

**LIBERAL FEMINIST AUTONOMY IN WINNIE MANDELA: A LIFE**

*Dr. Divya Johnson, Assistant Professor, Department of English, Mar Ivanios College, University of Kerala*

**Abstract:**

*“Liberal Feminist Autonomy in Winnie Mandela: A Life” is an exploration into the life of Winnie Mandela to draw insights from their contributions, sacrifices, unsung heroism, inner conflicts, follies, foibles, moments of despair and triumph. It aims at tracing the life of Winnie Mandela, how she stood behind Nelson Mandela and how liberal feminist ideas get represented in her life. The present study attempts to critically study the aspects of liberal feminism inscribed, represented and resisted in the select life writing, Winnie Mandela: A Life and how she stood alongside Mandela. Hence the aforementioned life writing is brought under critical scrutiny to carry out a comprehensive evaluation of forms of autonomy—personal and political and thereby examine the different aspects of liberal feminist theory. Through analysis it could be arrived at certain propositions that she possessed an incredible strength in supporting her spouse. The values, relationships and hierarchical structures of the family influenced the character of Winnie who stood behind Mandela could also be identified. It is assumed that the role and activities of Winnie helped Nelson Mandela to get fame and recognition. The experiences of Winnie Mandela prove that she was often victim of abuse and violent crimes and face discrimination and other social challenges.*

**Key words:** *Autonomy, liberal feminism, empowerment, public deliberation, violence.*

In a world where power and politics play the hoax, the need to foster the position of women has augmented. Combating for a space, women with their strength which is inestimable is often victims of the wily world. Their innermost resilience and ingenuity which remain untouched is on long run elapsed.

The biography, *Winnie Mandela: A Life* is an in-depth and intimate look at the personal and political life of Winnie Mandela, and takes the reader on a remarkable journey of understanding. The book traces her development from talented and privileged child to dedicated social worker, caring wife and mother, and fiery political activist. It examines her vigorous campaign to keep the name of her jailed husband alive, and explores her own harassment, imprisonment and isolation at the hands of the security police. It investigates the events that have made Winnie Mandela such a controversial figure: the allegations of kidnapping and murder, her divorce from Mandela, and the current fraud charges. Winnie Mandela's journey to this point is traced with understanding and honesty, in this fascinating and balanced biography of a most enigmatic woman.

Wendy Donner in *John Stuart Mill's Liberal Feminism* defines autonomy as:

the capacity to critically reflect upon and endorse our commitments, our character, and our lives and reverse them if we want. The most worthwhile forms of human happiness and lives result from this discovery of possibilities and this choice of lifestyles and pursuits on its foundation. (158)

Mill believes that it is essential that women as well as men have genuine choices about the commitments and pursuits of their lives. This conception of autonomy as self-determination and power over lives is consistent with feminist vision. Many feminist writers eloquently elaborate upon the significance of empowerment and self-determination for women, and the harm done to women when they are denied these goods. (ibid 158)

As Susan Okin says in *Justice, Gender and the Family* liberal feminism regards freedom as personal autonomy and political autonomy. Liberal feminists hold that the exercise of personal autonomy depends on certain enabling conditions that are inadequately present in the lives of women, or that social arrangements often fail to respect the personal autonomy of women and other elements of their flourishing. They hold that the needs of women and their interests are insufficiently reflected in the basic conditions under which they live, and that those conditions lack legitimacy because women are inadequately represented in the processes of democratic self-determination. Liberal feminists foreground that autonomy deficits like these are due to the “gender system,” or the patriarchal nature of inherited traditions and institutions, and that the women's movement should work to identify and remedy them. As the protection and promotion of the autonomy of the citizen is the appropriate role of the state in liberal perspective, liberal feminists hold that the state can and should be the women's movement's ally in promoting women's autonomy. (89)

Liberal feminists formulate that the social arrangements of personal life should be freely chosen and should be characterized by fairness or justice. In Jean Hampton's view in *Feminist Contractarianism*, a personal relationship is fair only if both parties to it could,

reasonably accept the distribution of costs and benefits (that is, the costs and benefits that are not themselves side effects of any affective or duty-based tie between us) if it were the subject of an informed, unforced agreement in which we think of ourselves as motivated solely by self-interest. (Hampton 240).

Personal relationship in which all parties respect their own and others' intrinsic value and thus are unwilling to exploit or be exploited are, in Hampton's estimation healthier and more caring for all concerned. (ibid 7)

Mandela did his best to comfort Winnie pointing out that they were not the first family to face such bad predicaments. When he was imprisoned, he gently reminded her that he would need her support more than ever, and that their cause was just, but it demanded personal sacrifice. (Bezdrob 105)

Mandela was not insensitive to Winnie's difficulties though he was underground for seventeen months. He did what he could to make life easier for her. This is evident when he sprang into action when he heard that she was having problems with their old car. He appeared in disguise of a chauffeur and drove to a car dealer, and in broad daylight traded in the old car and bought another one. (Bezdrob 99) When she was prevented from visiting Nelson who was imprisoned in Robben Island, he provided support to his wife through letters. Anne Marie du Preez Bezdrob writes,

In Madiba's next letter, he reminded Winnie how much he cared for her, how unbreakable the bond between them was, and how courageous she was. It was both a love letter and a reaffirmation of the emotional support she so sorely needed. (135)

Even when he was in prison, Winnie shared insights and information that he otherwise might not receive and thereby reciprocated her love for him which he conveyed through letters. The biographer continues,

Mandela continued to rely on Winnie as the mainstay of his life, both as his wife and political partner. He poured out his love and longing for her in deeply romantic and touching letters, often hinting at physical intimacy, baring emotions he had always kept carefully hidden from others. His friends and relatives did their best to boost his spirits, but Winnie remained his primary source of strength- and political information. (169)

Hampton in *Feminist Contractarianism* does not call on women to cease valuing the satisfaction of others or the fulfillment of duty. (227) Instead, she calls on the women's movement to cultivate in women and men sensitivity and an aversion to this kind of injustice, and to develop remedies.

Winnie was the one person with whom Nelson shared his inner fears and feelings, and his letters to her were the record of his deep anxieties and longing, his every dream and aspiration. (Bezdrob 172) For

Mandela, her support had become more important than his life's blood, and he often acknowledged this. He idealized Winnie, admired her tenacity and concern for others under the most difficult of circumstances, and frequently reminded her how much he depended on her. (Bezdrob 200)

Even though Nelson paid tribute to the contributions of Winnie, they agreed on a separation because of their difference. The lack of fairness in their relationship is evident when “he referred to her throughout as Comrade Nomzamo, as though she was someone he hadn't known very well, or perhaps signaling that he had always distanced himself from her.” (Bezdrob 240)

Thus it could be analyzed that the relationship between them had been fairer in some aspects while in some situations they had to remain as disarmed victims. For Winnie, though she was in good relationship with Nelson Mandela, she had to endure the suffering all alone for years. She was treated unfairly throughout by the people around and finally by her own husband.

Echoing what has traditionally been categorized as a radical feminist position, Jean Hampton in *Political Philosophy* suggests that much of the violence against women in liberal societies is carried out because they are women.

Women are the subject of so much violence in our society in part because they are women and hence in the view of their attackers less worthy of respect than men- and indeed the sort of person for whom significant disrespect is permissible. (200)

Winnie Mandela had to make compromises in her life with regard to marriage and motherhood. But she was determined to remain true to herself. She never hid behind the shadow of Nelson or wanted to be known just as his wife. So she sacrificed to leave behind her five months old daughter in the care of her grandmother and went back to work. (Bezdrob 79) Again when she was arrested, she was subjected to extreme emotional, psychological and physical torture for seventeen months.

For most of this time, she was held in isolation in an icy cage: four cement walls, a cement floor and a cement ceiling, lit by a single naked light bulb. Winnie, whose standards of cleanliness bordered on the pathological, was revolted by the conditions. In addition to using the bucket as a toilet, she had to wash over it, which she did by pouring a little water from her one- litre ration on to her hands and vigorously rubbing her hands and face”. (Bezdrob 140)

Silence in the prison was an instrument of torture for her. She felt a sense of diffidence and bleakness throughout her days in prison.

For the first two hundred days, she had no normal contact with another human being. She heard no other voice, spoke to no other living soul. The first few days were the worst of her life. She had only her thoughts for her company, and she was overwhelmed by excruciating uncertainty and insecurity, a sense of hopelessness, the feeling that this was the end. (Bezdrob 140)

Violence against women is, collectively, violent acts that are primarily or exclusively committed against women. This type of violence is gender-based, meaning that the acts of violence are committed against women expressly because they are women.

Even when Nelson was in exile, Winnie soldiered on, meeting the many challenges of being a young mother, wife and working woman, supporting her husband morally, politically and financially. (Bezdrob 82)

Nelson's life in the shadows was a frightening experience for Winnie. She knew he would be arrested if he came home, and she tried hard to fight depression and despondency. (Bezdrob 97) Often police searched or visited her house almost every day sometimes businesslike but at others rude and aggressive. (Bezdrob 101) Anne Marie du Preez Bezdrob shares an experience when the police raided and ransacked the house of Winnie while she had gone to meet Nelson in prison. (126) The author says,

She had no illusions about the extent to which the authorities would go to make her own life difficult, and would suffer any measures stoically, but the realization that her children, too, were going to be victimized brought her close to breaking point. (127)

In the broadest sense, violence against women is any violation of a woman's personhood, mental or physical integrity, or freedom of movement through individual acts and societal oppression. It includes all the ways our society objectifies and oppresses women. Violence against women is rooted in a global culture of discrimination which denies women equal rights with men and which legitimizes the appropriation of women's bodies for individual gratification or political ends. The threat of violence upon Winnie is clear when once, she was woken at four in the morning and told that she was being arrested. By the time she closed her bedroom door while dressing, a white policeman pushed open the door and grabbed her by the shoulder. (Bezdrob 133- 134)

Winnie was vulnerable and exposed to abuse. Once she was arrested for attending a gathering, but when the case was heard, she was acquitted. The police had fabricated evidence against her. (Bezdrob 115) When Nelson was sentenced life imprisonment, she felt like human tragedy playing out in front of them. For Winnie, the agony was over, but the ordeal had begun. Nelson's life had been spared, but it was stolen from her forever, and she faced a long, bleak future alone. Police continued to harass her not even treating her as a human being.

Not even a drop of empathy with a woman who had just lost her husband, nothing but the cruel need to remind her that they still had the upper hand, that they controlled her life. Momentarily, Winnie lost control, and kicked the huge policeman, hard. He showed no sign of noticing, possibly putting the blow down to the jostling of the crowd. (Bezdrob 123)

Later, the increased media attention generated by the 'Free Mandela' campaign did not deter the security police one iota from harassing Winnie. In her book, *The Lady*, the British author Emma Gilbey wrote that persecution of Winnie was 'no more constructive than slowly pulling the wings off a fly.' Winnie "had long since realized that she was not being targeted only as an individual, but also as the personification of the black political aspiration." (Bezdrob 204)

Winnie Mandela was attacked by the public throughout her life. In order to keep the name of her husband and the Party burning, she suffered the brutal attacks of the police and other authorities.

Valerie Bryson states that liberal feminism is based upon the belief that women are individuals possessed of reason, that as such they are entitled to full human rights, and that they should therefore be free to choose their role in life and explore their full potential in equal competition with men. (159) Rosemarie Tong too finds that liberal feminists are engaged in a project to address the unjust consequences of gender stereotyping that have placed women in an unequal position relative to men. (28-29)

The oppression and exploitation which Winnie had to endure shows that she had her own limitations as a woman.

She was served with a banning order that restricted her from entering any educational premises, and barred her from attending or addressing any meetings or gatherings where more than two people were present. In addition to the physical limitations on her movements, the banning order silenced her voice, as the media were no longer allowed to quote anything she said. (Bezdrob 111)

If Winnie had proved only one thing during her solo crusade, it was that she was no shrinking violet. She refused to be intimidated by the threat that her banning order could be reinstated at any time, and use every opportunity to speak out against the regime and the mainstream media. (Bezdrob 170)

In terms of her banning order, Winnie was confined to her house for twelve hours every night, and to the magisterial district of Brandfort by day. With scant chance of finding a job in Brandfort, she was condemned to live on the charity of others- a painful situation for a woman who had worked since completing her studies in social work, had a bright future in her profession, and had supported herself and her family. (Bezdrob 194)

Winnie resigned all her positions in the ANC, saying it was in the best interests of her dear husband and beloved family to do so, but "ascribing the situation to a malicious campaign against her." (Bezdrob

241) Winnie Mandela could resist all the ideologies imposed on her by the society.

Winnie was one of the few black women to “have an ante-nuptial contract which gave her the right to conduct business transactions” without having to first seek her husband's permission, and ensured that she remained in control of her own possessions. (Bezdrob 69)

Winnie had been living under great strain and had become part and parcel of her life. She endured all the sufferings for the sake of Mandela. Still,

she could keep the freedom flame burning, to continue the fight when Nelson was behind bars. She dedicated her life keeping the cause- and Mandela's name alive. (Bezdrob 111)

Winnie's many responsibilities weighed heavily on her, and she was grateful that she could carry on working. Though the banning order complicated her life in numerous ways, she developed two personalities- in company, she hid her problems behind a brave face and brilliant smile, but in private she grew increasingly anxious and lonely. But “circumstances had forced Winnie to become independent, to make her own way, and she found it difficult to revert to the pattern of their early years together” once Nelson was released. (Bezdrob 235)

Winnie could express herself and show to the world what a woman can do to keep the vision of her husband alive. Anne Marie du Preez Bezdrob says,

To the annoyance and alarm of her opponents, far from having been bludgeoned into submission, Winnie emerged as a major player on the political stage, a protagonist in her own right and with her own support base. To the downtrodden masses, she had become a heroine, an African Joan of Arc: a leader to be reckoned with. (170)

Winnie was “deeply distressed at the thought that Nelson might pay with his life for the cause.” She was under enormous pressure, having to work, take care of the children and provide as much support as she could for Nelson. (Bezdrob 121) Winnie,

had little choice but to carry on with her life as best she could. She worked, she helped others, and made effort to spare her children from suffering any more than they already had as a result of their father's imprisonment. (Bezdrob 127)

Winnie Mandela dedicated her life for her husband and fought throughout when everything came under restriction.

*Winnie Mandela: A Life* reveals who Winnie Mandela is, by exploring both her personal and political life. Through her fierce determination and dauntless courage, she survived her husband's imprisonment, continuous harassment by the security police, banishment to a small Free State town, betrayal by friends and allies, and more than a year in solitary confinement all the while keeping the flame of struggle alight and the name of Nelson Mandela alive.

Winnie suffered persecution at the hands of the apartheid authorities, with imprisonment, exile, a ban from setting foot in her home in Soweto, and even a year-long solitary confinement being unleashed by the regime to silence her and break her spirit. But an innate defiance was also part of her nature, so she rejected all attempts at being muzzled and continued to display the qualities that would fix her place as a political force in her own right.

Nelson Mandela could not have functioned as the kind of icon which he proved to be in South Africa without his wife, Winnie Mandela: the correlate mother of the nation, the woman through whom Mandela could be reached and whose every visit to her husband on Robben Island was watched for a political signal. Winnie stood in for Nelson, sometimes acting as his ventriloquist and at other times using the space that the iconic status created to advance a political position of her own. (132)

Denied freedom in every sphere of life, Winnie was determined to fight for her husband and nation. She could withstand all the troubles and violence imposed upon her. She became empowered enough to fight for the nation and didn't want to be muzzled.

Winnie Mandela was denied a space by the society and even issued a banning order. However she

fought against the supreme authority to gain a rightful place. This is clear when she protested against the authority and the police brutality at midnight without being apprehensive of the threat she will have to encounter.

It was Winnie Mandela who provided strength for Nelson Mandela when he was in prison. She could be appreciated for the support offered to her husband enduring all the misfortunes of life. Still by the time Nelson Mandela was released from the prison and when he came to power he failed to realise the hard labour done by her wife without whom he wouldn't have survived.

Winnie Mandela acted according to her conscience realising her own ability. Without having any position or force she could fight against those who tried to destroy her. She was empowered to keep the ANC running all alone without even the support of her friends.

Winnie possessed the potential to work alongside her husband. Yet she chose an apparently submissive role playing second fiddle. Though the power which she possessed was not evident to the public, it could be concluded through a close reading of the select life writing that Nelson Mandela was dependent on the inner strength of Winnie. He was enriched physically, intellectually and spiritually by the contributions, non-competitive presence, levels of tolerance, forgiveness and the spirit of sacrifice of Winnie. She surrendered herself out of love in the orbit of her life partner. Though she voluntarily accepted her position enduring isolation, misunderstanding and physical harm, she got some reflected glory as the wife of Nelson Mandela. After taking a comprehensive overview of the select life writing of Winnie Mandela, the emerging fact is that given the right circumstances, she could have risen to greatness in her own right.

Liberal feminism remains a strong current in feminist political thought. Its primary concern is to protect and enhance women's personal and political autonomy, the first being the freedom to live one's life as one wants and the second being the freedom to help decide the direction of the political community. Within a classical liberal framework, rights defined men as a group which excluded women, through the very act of constituting that group as universal. To refuse the universalism of this rights discourse would be precisely to make visible its role in differentiation and hierarchisation of social groups. (Ahmed 35)

Liberal feminists emphasize the importance of political autonomy that is, being co-author of the conditions under which one lives. Some argue that the state should ensure that the basic structure of society satisfies principles of justice that women, as well as men, could endorse. Others argue that the democratic legitimacy of the basic conditions under which citizens live depends on the inclusion of women in the processes of public deliberation and electoral politics.

As liberal feminists point out, on all fronts, tactics pressing to enhance women's voices, their lives, expectations, needs, and the like, must be explored- and such tactics unquestionably demand the sustained attention of those engaged in practical and theoretical discussions alike. (Ellen 108) Ronald Dworkin's contemporary justification for freedom of expression claims that a thoroughgoing right to freedom of expression is justified by the fact that it guarantees and preserves liberalism's commitment to equality by offering everyone an opportunity to speak. According to Mill, protecting freedom of expression maximizes utility and fairness. (Levin 357)

Abbey Ruth articulates the freedom of expression endorsed by the liberal feminists in *The Return of Feminist Liberalism*. He says that liberal feminism has:

traditionally protected the citizen's civil and political rights: in defending such things as freedom of speech, the press and assembly, and the principle of habeas corpus, liberalism makes citizens as free from government interference as is compatible with public order and the equal freedom of other citizens. (14)

When Winnie Mandela made her first public speech after joining the Women's Federation,

she made such an impact that her audience composed a song in her honour there and then. Her candid shoot- from- the- hip delivery became one of her trademarks, and her public

addresses reflected an innate insight and natural empathy that could not be learned. (Bezdrob 82)

In spite of all the opportunities, Winnie Mandela strived hard to make herself heard to the public thereby keeping the voice of Nelson Mandela alive among the people.

Freedom of expression is most important for government. A government which does not know what the people feel and think is in a dangerous position. The government that muzzles free speech runs a risk of destroying the creative instincts of its people. Winnie Mandela was

served with a banning order that restricted her to the magisterial district of Johannesburg, prohibited her from entering any educational premises, and barred her from attending or addressing any meetings or gatherings where more than two people were present. In addition to the physical limitations on her movements, the banning order silenced her voice, as the media were no longer allowed to quote anything she said. (Bezdrob 111)

Even when Winnie Mandela was muzzled by the government, she protested and strived hard to rise herself from her own ashes. Though restrictions were imposed upon her, she courageously fought against all the cruelties with all courage. She thought it as her obligation to protest and continue her action.

When Winnie Mandela was imprisoned she was denied contact to any human being for two hundred days. She heard no other voice, spoke to no other human soul. (Bezdrob 140) Similarly when she was appointed Deputy Minister of Arts and Culture, rumours quickly surfaced of financial irregularities. When Mandela was furious and demanded an apology, she complied, but made it clear that she was doing so under pressure, and leveled a new accusation at the government, namely that it was undermining free speech. (Bezdrob 243)

In *Individualism and the Objects of Psychology*, Naomi Scheman describes the individualist assumptions of the ideology of liberal individualism in this way:

Thus, it is supposed to be a natural fact about human beings, and hence a constraint on any possible social theory, that no matter how social our development may be, we exist essentially as separate individuals- with wants, preferences, needs, abilities, pleasures and pains- and any social order has to begin by respecting these as attaching to us determinately and singly, as a way of respecting us. Classical liberal social theory gets off the ground with the observation that individuals so defined are in need of being enticed- or threatened- into enduring and stable association with one another. (231)

Winnie acted according to demands of the time which was a relief for Nelson. She would deal the situations accordingly providing every aid she could to her husband.

When he was at home the telephone would ring incessantly, or he would be called away, and he marveled at Winnie's patience with the frenetic lifestyle he had imposed on her. Busy as she was, Winnie took on the job of finding suitable schools for Nelson's son. He wanted them settled in a safe place if he should be imprisoned". (Bezdrob 94)

Even when Mandela was in prison, there were people who brought negative publicity about Winnie to his attention. But he was aware of what was happening to Winnie. It was true that "without Winnie, Mandela could not have remained what he was." (Bezdrob 170)

Madiba knew more about Winnie's life than anyone would have thought possible, taking into account the ban on newspapers, the almost total absence of information and carefully censored letters that were part of life on the island. He knew that she had been under constant harassment since her last visit, that her siblings were being persecuted by the security police, and that the authorities intimidated anyone who gave consideration to moving into the house with her. (Bezdrob 134)

The agreement between Nelson and Winnie is clear from a small incident after Nelson was released from prison. When he removed the pages of his speech from his jacket pocket, he realized that he had left his reading glasses at the prison, and had to borrow Winnie's. Though a small incident, it was rich with symbolism: "he would read his first words as a free man through both their eyes." He expressed his appreciation for the strength given to him by Winnie during his years in prison. He expressed "deep appreciation for the strength given to me during my long and lonely years in prison by my beloved wife and family," and added: "I am convinced that your pain and suffering was far greater than my own." (Bezdrob, 233)

However after Mandela's release the focus was constantly on him.

No one bothered to find out what Winnie needed and wanted, how her life had changed or what her aspirations might be. She had received almost no public credit or acclaim for the personal suffering she had endured, or the damage it had caused". (Bezdrob 239)

Even when Nelson was inaugurated as president of South Africa, she was reduced to no more than a spectator, snubbed in the most public manner imaginable by her husband at his moment of supreme triumph, though she had waited and labored her entire adult for that day. (Bezdrob 242) Winnie Mandela had to undergo hardships during several phases of her life though she endured them with courage.

In *Justice, Gender and the Family*, Okin says that "social structures, practices and understandings should be reformed so that women are free to engage in traditionally masculine areas such as politics and the formal economy." (72) Echoing the claim of Mary Wollstonecraft that women were trained to be pathetic, twentieth century liberal feminists argued that 'gender role stereotyping' was responsible for training women to be less successful than men. Liberal feminists suggested that girls should stop being brought up to be passive and lacking in confidence and instead encourage to develop into assertive independent human beings. (Zalewski 6)

Winnie Mandela recognised her potential and came forward to act according to her conscience. During Mandela's long years in prison, Winnie made it her business to visit the families of other political detainees and arrange financial aid for the ordinary "forgotten people." (Bezdrob 87- 88) Again, she possessed an inner strength to face the hurdles and challenges of life. "Wittingly or unwittingly, the security police recognised Winnie's strength and ability to lead, and they feared her influence." (Bezdrob 138) The letters which Winnie received from Nelson was filled with reassurance and encouragement. He urged her to be brave, and reminded her that in his absence she would occupy an important position in the community. (Bezdrob 110)

Winnie Mandela was the only person who had stood by Mandela and his party without wavering, "the only one who had dared the authorities to try to stop her. She was prepared to die for the liberation struggle." (Bezdrob 170) Winnie Mandela "was more than a man." She "was a pivotal figure in forging unity, because the youth related to her, trusted her, and never questioned her leadership." (Bezdrob 177) However controversial her public utterances were, Winnie "had a clear understanding of, and insight into, the political situation. She showed clear sighted judgment about the unfolding crisis." (Bezdrob 221)

Women's political space can be perceived at two levels: private political space and public political space. The first relates to the political situation within the domestic unit. It deals with the working of the individual placements in the hierarchy. The second level, public political spaces has to do with women's access to and control of public office and their participation in the administration and governance of society and institutions locally, regionally and nationally. Access to this public space is in part a function of personality traits such as courage, determination and qualities of leadership. But it depends even more on structural factors. The divide between the private and the public is very significant in the lives of women: public political space exists on the public side of the divide, while women are largely confined to the private side, and few bridges exist to assist the crossing. As a result, women's access to and control of public political space is severely restricted. (Mason 112)



After years of watching every move of Winnie, intercepting her letters and telephone calls, brutal interrogation and more than a year of solitary confinement, the security police had still not fathomed the depth of Winnie's courage, her strength of character and will, her determination and extraordinary tenacity. They clearly did not understand that her spirit was far from broken, and that she would confront every obstacle they put in her way. (Bezdrob 188)

In accordance with the habits of a lifetime, Winnie was invariably to be found where there was suffering or injustice, regardless of time or distance. Women's issues remained a priority.

Far from waning, Winnie's star continued to glitter over the political landscape, as a member of parliament, head of women's movement and member of the ANC's national executive and national working committee. (Bezdrob 264)

For Winnie Mandela, her circumstances forced her to realise her power and worked hard to the maximum.

As Okin says in *Justice, Gender and the Family*, liberal feminists hold that the conditions under which women live lack legitimacy because women are inadequately represented in the processes of public deliberation. They hold that this political autonomy deficit is due to the "gender system" or the patriarchal nature of inherited traditions and institutions, and that the women's movement should work to identify and remedy it. (Okin 89) Justice in the distribution of benefits and burdens in society would go some way towards enabling women to access forums of public debate on equal terms with men. But cultural change is necessary as well if stereotypes about women's abilities are not to interfere with their participation, if women's needs and interests are to be understood as legitimate claims on democratic power, and if men's dominance in institutions of influence is to be overcome. (104)

Winnie Mandela was so determined that she was even ready take arms against the whites.

The rigid petty apartheid policy backfired on the white community when Winnie insisted on trying on a dress in a well-known fashion chain store. Blacks had always had to buy clothes without first trying them on, and could not return purchases if they were the wrong size. (Bezdrob 190)

Despite her continuous efforts, Winnie Mandela is neglected at the end when Nelson Mandela is released from prison. Everybody including her husband failed to realize her worth.

When Nelson was apprised of the club's unsavoury reputation, he told Winnie he wanted it disbanded, but, in a rare display of defiance against his wishes, she ignored him and made no attempt to curb the behavior of its members. (Bezdrob 224)

The liberal feminists have become increasingly aware of the barriers which women confront. It could be concluded that male supremacy shapes women's perceptions of themselves; molds women's interests, needs and wants; and limits women's ambition, determination and perseverance.

### **Bibliography:**

1. Abbey, Ruth. *The Return of Feminist Liberalism*. New York: Acumen, 2011. Print.
2. Bezdrob, Anne Marie du Preez. *Winnie Mandela: A Life*. SAfrica: Zebra Press, 2003
3. Bryson, Valerie. *Feminist Political Theory: An Introduction*. New York: Paragon, 1992. Print.
4. Donner, Wendy. "James Stuart Mill's Liberal Feminism: Philosophical Studies." *An International Journal for Philosophy in the Analytic Tradition*. 69.2(1993): 155- 166. *JSTOR*. Web. 25 Oct 2018.
5. Freeberg, Ellen M. "Translating a Liberal Feminism: Revisiting Susan Okin on Freedom, Culture and Women's Rights." *Constructing Human Rights in the Age of Globalization*. Eds. Mahmood Monshipouri et. al. New Delhi: Prentice, 2004. Print.
6. Hampton, Jean. "Feminist Contractarianism." *The Intrinsic Worth of Persons: Contractarianism in Moral and Political Philosophy*. Ed. D Farnham. Cambridge: CUP, 2007. Print.

7. .... "Selflessness and the Loss of Self." *The Intrinsic Worth of Persons: Contractarianism in Moral and Political Philosophy*. Ed. D Farnham. Cambridge: CUP, 2007. Print.
8. .... *Political Philosophy*. Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1997. Print.
9. Levin, A. *The Cost of Free Speech: Pornography, Hate Speech and their Challenge to Liberalism*. UK: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010. Print.
10. Mason, Karen Oppenheim. "Measuring Women's Empowerment: Learning from Cross- National Research." *Measuring Empowerment: Cross Disciplinary Perspectives*. Ed. Deepa Narayanan. New Delhi: OUP, 2006. Print.
11. Mill, John Stuart. *On the Subjection of Women*. New York: D. Appleton, 1870. Print.
12. .... Utilitarianism, On Liberty and Consideration on Representative Government. London: Dent, 1972. Print.
13. Okin, Susan. M. *Women in Western Political Thought*. London: Virago, 1980. Print.
14. .... *Justice, Gender and the Family*. New York: Basic Books, 1989. Print.
15. .... "Reason and Feeling in Thinking about Justice." *Ethics* 99.2 (1989): 229- 249. *JSTOR*. Web. 26 Aug 2018. Print.
16. Scheman, Naomi. "Individualism and the Objects of Psychology." *Discovering Reality*. Eds. Sandra Harding and Merrill B. Hintikka. USA: Kluwer Academic Publishers, 2003. Print.
17. Tong, Rosemarie. *Feminist Thought: A Comprehensive Introduction*. Boulder: Westview Press, 1989. Print.
18. Zalewski, Marysia. *Feminism after Postmodernism: Theorising through Practice*. London: Routledge, 2000. Print.
19. Ahmad, S. Waseem and M. Ashraf Ali. "Social Justice and the Constitution of India." *The Indian Journal of Political Science*. 67.4 (2006): 767- 782. *JSTOR*. Web 24 July 2018.
20. Ahmed, Sara. "Beyond humanism and postmodernism: Theorizing a feminist practice." *Hypatia*. 11.2 (1996): 71- 93. *JSTOR*. Web. 24 July 2018.