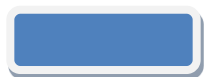


Facing Spouse Abuse in Thulani Mtshali's Weemen

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Abstract

Violence against women (VAW) and abuse are common themes that are frequently examined in literary work, particularly drama. Abusive actions are practiced due to many reasons and causes: psychopathological, socio-cultural, and social-interactional. Thus abuse fall within the two main categories (physical and mental abuse) under which many subcategories come. Following certain psychological, social and literary perspectives, the present paper aims to thoroughly examine the spousal abuse (physical and mental) in the home environment and the defence mechanism that the wife uses in Thulani S. Mtshali's *Weemen*.

Trusting that theatre could challenge, educate and develop people, Mtshali wrote *Weemen*– which had been favourably reacted to in 1996– to reflect his aunt's suffering with her husband and the similar cases in other families. Thus, the play is a response to real life experiences that theatre, according to the playwright, must address in order to challenge people to think and eventually take actions in facing such ills in society.

Keywords: Violence against women; abuse; South African, black; Mtshali; *Weemen*.

Violence/ abuse: Definitions and Scope

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Addressing violence against women (VAW) in New York on International Women's Day in 1999, Kofi Annan's delivered a speech in which he condemned this epidemic global issue which undoubtedly would hinder, according to his perspective, prosperity and success at levels. Thus Ann remarks: "[v]iolence against women is perhaps the most shameful human rights violation, and it is perhaps the most pervasive. It knows no boundaries of geography, culture or wealth."¹ Barbara defines VAW women as "a form of discrimination and a violation of human rights. It causes untold misery, cutting short lives and leaving countless women living in pain and fear in every country in the world."² Catherine Itzin et al in *Domestic Violence and Abuse* mention the following practices of domestic violence: "physical and sexual violence in different forms... psychological and verbal abuse, and financial and economic control".³

Reports from around the world, James Ptacek writes, indicate that VAW "is horribly common and profoundly consequential."⁴ VAW has been brought into public attention due to the women's movements and organizations around the world which mobilize their efforts to

address such a harsh reality. Shedding light on the universality of this global issue Barbara asserts that VAW is "not the result of random, individual acts of misconduct, but rather is deeply rooted in structural relationships of inequality between women and men."⁵ VAW in all of its types– whether physical or verbal– can be regarded as a very serious social ill. It is, Anna Motz cites, "a loss of control of aggressive impulse leading to action."⁶ She argues that the physical harm against both objects and individuals are central to the definition.⁷ Mayhew *et al* argue that "Most violence is perpetrated by men, whether directed at men or women."⁸

The conditions of South African women are not different from women's suffering around the globe. Indeed it is safe to say that their cases are the worst. Accordingly, defending women's rights in South Africa and realising the negligence of such rights Danielle Hoffmeester & Jodi Williams in *How violence affects black and brown women* argue that "There is an urgent need for us to dismantle systems and beliefs that uphold and perpetuate patriarchal violence, and to establish a collective consciousness characterised by accountability, justice and full realisation of another's humanity."⁹ Actually, finding

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justice, especially when women are involved, is one of the hardest tasks, sometimes, moreover, non-accomplishable. James Ptacek asserts that there should be new ways so as justice for abused women can be accomplished. It is worth noting that there are very noticeable attempts by feminist antiviolence movement, yet, unfortunately, most of the victims involved are without justice.¹⁰

For studying VAW, Itzin et al refer to Heise's 'ecological framework'. The framework uses the following levels: individual, relationship, community and society. It is worth noting, according to this framework, violence and abuse are the results of "complex interaction of a variety of factors, each of which operates on a variety of different levels."¹¹ It is quite safe to argue that these levels are interrelated and, very likely, could affect each other. Accordingly, it is hard to separate them if we attempt to investigate the reasons and causes behind violence /abuse. Examining Thulani Mtshali's *Weemen*, one can straightforwardly find out that these levels are applicable to the main theme of the play.

Introductory remarks about Thulani Mtshali and his play, *Weemen*:

In *Black South African Women: An Anthology of Plays*, Kathy Perkins compiles plays– written by women or men during and after apartheid– that mainly address the lives of the black South African women since she believes that their positions have not been thoroughly tackled and thus should be brought to light. Perkins, by collecting these plays, hopes that the book would be the first of its type that centers on black women (Africans, Coloureds and Indians). In her introduction to the anthology, Perkins argues that she has "always been fascinated by drama's unique power to educate audiences about histories and cultures."¹²

One of the plays she includes is *Weemen* by Thulani Mtshali. Apparently, Perkins has found feasible themes in such male playwright that serves the purpose of her book. Mtshali is a well– recognized playwright, poet, producer and director in South Africa. Mtshali's *WEEMEN* was premiered in July 1996 at the Grahamstown Festival. The production was directed by the playwright himself. It is a protest against the persistent harsh reality of women's abuse in both the playwright's own family and society. In fact, its authenticity is undeniable since

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the play is the product of the playwright's member of the family (aunt) real experiences, and, as he puts it in an interview with Kathy Perkins, "of other people that [he] know[s] and [has] seen."

¹³ Mtshali's aunt has suffered because her husband "used to be ruthless to her."

¹⁴ Thus she has been brutally abused. "He would hack her with the axe" Mtshali declares "and she would have all sorts of scars and blue-and-black eyes." ¹⁵

Noelia Hernando-Real and Barbara Ozieblo in *Performing Gender Violence* argue that American women playwrights have used theatre to reflect women suffering and as a reaction to violence on both the domestic and social levels. Accordingly, theatre "has been a useful tool in awakening awareness of violence"

¹⁶ It is highly acceptable that Mtshali attempts in *Weemen* to bring to light these ills so as action could be taken at all different levels: personal and governmental. What matters to him is that these voices and/ or stands must be heard.

South Africa is a country that has suffered long years of apartheid. The effects of this system have damaged all social and political institutions. Women are one of the

categories that have paid the highest price of suffering from femicide, violence, abuse, rape depriving off the simplest rights...etc. Demographic and Health Survey in 2016 showed that one in five women older than 18 has experienced physical violence. ¹⁷ Perkins asserts that topics related to women abuse in all of its forms are rarely tackled in South Africa. Thus, *Weemen* is such a rich play that lays bare the underestimated- and often not plainly brought to light- topic of women abuse. It worth noting that the playwright is not a woman and the events of the play are based on real facts. So the validity of the topic is quintessentially remarkable. Thus, Perkins states that "*WEEMEN* explores physical and mental spousal abuse, and is one of the few plays that take us into the home of a township couple to address this issue." ¹⁸

Analysis of Weemen:

Mtshali clearly expresses- to give validity to the topic- in the stage direction that "characters are from the lower African class". ¹⁹ Moreover, the setting indicates the poor condition and hard lifestyle which seem to be typical of the lower class. Thus shack, rails to hang clothes, table,

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sparsely furnished room... etc. support the playwright's ultimate purpose.

The play opens with a loud knock on the door announcing the arrival of the drunk husband, Mlitshe, as if the violence is already there even before the performance begins. Indeed, the playwright efficaciously gets the audience involved straightforwardly in the action. As the wife, Tsoarelo, opens up the door, the drunk husband disdains her "This is my house woman, and you are my wife...when I knock you must not take more than an hour to open up!" ²⁰ The audience can noticeably see that the wife has not taken more than seconds to open the door. However, her husband seems to be already filled with anger– possibly due to the fact that he is drunk. "The problems of substance and alcohol addiction", Anna Motz writes in *The Psychology of Female Violence*, "may further contribute to the development of violence and other types of offending." ²¹ Thus, alcohol, as we shall see in the play, is one of the vital causes of violence/abuse. The poor condition is very palpable since the wife gives the excuse that having no money left to buy any food.

Moreover, even when asking about bringing him food Mlitshe chooses the

expression "bring the bloody plate!" ²²

Mtshali attempts in the opening scene, through speeches and stage direction, to give us a crystal clear idea, almost a foreshadowing, about the whole course of the play.

One of the most shocking facts that is introduced early in the play is that the wife could have been killed because she had refused to give her husband more money to spend. This fact reveals the level of violence and/ or abuse that we should expect to see in the play. Mlitshe shouts at his wife "Shut up! You are lying...you are supporting your family with my money pretending you are supporting my children, you think I am a fool neh?" ²³ Here we see that the husband is not only treating his wife badly, but he accuses her of being a thief stealing his money to support her family. Indeed, it is very hard to judge at this stage whether the husband is telling the truth about his wife as a thief, or this accusation is part of the spousal abuse! Thus, we are now very much anxious to figure out more about this family. It is only after five speeches between them arguing about the money that should be spent on childrens' school, the husband throws things at her and, in the stage direction, the playwright writes

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"He takes an axe wanting to chop her." ²⁴

We are aware that the level of violence in the play could be escalated to murder. Kofi Annan made a declaration in 2006 under the title ("Ending Violence") in which he argues that VAW all over the world in peace or in war times is the "result of fanaticism or of structural inequality in society" which "continues to confound our civilization." ²⁵ Mlitshe announces "I am the only man here...this mouth says the final word here...you, you are just like this furniture!...bloody damn shit." ²⁶ It is very clear that the husband– through verbal violence– treats his wife as commodity. Thus she is introduced, according to her husband's perspective, as being of materialistic value.

James Ptacek argues that "A primary facet of battering is the abuser's restriction of his partner's liberty—controlling how she spends her time, whom she sees, where she goes." ²⁷ Thus he suggests that battered women should experience a space of freedom. In other words, woman has to decide for herself in order to control her life and restore or compensate what she has lost. Another thread that we discover in this complicated relationship is the fact that the husband does not allow his wife to work for reasons, as he frankly

states, related to issues of trust: "know you women. Don't forget that we are working with women, we see what they do...how they flirt around behind their husbands, so don't pretend to be better, you women are all bitches man!" ²⁸

Obviously, the verbal abuse has reached a higher level as the husband shows that he does not trust his wife. The sense of overgeneralization is a very critical indicator showing that women are either housewives (imprisoned in the house) – or, if allowed to work or to have a space of freedom, adulterer. Tsoarelo defends this very serious accusation with her tears crying that she indeed has given him her life and love. Although we have not seen and/or witnessed what the wife does when she goes out, yet we feel that she is innocent and it is only the husband's constant attempts of abuse that made him say that. However, it is only the first scene in the play and early judgment would be a rush judgment and not objective! It is ironic that Mlitshe scorns his wife tears claiming that they are "salty water". In other words, he accuses her of acting the role of the oppressed. Moreover, he states that he has many girlfriends and he doesn't understand why he has chosen his Tosalreo as his wife. It is worth noting

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that he doesn't mind confessing— regardless of whether or not he is telling the truth, his many relationships. The scene ends with a threat that the wife must prepare him food or else she would see his true colours.

Barbara Oziebl Noelia Hernando–Real in *Performing Gender Violence* attempt to show how VAW is portrayed urging the audience to react and act.²⁹ The playwright magnificently makes us genuinely feel – through the stage direction– what the wife is undergoing and indeed almost shows us the true heart she has.

*“On realizing he is asleep she slowly takes the axe into her hands, looks at him snoring... Slowly raises the axe to chop him... But she cannot do it... She breaks down into tears... She packs her clothes to leave the place... After some thought she decides not to...and then goes and lifts him up on her shoulders and drags him to bed, takes off his shoes, socks and shirt, and joins him.”*³⁰

James Ptacek argues that “For many feminists, anger is a powerful process that facilitates insights about injustice and galvanizes action against it.”³¹ Indeed, there are two essential facts that are revealed about Tsoarelo: first, she has

been facing different types of violence and abuse which make her now thinks of killing her husband. Thus, the expressions “raises the axe” and “to chop him” are masterfully selected to indicate both the real pain inside her and the options that she has for facing these acts. Yet, the last four lines of the extract above almost sum up the character of the wife: she doesn't kill her husband; however, she bursts into tears. We are now obliged to believe that these tears are not the ‘salty water’ as being described by her husband earlier. They are, unquestionably, genuine– this woman is genuine. Also, she could have escaped but she decides not. Instead, she carries him on her shoulder to lay him on his bed, and finally she joins him.³² The overnight incidents have summed up the wife's suffering.

Forgetting all incidents took place last night, the next morning seems to be more optimistic and different since Tsoarelo wakes up very early to begin her house duties while her husband is still snoring in his bed. She tries to wake him up. Mlitshe begins his morning by pointing his finger at his wife, as she nags waking him up not to be late for his work “Hey, you are not my boss, shut up your stinking mouth”. We should now take into

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consideration the husband's action since he is not drunk; therefore, he is fully responsible for his words and actions. Thus he seems not different from what we have seen during the last night. At the same time, we are to be aware of the wife's reactions: she is more obedient and faithful in serving her husband (she helps him to get dressed to catch up his work). Itzin et al state that women and children of substation minority are the most affected categories.³³ We discover now that Tsoarelo has her own small and private business– selling home-made sweet– to support her children and, indeed her husband too. Working secretly is one of Tsoarelo's strong traits because her husband would skin her alive for that. She tries to maintain her relationship with her husband at the same time providing her children's needs which are somehow neglected by her husband.

Loren Kruger, in *The Drama of South Africa*, exemplifies that Mtshali's *Weemen* deals “not only with the suffering and resistance of an abused woman, but also with the husband's uneven contrition and his dealings with the female boss and isangoma who expose his failings,”³⁴ In scene Three, Mlitshe is introduced as weak, submissive and timid in front of his

female boss, Mrs Johnson. She affronts him for regularly being late and constantly telling lies. He tries to act as a very innocent and caring father: “The truth is that my wife is sick, very sick” and later announces “You know I am the bread winner, please think of my children.”³⁵ The playwright in this scene seems to show us another manifestation of women who seem to be in control and very much possesses all power. Similarly, we are able now to judge how weak Mlitshe is. He is now behaving differently since the context is changed taking in account that a woman here dominates the scene. She faces him with his real character:

What do you think you are?... A shareholder I suppose... My boy I want production... My child is sick...my wife is sick...my father's sister is dead...and yet you are always drunk...*(He is crying real tears.)* Here is your money, pack your things and go, I don't want to see your face anymore... Out!!³⁶

The speech above is not only intended to reveal that not all women are like Tsoarelo but also tells us more about the husband. Thus, he is now crying and it is very safe to describe his tears as salty water. The husband's authority over his wife is fake and, most importantly, we discover that he is a liar!

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Sangoma, the fortune teller, tries to help Mlitshe to find another job. However, they enjoy being together. However, Sangoma adds much to what the audience has built concerning the wife's character. As an independent character who has nothing to do with the what the family is going through, we know through the fortune teller that "your wife's heart is bleeding from inside... Your ancestors will turn against you for that." This description in respect to Tsoarelo fits with what we have seen so far.

Wolfgang Sofsky asserts that "Violence itself is a product of human culture, a result of cultural experience"³⁷ Accordingly, it is a culture that very much affect the persistence of violence. Tsoarelo opens Scene Six with a soliloquy which we can consider one of the most thoughtful and informative speeches. It is worth arguing that she indirectly blames the culture that abuses her and subjects her to different types of violence/ abuse.

"I am married to Mlitshe, what is it that I get from him? Constant abuse...harassment, insults and beatings... But why?... Am I doing something wrong?... What?... Nothing!... It is not because he drinks too much, otherwise he would be fighting other men as well!... But just because I am a woman and I am his wife... But why is it that most women suffer one way or another?... He

stopped me from working and he gives me pittance, what is R100 a month?... He calls me all sorts of names... I know no happiness, even my business is secret... Will this curse over women ever end?"

The playwright's voice and intended messages are crystal clear. He, in fact, sums up the main theme of the play. Moreover, he puts forward the Black South women's suffering. Thus, abuse, harassment, insults and beating, not allowing the partner to work– which indeed we have seen and witnessed– are all due to the fact that they are women and wives. In *Violence Against Women in South Africa*, Nonhlanhla Sibanda-Moyo et al state that "The lack of access to financial resources and support is a central barrier to leaving abusive relationships or even reporting incidences of abuse"³⁸

For a moment– at the beginning of the play– we thought that Mlitshe's violence and abuse are the effects of alcohol. Nevertheless, the wife answers on our behalf and informs us that he is coward. She even attempts to speak up on behalf of all Black South Women. The vital question that the audience and the wife should ask is 'what are the alternatives and/ or solutions'? Thus, she thinks of

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leaving him, but about her children? The shocking substitute is to "kill the bastard once and for all and live in peace!" ³⁹

We have already noticed that she tried to kill her husband, or at least thought of that reaction. What prevented her was her good morals and her genuine love. It is worth investigating that she only does care about God since she thinks that God will forgive her should she go on with this plan.

Just seconds later– as her husband comes back home and apologizes for his bad treatment– she shows her inmost character (what we called earlier genuine) by accepting the apologies "Through pain and happiness you are mine... Didn't we make vows in church, witnessed by all?" ⁴⁰

I think– based on what we have seen so far– we should believe what the wife says, but hardly could we believe the husband. We see him totally changed and well-behaved due to the fact that he has been fired and is now totally depending on his wife. Thus, losing the job is one of the things that helps him realise his bad action. Based on Mlitshe's current circumstances and what the fortune teller informs him about his wife, he finally confesses that "how lucky I am to have you as my wife." ⁴¹ As a woman who has

great faith in God, she is now ready to give her full support to stand by him through these difficult times forgetting all the sever incidents that she has faced: "You will find another job, don't worry... All you need to do is just pray and God will answer". ⁴² Also, when the time comes, she confesses that she has been secretly working so as to provide the family members with their needs. Since he is now in need of her support, he is utterly happy that his wife is working. Moreover, he admits that he is blessed by his ancestors having "such a beautiful and sensible wife" ⁴³

in Scenes Seven and Eight, the family economic conditions and the couple's relationships have boomed where they live peaceful and intimate times. The husband is now more productive since he starts preaching and the wife's business is very much paying off. However, it the wife's side that is weighing much as she has become the source of the family income. As an attempt to make her husband feel happy, Tsoarelo shows her husband a new dress that she bought using her own money. "The violent partner expresses his dominance and asserts his identity through" writes Anna Motz "attempting to control and master every aspect of his

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partner's life." ⁴⁴ Mlitshe feels insulted and thus cries "Shut up!... You are insulting me, shut your mouth now... Or I will shut it for you!" ⁴⁵ Thus he insults his wife not because she has done something wrong, but he feels, in his words "Now that you have a lot of money you forget I am still your husband here..." ⁴⁶ In other words, he insults her when he feels that he is not acting as the source of power being the man– dominance –in the house.

Anna Motz argues, according to psychological experiments, that "Women who are repeatedly exposed to painful events over which they have no control and who have no obvious means of escape may develop the classic symptoms of learned helplessness". ⁴⁷ This means that women who face constant violence and abuse come to the conclusion– when convinced that their attempts are useless, that they should take no further action. In other words, they accept their harsh realities as they are. Accordingly, they lose faith in their own potentials and, accordingly believe that they have become too weak to bring change. It is worth noting that Tsoalerno's case is an exceptional as her abuse fuels her with more power. The more the husband abuses her, the stronger she is. The

peaceful environment is not a friend of this family. The husband in Scene Ten gets back to his previous attitude. In Tsoarelo's words "it's back to square one?" ⁴⁸ Thus she is just wondering why. The husband returns back dead drunk asking for food and trying to control the wife's money. She rejects declaring that she is not giving away her money by which she is supporting her children. Accordingly, she is ready to be killed.

"Our civilization abounds in examples of violence perpetrated against women and" Marta Fernández–Morales *et al* indicate, "in general, against all those who in some way appear to be weak or inferior." ⁴⁹ For the first time in the play Mlitshe states why he treats his wife badly. Indeed, in his aside, he philosophizes the reason behind the violence and abuse "if you don't beat up a woman she takes you for granted, she takes you cheap... It's worse once she starts having more money and you earn nothing... She thinks she is a king... A man is a man, is a man, is a man, is a man!" Thus it becomes very clear that the reason of his attitude is to control his wife and also control her money as well. Since he is 'a man' he has the right to act as such; otherwise, he is not a man. His manhood, he believes, could be fulfilled by

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beating women. The confrontation between the couple has reached the climax as each one of them is thinking of killing the other. Mlitshe threatens to kill her and she is challenging him to try. She is now ready more than ever before to take action. Moreover, she frankly enunciates;

"I respect you as my husband, but mind you I am not afraid of you and your threats, a lousy drunkard like you... If I had wanted I would have long killed you, I could have just poisoned your food, and you would die just like a dog, or I could have just hacked you with your axe in your sleep, and you would wake up in hell!" ⁵⁰

Confidence, financial resources, fearing about the future of children and not let other know about their harsh condition, according to Anna, are among many barriers that prevent women from leaving their abused partners. ⁵¹ Moreover, Itzin includes "shame, fear, confusion, possible stigma and the presence of threats or perceived potential negative consequences of disclosing abuses." ⁵² It had become very apparent for both the husband and the audience as well that Tsoarelo is not weak. Indeed, she has been trying to face all kinds of violence

and abuse just to show how a good wife she is. She is respecting the family institution. Thus, she clarifies all means that she could have used to put an end to her bad treatment, even thinking of killing him and thus sends him to hell. Her strength and power are very evident and indeed she is telling the truth.

Statically, two women "are killed each week by their husband or intimate partner", whereas in Africa the number increases to one woman every six hours. ⁵³ Moreover, Nonhlanhla Sibanda-Moyo *et al* elucidate that "Yet, despite the myriad of legal protections and interventions by state and non-state actors, women in South Africa continue to experience extremely high rates of violence." ⁵⁴ In fact, this explains the real catastrophe of women in such culture. A new strategy is used by Tsoarelo in facing violence/abuse. She neglects/ ignores her husband. Thus, in Scene Eleven, the wife is only understood through the stage direction since she never speaks. Indeed, she continues working in her own private business as if she decides to move on in her life after realizing that her husband will never change no matter how good she is with him. He is not appreciating his wife's sacrifices. Thus to avenge the negligence

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of his wife– being active while he is so passive and fully depending on her business– he steals his wife's savings: *"He walks on the bed to hers, rips it open and there it is, two rows of ten– and twenty–rand notes, R450, he gives a sly smile, goes to the wardrobe and takes the dress, and rushes to the doorway, victory written on his face, leaving the room upside down."*⁵⁵ The playwright intends in this stage direction to show not only that the husband is bad but also the constant abuse. Thus, he takes the money leaving the room upside down so as to leave a message behind. The expression "victory on his face" may demonstrate that he is both coward/ mean and villainous.

Tsoarelo arrives home –in the final scene of the play– to find the mess and damage caused by her husband. She also realises that her money and dress are missing. The playwright describes her reaction as she bursts into tears like a child. However, this incident forces her to stand "still deep in thought, and then she decides what to do."⁵⁶ Thus we should expect a serious action to be taken by the wife as the suffering has become too much to bear. Mlitshe comes home very late– half past two in the morning– drunk with his friend, Willie. He invites his friend to stay with

him no matter whether his wife likes it or not. As usual, he tries to wake his wife up to make him food. This time Tsoarelo seems to be totally different and more determined: *"he pulls the blankets off her trying to beat her, but she pulls the blankets and he falls and she jumps on him, beating him with fists."*⁵⁷ Anns argues that women's "subjective experience of humiliation, degradation, isolation and terror imposed on them by their partners" can result in killing the abusive partners.⁵⁸

As Mlitshe tries to resist and fight back, Tsoarelo "beats him harder and sits on him."⁵⁹ When the newcomer tries to protect his friend, she now "takes the axe and turns to him."⁶⁰ and she even hits him. Thus the two gentlemen are now running outside; the husband is bare– chested with no T–shirt on him crying outside. Thus, she locks the door and stays inside trying to deliver the message that she has now locked all doors of forgiveness and mercy. Realizing that he has lost, he starts begging her to allow him to come inside crying that he will die. She appears this time to be very tough, and is not ready to be fooled anymore. To remind him of his earlier philosophy she states "Why don't you die? You are a

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man, a man.”⁶¹ She even goes to sleep. She declares that she will not allow him to mess up with her life. When he tells her that she should kill him if he dares to repeat his action, she replies: “You are dead already! I have stomached so much pain from you...hoping you will change...thinking of our marriage, our children...”⁶² Thus she, once again, explains why she has been taken all the pain of this relationship. She is not a weak woman, but she has favoured the ultimate interest of the family. “Weakness, vulnerability, and dependency” Arnon Bentovim argues “are central unifying and common features of all types of family violence”⁶³

We understand that this wife has a very forgivable heart. Thus she allows him to come into the house facing him with his bad treatment of her. He, although we cannot believe him, admits his faults and accepts to be working for her. Finally, Tsoarelo's victory is achieved as Mlitshe “kneels down clinging on to her dress crying tears of happiness.”⁶²

Conclusion

Thulani Mtshali's *Weemen* sheds light on violence/ abuse against black women in South Africa. It allows audience to explore the different types of violence (physical, mental, psychological and verbal) that are hard to discover and rarely spoken of in the playwright's context. Mtshali attempts in his play not only to inform about these ills in society, but also urging audience to take a positive stand.

Black women in South Africa who come from poor families are very inactive, due to the cultural restrictions, in facing domestic violence/ abuse. However, Mtshali presents a perfect example of a woman who draws a special and different path that allows her to gradually establish her independent identity. Thus, Tsoalreo has been successful in bringing her family (children and husband) to the safe side . Throughout the course of the play, she never stops fighting the spousal abuse. Indeed, she uses different techniques adopting with violent situation she is involved in. Finally, her remarkable success is the playwright's message to his audience.

Endnotes:

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- 2 Ozieblo, Barbara and Noelia Hernando–Real (eds). *Performing Gender Violence* (United States: Palgrave Mcmillan, 2012), 1
- 3 Itzin, Catherine et al. *Domestic and Sexual Violence and Abuse* (London: Routledge, 2010), 7
- 4 Ptacek, James. 'Resisting Co–Optation' (ed), in *Restorative Justice and Violence Against Women* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), 5
- 5 Ozieblo, Barbara and Noelia Hernando–Real (eds). *Performing Gender Violence* (United States: Palgrave Mcmillan, 2012), 1
- 6 Cited in Motz, Anna. *The Psychology of Female Violence* (UK: Routledge, 2008), 1
- 7 It is worth noting that Anna Motz in her book focuses on individuals' physical harm.

- 8 Cited in Motz, Anna. *The Psychology of Female Violence* (UK: Routledge, 2008), 3
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مواجهة سوء معاملة الزوج في المنزل في مسرحية النساء للكاتب ثولاني متشالي

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المستخلص

يعد العنف ضد المرأة وسوء المعاملة من الموضوعات الشائعة التي غالبا ما يتم بحثها وبشكل متكرر في الأعمال الأدبية، على وجه الخصوص في الدراما. تمارس الأعمال المسيئة للزوج لأسباب عديدة منها: الاضطراب النفسي والاجتماعي والثقافي والاجتماعي التفاعلي. وبالتالي ، تتدرج إساءة المعاملة ضمن الفئتين الرئيسيتين (الإساءة الجسدية والعقلية) والتي بدورها تتدرج ضمن العديد من الفئات الفرعية وفقاً لوجهات نظر نفسية واجتماعية وأدبية معينة. يهدف هذا البحث إلى إجراء دراسة شاملة لإساءة معاملة الزوج (جسدياً وعقلياً) في البيئة المنزلية وآلية الدفاع التي تستخدمها الزوجة في مسرحية النساء للكاتب ثولاني اس متشالي. كتب متشالي مسرحية النساء وذلك لثقته أن المسرح بأستطاعته أن يتحدى ويثقف ويطور الجمهور من خلال ما يطرحه، اذ تعتبر المسرحية رد فعل إيجابي في عام ١٩٩٦

لتعكس معاناة عمته مع زوجها والقضايا المماثلة في أسر أخرى. وبالتالي، فإن المسرحية هي استجابة لتجارب الحياة الحقيقية التي يجب على المسرح ، وفقاً للكاتب المسرحي ، معالجتها من أجل تحدي الناس في التفكير العميق واتخاذ التدابير اللازمة لمواجهة مثل هذه المشاكل في المجتمع.

الكلمات المفتاحية: العنف ضد المرأة، سوء المعاملة، جنوب افريقيا، السود، متشالي، مسرحية النساء.

