house chores in her uncle’s house. In Makhalisa’s play, the girl child’s upbringing in the family falls on the grandmother’s shoulders. From the teachings that she acquires, Sibonile is presented as a hard worker, coachable, and someone who holds the upper hand in managing different household chores.

Furthermore, the relationship between a girl child and her grandmother or aunt is said to be cordial. These two are free to talk about anything and everything to do with menstruation, courtship and marriage. Nyathi (2001:98) states that “before a girl experienced her first menstruation, her grandmother would have taught her about what to expect and how to go about it. It is at this stage where she begins to sleep in the same hut with her grandmother.” This is where she becomes free to tell her grandmother about her partner, and the grandmother plays the role of helping her choose a prospective partner. This can be noted in the play when

Sibonile and her grandmother become so open in talking about issues to do with courtship and choosing the right partner. This is noted in the play when they converse:

*Gogo: intombi esikhulile njengawe ibisilungele ukwenda, izalele umkayo*

*Sibonile: ngingendela kubani lami ngiyimi nje gogo?*

*Gogo: .....kuswelekeni njengoba ungagezanga kwesimnyama nje?.....bazakubangelana (p9)*

*Grandmother: a lady like you is now ready for marriage and is supposed to bear children for her husband.*

*Sibonile: Whom will I get married to when I am just nothing?*

*Grandmother: what could be amiss when you do not have bad luck.*

*They are going to fight over you.*

*Sibonile: a girl who gets married without education ends up nowhere.*

*..... You never know what lies ahead of you in marriage; that’s what you always say.*

*Grandmother: I am pleased to hear you say such wise words. You are right*

*but I am worried about this city that you want to go to.*

*What kind of work will you do when you get there?*

*Im asking because we always hear bad things about the city.*

This shows that Sibonile and her grandmother often have open discussions about marriage and related issues. Sibonile sounds aware of the whole concept of marriage, and she acknowledges her grandmother for that. It was always the grandmother’s role to teach the girl child issues to do with courtship and marriage, and in this case, Sibonile’s grandmother has fully taught her granddaughter to be cautious of the demands of marriage. This shows that grandmothers played a significant role in the upbringing of a girl child in an extended family. Makhalisa also reveals to her readers that because of the changes brought by colonisation, a girl child has to acquire western education in the course of her upbringing. She emphasises that one needs to acquire western education, get a certificate in a certain course and then get married. She believes that a girl child who receives western education turns out to succeed in the Ndebele society.

In the Ndebele society, as is the case in all other African societies, a woman is expected to be a strong and respectable person everywhere she goes and in whatever she does. Every individual is expected to have values to which they conform and which define where they come from. Gelles (1999:88) views values as “broad, abstract shared standards of what is right, desirable and worth of respect, and they set the general tone of cultural and social life”. However, new values placed most teenagers in a dilemma of identifying themselves in the modern world. Rwebangira and Liljestrome (1998:34) argue

that “the split between urban and rural life affects how youths understand themselves and the content and traits from which they construct their identities”. Most adolescents who become exposed to urban life at a later stage tend to be at a crossroads in deciding what is wrong and right. With the demand for new and old values conflicting simultaneously, most young people become confused about who they are.

Sibonile is one girl who is presented as being very strict in keeping her values. She acquires these values from childhood through teachings from her family, church and school. She believes that even when she goes to the city, she will not be stray, but she will conform to her values because she carries along the teachings that she acquired from childhood inside her. This is evident in the play when she tells her grandmother that;

*dawu usulibele ukuthi mina ngilo Jesu wami la, (eziqoqoda ngomunwe enhlizweni). Nguye uMalusi wami kukho konke engikwenzayo. Uzangivikela kuzo Zonke izigodi ezilamathunzi okufa khonale koBulawayo*

*Dawu are you forgetting that I have my Jesus within me, (Pointing at her heart) he is my Shepard in everything that I do. He will protect me from the shadows of death in the city of Bulawayo.*

From the above statement, it can be noted that above all the teachings and how she has been brought up, her strong religious belief will protect her from the devious city life in Bulawayo. In other words, Makhalisa glorifies Christianity as she views it as being the only way that one can be able to beat the challenges in life out. The playwright portrays those that are not Christians as thieves and prostitutes. For example, Lulu, Nozipho and Jeff, although we are not told of their historical background, are portrayed as stray and setting a very bad example to many young girls and boys growing up in the city. The playwright portrays these young people as what they are because Christian values do not govern them. Lulu mocks Sibonile about her loyalty to Christianity and tries to make her turn against her religion by trying to lure her into prostitution and trying to destroy her relationship with Mbonisi, but she fails. We find Sibonile able to deal with all the challenges she encounters because she is devoted to Christ. Mbonisi, Sibonile’s boyfriend, is also a devoted Christian and is so adamant about his religion. These two keep on going to church, and that is why they are different from the other young people in the play. At the end of the play, these two marry. Therefore, Makhalisa’s message to her readers is that Christianity plays a significant role in every child’s upbringing. Christianity is viewed as the main encore to a better life.

Physical abuse is common and dominant among young girls who stay with their relatives in urban areas. Most of the girls who relocate to urban areas searching for work become physical, sexual, and emotional abuse victims. In most cases, these relatives treat them like their own maids. They are made

to perform all the house chores. This is noted when Masuku replies her friend MaNkosi who talks about how early it is for the house to be clean. She says,

*A-a, kant’angithi mina ngilesichaka ngalezi insuku*

*A-a, isn’t it that I have my own slave nowadays?*

This shows how some relatives in the city treat young girls who come to the city searching for employment. Masuku considers Sibonile as a maid, and she even calls her ‘slave’. Masuku takes advantage of Sibonile’s desperate state and ill-treats her because she knows that she has no choice but to stay. These girls are also seen as burdens in the family and are said to be wasteful in resources. UNICEF has also discovered that “a girl child can be seen as a drain on the family’s resources”. Masuku does not allow Sibonile to touch any of her food. She leaves her to perform all the house chores and lets her walk to town in search of a job on an empty stomach, and at the end of the day, she insults her accusing her of stealing food from her kitchen. In the event of this, Sibonile does not manage to get a job, and Masuku becomes annoyed and throws her out of the house. This is seen in the play when Masuku says;

Most of the girls who relocate to the city searching for employment face physical abuse from such situations. They get thrown out of their relatives’ homes simply because they perceive them as a drain on family resources. Sometimes, they get haunted by their parents’ conflicts. For instance, in the play, Masuku despises Sibonile’s mother because she believes that she wanted to destroy her marriage to Zenzo, the brother of Sibonile’s mother. The conflict does not get resolved because Masuku does not see the value of an extended family, and she chooses to isolate herself and her family from the rest of the relatives. She sees this as an excuse to throw Sibonile out of her house. Therefore, most girls who live with relatives in urban areas are prone to physical abuse in which they are made to work tirelessly. They get chased away simply because urban life does not accommodate the idea of the extended family set-up. This shows that the family has lost its meaning. A child brought up by relatives encounters sexual or physical abuse, affecting the girl child’s upbringing.

It is a common feature in African societies that we find cases where an aunt’s husband may call his niece *umlamu*, the daughter of his wife’s brother, his wife. However, this term has promoted most rape cases where the uncle takes advantage of this relationship and makes sexual advances on the girl as the customary husband. In the play *Umhlaba Lo!*, Sibonile is faced with sexual advances from her uncle. This is noted when her uncle Ndaba tells her the following statements,

*Woza lapha diya. ....Sondela mani dali. Wozohlala lapha, ngifuna ukukubuka kahle. Kanti uyangesaba yini mlamu wami? Ungayesaba umkhwenyenu pho ongayi kumesaba ngubani? .....Lalela lapha ke mama, wena*

*uyintombi yami. Angizange ngikugaqela ngamadolo kwabakini, nguwe owazazendela koyihlokazala(p32)*

Come here, dear.....Come closer, darling. Come and sit here. I want to admire you nicely. Don't be scared of me, my niece. How can you be scared of your in-law? ..... Listen here, woman, you are my girl. I did not ask you to come here, and you came here by yourself.

The above statement shows that some family members, such as uncles, can take advantage of their nieces simply because they see that their relationship is distant. Sibonile falls victim to attempted rape by her uncle, who claims that it is his money that feeds her, and therefore, she should conform to his sexual needs. Ndaba is taking advantage of the fact that Sibonile is vulnerable. She is unemployed, and she has nowhere else she can call home. Therefore, Ndaba takes advantage of his authority. Because of such beliefs that a niece and an uncle are traditionally husband and wife, most girls fall victims to rape because these uncles consider themselves entitled to sleeping with the girls. Makhalisa brings to the fore such experiences of a girl child where her upbringing is affected by those who are supposed to be protecting her.

The family might also act as the influence of sexual abuse as O'Connell (1994:79) would argue that "sexual abuse may occur publicly: girl child prostitution, abuse of street children or children sold by their parents to earn money for the family: and trafficking in young girls". This means that family members can be responsible for most rape cases in the Ndebele society. This is evidenced in the play when Sibonile runs away from her aunt's house after Ndaba attempts to rape her. She could not tell her aunt Zandile who also, on the other hand, organised sexual relationships for Sibonile with older married men in exchange for money. Therefore, one may conclude that most physical, sexual abuse and incest sexual relations emanate mainly from the family set-up.

*Summary of the play Lakanye Wangenza by T.P. Ndlovu (2000)*

The play is set in Bulawayo, in the high-density suburb of Mpopoma. The protagonist Sofie silently suffers sexual abuse from her step-father Sidumo who is married to Soneni Dube. Soneni is desperate to conceive a child for Sidumo since Sofie is not Sidumo's biological daughter. Mkandla raped Soneni, and she conceived Sofie and, Sidumo accepted her with her pregnancy, and he married her. Without her knowledge, Sidumo repeatedly raped and sexually abused Sofie when she was still young and unable to bath herself. Sidumo is reluctant about his family and is only concerned about his business. He consults Mehlwenduku, the traditional healer, to keep his business going despite the country's economic challenges.

On the other hand, Soneni consults the same traditional healer to help her conceive. Sofie suffers the traumatic experiences from her father's abuse, but she cannot share the sad news with her friend Thokozile and her boyfriend Bongani, let alone her mother. However, Bongani suspects that Sofie is

hiding something from him, and he tries to convince her into telling him, but he fails.

Soneni goes to see Mehlwenduku, the traditional healer by night for her healing. Upon her visit, Mehlwenduku attempts to rape her, but he fails. During her absence, Sidumo rapes Sofie, and on that same night, she commits suicide. Sofie leaves a suicide letter which Soneni finds on the table upon her arrival. The letter narrates all that Sidumo has been doing to Sofie. Still, in great shock, Soneni notices Sidumo, who binges in drunk and finds her in a bad state of mind. While trying to inquire what was happening to her, Soneni pushes him and rushes off to grab a pot of boiling water and pours the boiling water on him. The play ends with neighbours coming to see what was going on as they get alarmed by Sofie's mother's screaming. The ambulance comes to rush Sidumo to the hospital, Sofie's corpse is found dangling from the ceiling, and at the same time, the police are getting the incident's statement.

*Ndlovu's depiction of the upbringing of the girl child in a family*

Ndlovu differs from Makhalisa in the way he presents the socialisation of the girl child. How a girl child is socialised in the play shows that there has been a transition in the family system; the role in which every member of the family plays today is different from what was done in the traditional Ndebele society. Sharpe (1994:3) argues that a father's role has been included in child development from a psychological perspective, and the reality of being a father has been modified. Housework and child care are now shared between men and women. These include playing with their children. Bathing their children and maybe reading them bedtime stories applies to either female or male children. This shows the bond which is created between fathers and their daughters.

Contrary to this, it is taboo for a father to participate in such household chores in traditional African society. Fathers cannot bath their female children. The mother has to bath the child, not the other way round. Hence, the advent of modernism has brought a change in the Ndebele society.

In the play, a modern family is presented with the same features where a father is positioned to take up a larger role in his daughter's upbringing. As mentioned above, in the modern world, the father can take up bathing their female child and playing with her. It is also presented by Ndlovu where Sidumo takes part in his daughter's physical developments when he baths her until she becomes a teenager. He also helps her with her social development skills as he takes her for some outdoor activities. Such an act is not permissible in Ndebele societies. This is evident in the play when MaDube Sofie's mother comments on Sidumo's help in their child development,

Umntwana wawungamthontisi esakhula. Nguwe owawumgezisa. Mina ngikubuka ngisithi nansi indoda ezwisisayo. Esephuhla lapha ubumthatha unyamalale laye umvakatshisa umtshengisa zonke indawo zokuvakatshela. Kwesinye isikhati uze wale ukuthi lami ngihambe. (p6)



You never wanted to leave the sight of your child. I used to commend you for saying that you are such an understanding man. Even when she started to develop her breasts, you would go with her to beautiful places, and sometimes you did not want me to come with you.

This is what the mother thought, and it did not surprise her because some fathers in the modern era are doing such kind of chores as well, that is, in urban areas. She did not know that Sidumo did all this in disguise to get an opportunity to abuse Sofie sexually. He disrupted MaDube's concern, and she thought that he was doing all this out of love and yet he was doing it so that he could sexually abuse their daughter. Although modernity seems to have invaded the African ways of living, the playwright's presentation is not convincing. It is not practical for a father to keep bathing a girl child, especially when the mother is a full-time wife. MaDube allows her husband to bath Sofie while she knew that Sofie was not his biological daughter. Any normal mother would be concerned.

Furthermore, Sofie falls victim to rape. Sidumo rapes her on the pretext that he is not her biological father. This is revealed in the play when Sidumo says,

Hatshi Sofie, angisuyihlo mina. Wena ngakutshela kudala ukuthi uyiliza lizelwe. Unyoko lo ngamthatha evele esezithwele isisu sakho.(p2)

No, Sofie, I am not your father. I told you a long time ago that you are more like an adopted child to me. I married your mother when she was already pregnant with you for another man.

The statement above shows that most step-fathers sexually harass their stepdaughters with the mind that they do not have any blood relations. They abuse their authority and manipulate their stepdaughters, who, on the other hand, fear to be disowned by these men.

The preceding entails that family relations are by nature complicated, especially those between parents and children. As noted earlier, Makhalisa presents an extended family as ideal for a girl child's upbringing. Sibonile becomes close to her grandmother, who takes part in developing her social skills. However, most girls who grow up in urban areas do not get the chance to visit their rural homes to encounter such experiences with their relatives. They become confined to city life which may cause them to miss out on important issues about the transition from childhood to adolescent. Sibonile gets the privilege of being raised in an extended family where she can become open to her grandmother and talks about social issues. On the contrary, Ndlovu presents Sofie, who goes through sexual abuse but cannot tell anyone about it. This is evident in the play when she fails to speak to her friend Thokozile who seems so concerned about Sofie's behaviour change. Sofie explains,

*Hatshi akunjalo Thoko please, (uyakhala).....  
ngilama problems ngekhyaya Thoko please.....*

*Angingeke ngakutshela Thoko. Uma (amqume uThokozile)  
(p3-4)*

No, it is not like that Thoko please (crying) I have problems at home Thoko please I cannot tell you Thoko, if..... (Thokozile interrupts)

This shows that Sofie cannot open up to anyone about her issues even to her best friend. She cannot trust anyone with whatever is happening in her life, and so at the end of the day, she bottles up her issues until she commits suicide. Sharper (1994:29) argues that the traditional feminine stereotype portrays girls as quieter, neater, better behaved and more conforming than boys. Thus, most girls suffer such problems where even if they have serious issues, they are assumed to be at their best state of mind. Sofie's mother chooses not to see any problem with her daughter's behaviour because she is preoccupied with other issues such as bearing a child for Sidumo. Ndlovu presents mothers in urban areas as passive family members in the upbringing of the girl child.

*The playwrights' effectiveness in portraying the lived experiences of the Ndebele people.*

There are certain expectations that an African writer has to reach in a literary work. It is every African writer's role to address the reality of African society and its people effectively. Every writer plays a role in revealing the present experiences and also the lived experiences of the people. Chiwome (1996:22) asserts that "literature should actively influence how life develops, contribute to the consolidation of more pressing trends and help solve pressing social problems". A writer is expected to be the voice of the voiceless. A literary work should speak to society and be a reflection of society. Considering Wilson's (1976:42) view that "art is a mirror of its age, it grows in the soil of a specific society and thereby reflecting its social issues, an African writer should effectively address the issues of the society and be able to provide solutions".

The play *Umhlaba lo!* is one of the plays that was written in the colonial era. It addresses issues to do with family relations; how a girl child is brought up in different types of family structure. The playwright presents an extended family in the rural areas and the nuclear families in Bulawayo. In the text, Makhalisa presents factors that gave rise to the nuclear family. These include colonisation, industrialisation and urbanisation. Politically, it can be noted that the advent of colonisation affected the Ndebele family structure, with most people adopting the new way of living. The family structure became altered as a result of domination by European empires. Colonisation brought about industrialisation, which is the transition from an agriculturally based community to an industrial-based community. This caused urbanisation whereby people migrated from rural areas to urban areas in search of greener pastures. These factors have affected the traditional extended family giving rise to the nuclear family.

Hutter (1988:32) posits that "the nuclear family is also called 'the unstable family'. This type of family is seen to prevail

among working populations who live under the working system. It was also common during the historical periods of great instability". In the case of Zimbabwe, the 'unstable family' can be associated with colonisation. Makhalisa presents this kind of family when she uses the protagonist Sibonile who goes to the city in search of employment. The experiences that she encounters in the city signify the decline of the extended family. Urban life became defined around the economic status of the people. Therefore, the extended family became challenging to manage due to the economic crises. This can be noted in the play when Masuku comments that,

*Kathesi baphongu fuqa umntwana bathi indlu le Ithelwela ngamanzi njengengadi? Bathi udla inhlabathi. Lemali yokube egada amabhasi ekuseni kayiphiwanga. Bathi iqhululwa ezihlahleni? (p22)*

They send this girl, do they think we pay rent by just pouring water on the house? Do they think that she feeds on soil? Moreover, she was not given any money for transport. Do they think that we pluck money from trees?

The statement above shows that urban life is expensive. It is difficult to survive in the city without money. Masuku's statement rejects the extended family. She regards it as an expense. Hutter (1988:4) states that "economically, the forces of industrialisation and urbanisation are making themselves felt in both developed and undeveloped countries". It can be noted that Makhalisa is highlighting the effects of industrialisation and urbanisation. Money has become the central core of life in town, and it makes it difficult for people to maintain the traditional extended family that catered for everyone. The playwright has highlighted why the family has undergone a massive change from the period of colonisation. Makhalisa effectively fulfils the roles of an African writer. In contemporary society, people no longer look after their relatives, especially in towns. The high cost of living is increasing, and it is difficult for someone to look after a relative, especially those who come from rural areas to seek employment. Bourdillon (1993:2) states that it may occur that "the family in the urban area may not be able to feed another mouth due to the economic constraints, therefore, in the end, they ask the relative to leave". The cash-based economy has put constraints on hospitality. That is the reason why in the text, Masuku keeps on emphasising how Sibonile has come to spend her husband's money and food in the house and ends up chasing her.

Traditionally. It was well known that the paternal aunt played a significant role in the upbringing of a girl child. The aunt was expected to guide through a girl child in the process of socialisation. In the play, the playwright presents the change that has occurred to the role played by an aunt in the upbringing of a girl child. Instead of guiding Sibonile to a better life, Zandile tries to destroy her life. She organises older married men for her so that she could get money. This is noted in the play when she tells Mbizo that,

*Akungichaze nge-50c.....*

*Bengingathi yikhona ngizakuhombisela umntwanomnewethu, Isithwathwa lesiyana oke wasifika lapha izolo. (p36)*

*Can you give me 50c.....? I was going to give you my niece, that beautiful girl you found here yesterday.*

The statement above shows that there has been a change in the Ndebele social values. The city life's living standards have changed an aunt's role as a teacher and an advisor. Urban life has exacted pressure on people living in urban areas. Goode (1963:1) states that "the most common set of influence that has affected the family is the social force of industrialisation and urbanisation. These have affected every known society, even the traditional family system in such widely separate and diverse societies". People have lost their social values. The essence of culture and tradition has lost its meaning due to different forces of city life.

The money-based economy has caused so many changes in the family structure. Brown and Thakur (1997:35) state that "kinship among the African society constitutes the major system for the individual members through which they seek redress". This means that members of kin are expected to protect an individual's economic and social needs. Zandile does not do this for Sibonile; neither does Masuku. This could be because of the economic forces that influence them to do so. For example, their low economic status is revealed when looking at how Makhalisa describes Zandile and Ndaba's living conditions. These two live in a small single room in the high-density suburb of Magwegwe in Bulawayo. It also shows the effects of colonisation which left Africans living in small shanty places in the city, which could not allow large family units.

Therefore, it can be said that a nuclear family in the urban set-up has no positive influence on the upbringing of the girl child from an extended family. It destroys the well-being of the girl child. It is better to raise a girl child in an extended family in a rural setting rather than in an urban setting. Makhalisa is successful at revealing the lived experiences of the people during the colonial era. The economic problems are some of the reasons why the extended family is rejected in the play. Even in the post-colonial era, the urban settlement still draws back in the African people's lives and has made it difficult to maintain an extended family set-up.

Furthermore, in the play, Makhalisa addresses how the change of economy affected people from all walks of lives. Industrialisation forced people to migrate from rural areas to urban areas searching for work and better living standards. Poverty is said to be reproducing itself. Life becomes problematic in the city because of the high standards of living. This has caused many rural to urban migrants to suffer from problems of limited accommodation and employment. Makhalisa reveals to her readers about such situations. City life does not become easy for Sibonile. She is confronted by more problems than those she had at her rural home. No one seems to be willing to take care of her and what is even worse is that she is unemployed. City life promotes individualism,

and this can be noted in the play when Makhalisa uses characters such as Mbizo (p38), Magaya (p63) and Jeff (p60), who say,

*kukoBulawayo lapha, kwabuywa.*

*This is Bulawayo, each man for himself.*

The statement above reveals that due to industrialisation, which caused rural to urban migration, urban life promotes individualism rather than collectivism which existed in the traditional Ndebele society. This means that when one is in the city, he/she is on their own just as they came alone. The playwright is alerting her readers about the effects of urbanisation which have caused family disintegration. This is evident also in the play when Masuku throws Sibonile out of her house and when Ndaba speaks of how he takes care of her in terms of food and shelter, and therefore he expects her to pay him back sexually. It shows that families in urban areas reject the existence of extended family set-up.

Thakur and Brown (1997:19) note that with the increasing influence of technological change, urbanisation and changes within the social and economic modes of production, there are increasing pressures on the family. Ndaba and Masuku discourage the extended family. The influence of social and economic pressures forces them to reject extended family, as presented by Makhalisa. The playwright presents the lived experiences of the people during the colonial era. Due to the economic hardships that invaded the country, people living in urban areas lived the tit for tat kind of life where they believed that one could only help the other if they benefit from them. It was also the 'each man for himself' kind of life, meaning that you are on your own when you are in Bulawayo.

This kind of life existed in the colonial era and the post-colonial era and is evident in other literary works such as *Lokhu Akungeke Kwenzeke* (1998) by B.S. Ncube. It is a historical text that presents a society affected by political and social issues in the early 90s, 1990 to 1994. This was the era of the Economic Structural Adjustment Programme. The novel presents the effects of ESAP on the lives of the people. The writer focuses mainly on the family, highlighting how a girl child living in a nuclear family is brought up and becomes a victim of circumstances. A young girl Iren gets raped by her employer after her mother finds her a job but chooses not to tell her that the man is a womaniser. She is raped because her family needed financial support. Makhalisa can effectively lay a foundation for writers who come after. She manages to reflect on the Ndebele people's lived experiences during the colonial era and even in the post-colonial era.

Ndlovu builds on what Makhalisa started. He comments on the Ndebele people's lived experiences in the post-colonial era outlining how the nuclear family has brought bad than good. Ndlovu presents the effects of the factors presented by Makhalisa in her play, showing how these factors have affected the upbringing of the girl child in the Ndebele society. It can be noted that Makhalisa has laid a foundation on how the nuclear family in Ndlovu's play came into being.

The events in Ndlovu's play can be a continuation of what Makhalisa had laid the basis for family structure dynamics. The nuclear family is a family set-up that can be said to have emanated from colonisation, industrialisation and urbanisation. Nuclear families developed in crisis times, and people preferred to live in smaller groups to cut on living costs. Therefore, Ndlovu addresses the lived experiences of the people in the post-colonial era. In the play, Ndlovu presents the country's economic turmoil whereby the country is experiencing a political and economic meltdown. This is evident in the play when Mkhwananzi tells Sidumo that,

*Angithi indlala ibhahile eMaNdebeleni lapha, eMasvingo leManyikeni. Kumele silungise I Food for Work. Inotho yelizwe layo ithi ngapha. Sesiphezu kwayo I Structural Adjustment leTrade Liberalisation mfana. (p12)*

*Hunger has spread all over Matabeleland, Masvingo and also In Manicaland. We have to prepare Food for Work. The country's riches also have been affected. We are on Structural Adjustment and Trade Liberalisation boy.*

The above statement shows that the economic situation is not stable, and it becomes difficult for people to maintain large family units. This is why most urban areas have resorted to a smaller family unit: the nuclear family. Hutter (1988:84) argues that modern society has seen the development of private life and the private sphere. Such life is noted in Ndlovu's play, where a modern family becomes confined to city life, and the focus is only on three people without any other kin.

Sofie sees suicide as the only option because she could not open up to anyone. Nuebeck (1979:368) observes that "the family should always exist as an oasis, a place that is safe and satisfying, where one can seek relief from and aid in dealing with the often stressful demands of the outside world". Sofie could have found solace in the family. However, the idea of family in her mind was a nightmare. If it were the case that she was being brought up in an extended family set up, she could have confined to one of the family members, either her aunt or grandmother. In this case, the playwright does not tell us about any relatives of the characters. It becomes difficult to link it to the lived experiences of the people and contemporary society. Although Ndlovu manages to bring out the negative aspects that occur to the girl child raised in a nuclear family, he fails in bringing out effectively the reality that befalls the Ndebele family in the upbringing of the girl child. It is not practical for an African family not to have kinship members.

Traditionally, when a woman has a child out of a marriage and becomes married to another man who is not the father of that child, she cannot take the child with her. In the play, it is said that MaDube got married to Sidumo while she was already pregnant. To make matters worse, Sofie is an offspring of rape. The Ndebele culture specifies that the child is left to be looked after by her relatives; it is the uncle, the brother of the mother or the grandparents who look after this child. Instead, even after she gives birth, she continues to live

with the child. The playwright does not tell his readers the reason why this has happened. The issue is presented as if Sofie's mother has no family. One would suppose that it is because of the cultural decadence that has affected the way of life of the Ndebele people. Sidumo takes advantage of this and rapes Sofie because he believes that there is no blood relation. Tradition emphasises that a child that does not belong to the current husband should be left at home.

Therefore, Ndlovu manages to bring out the reality surrounding the upbringing of a stepdaughter by a step-father. People in the 21<sup>st</sup> century have shunned their values. This shows that even after the colonial era, some values were lost entirely. That is why Ndlovu reveals to his readers the lived experiences that emanated from the colonial era as presented by Makhalisa and contemporary society's experiences. The upbringing of the girl child has been dramatically affected by the changing family structure and values.

#### V. CONCLUSION

The study observes that due to colonisation, industrialisation and urbanisation, the Ndebele family has undergone a tremendous transformation, as depicted by the playwrights. In the pre-colonial era, the extended family set-up that Makhalisa presents as the ideal family set up for the girl child's upbringing. Makhalisa points out the effects of colonisation, which led to industrialisation and later into urbanisation due to family disintegration. The events in *Umhlanba Lo!* and how Makhalisa uses her characters successfully bring out the rejection of the extended family in the urban areas giving rise to the nuclear family during the colonial era. Due to these changes, the girl child's upbringing in an urban extended family is impossible mainly because of the economic difficulties that seem to alter the city life. City life has become so individualistic that the concept of 'each man for himself' has taken over. No one caters for anyone, and even a relative cannot effectively take part in the upbringing of another relative's girl child who moves to the city for greener pastures. Makhalisa presents the effects of colonisation, industrialisation, and urbanisation on the family, highlighting how they have impacted the girl child's upbringing. It can be observed that the playwright has managed to portray the lived experiences of the Ndebele people effectively.

Furthermore, Ndlovu successfully builds on what Makhalisa started. The family structure that Makhalisa highlights are signified by Ndlovu, who highlights the pitfalls of family disintegration. Ndlovu presents the nuclear family as the epitome of the girl child social problems. Due to its individualistic nature, the nuclear family has created bad than good in the girl child's upbringing. It has brought problems such as child sexual abuse and has also affected family relations between parents and children. Ndlovu's depiction of the girl child's upbringing is useful in revealing the Ndebele people's lived experiences. In contemporary Ndebele society, we find such cases where step-fathers rape their stepdaughters because they do not share the same blood.

On the other hand, Ndlovu does not fully reflect on the lived experiences of contemporary society. How he presents the events in the play are unnatural. The playwright does not tell his readers about any other relatives from MaDube or Sidumo's side. It is impossible to have a family that does not have any relatives at all. Therefore, the plot and characterisation in *Lakanye Wangenza* do not fully clarify the writer's depiction of the upbringing of the girl child in the Ndebele family.

Based on the findings, the family plays a significant role in the girl child's upbringing in the Ndebele society. The family shapes the bases of every child's outcome. In *Umhlababa Lo!*, the playwright emphasises that a child brought up in an extended family with Christian values yields a better outcome than the one who is not brought up in a Christian way. Makhalisa uses Sibonile and Mbonisi as good examples of children brought up in a Christian environment, and they turn out to be successful in life.

On the other hand, Ndlovu highlights the effects of colonisation, industrialisation and urbanisation on the family structure. He manages to identify the nuclear family and its effects on the upbringing of the girl child. From Ndlovu's play, one can deduce that the nuclear family is not ideal for the girl's upbringing. It is destructive.

Chiwome and Gambahaya (1998:54) argue that "African artists need to write as Africans whose sole motivation is commitment and responsibility for Africa's development. They should write from African emotional resources rooted in the African soul, history and culture in order to channel their talents into improving the quality of life of their people". The research concludes that Makhalisa fulfils this role as an African writer. She effectively points out the lived experiences of the Ndebele people during the colonial era. She points out some of the issues that the Ndebele people are still experiencing in the Ndebele society today, and this can be noted in the works of playwrights who come after her. The events in Makhalisa foretell the future experiences that a girl child encounters today in how she is brought up in a nuclear family set-up.

Ndlovu is also successful in effectively depicting the Ndebele people's lived experiences in the girl child's upbringing. He continues to highlight what Makhalisa had laid a foundation on. It can be noted that the upbringing of the girl child in a nuclear family brings worse than right. However, the plot in Ndlovu's play does not present the events in the play correctly. It leaves readers with so many unanswered questions, especially with how he presents the violation of cultural norms. He does not entirely fulfil the roles of an African writer.

In comparing the two plays, one may conclude that Makhalisa is much more effective in depicting the Ndebele people's lived experiences in the girl's upbringing from the colonial era until today. The events in the plays give a clear depiction of the Ndebele society.

According to the reviewed plays, it can therefore be concluded that the family stands out to be the core of every girl child's upbringing, and it determines an individual's future. It is highly argued that colonisation, industrialisation and urbanisation are the root cause of extended family disintegration, leading to nuclear families' formation, which encourages individualism. The essence of togetherness has lost its meaning, thereby affecting the upbringing of the girl child. Despite a few discrepancies highlighted, both playwrights successfully depict the Ndebele people's lived experiences during the colonial era and post-colonial.

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